

A photograph of the Trinity Baptist Church building, a large brick structure with classical architectural features like columns and a pediment. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A stone plaque on the building reads "TRINITY CHAPEL 1868".

2022/23

ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE
**ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING**
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Trinity Baptist Church, Bexleyheath, DA6 7AY
Registered Charity Number 1130034

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Opportunities for Service

You are always welcome to get involved in the many opportunities that arise in the life of the fellowship at Trinity. Feel free to enquire with Andy about anything you might be interested in, however particular needs are outlined in the reports as follows:

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Pastor's Report

"I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word." (Psalm 119:16).

Our verse for 2023 reminds us of the importance of regular Bible reading. There simply is no substitute for this if we want to grow as Christians. It is an incredible privilege to own and be able to read a copy of God's Word in our own language – a blessing that is still denied to many Christians around the world – and we have the added blessing of many commentaries to help us better understand it! So, I am greatly encouraged by the number of people who have shared how much they are enjoying the Bible in One Year material (whether they are attempting to read the whole Bible this year or over the next two or three years. If you haven't yet started, or you have struggled to keep up with it, it is never too late to start (or restart). Full details can be found at: <https://bibleinoneyear.org/en/> . You can choose how to access the material, including via podcast (with the Bible read by Poirot actor, David Suchet), mobile app, through the website itself, or through ordering the commentary in book form.

I hope our "What's The Point Of Reading ...?" sermon series is also enhancing your experience. It is important that we hear the whole counsel of God and not just the bits we like more or find easier. Prior to this, our sermon series explored the material in the Christian Life and Witness course in more detail and then Paul's letter to Titus, with its particular focus on holiness. Thank you to the team of preachers who have again served us so well this year.

Our all-age services have tackled some stretching concepts: the "I AM" sayings of Jesus, the nature of the Trinity, and most recently, the Lord's Prayer. It is a delight to see Debs Harmer growing more confident in this role, and to release her increasingly to take the lead in these services. I know many of you have commented on how you are appreciating her work. As ever, all our children's and youth provision, from creche and Trinity Tots, through GodZone, to YP, continues to be excellent, for which we give our grateful thanks to the teams (see the relevant reports for more details). We have been praying for more children aged 3-7 especially, and those prayers have begun to be answered in recent months. For me personally, one of the highlights of the year continues to be our children's and youth camps, where they really get to deepen their relationships with each other, with their leaders, and with God. This year we were able to restart these camps, and they were particularly significant, spiritually.

At the time of writing, we are about to put out our advert for a part time Youth Leader to compliment the work that Debs does as our Children's Leader. This is planned to work in partnership with CRiBS (Christian Resources in Bexley Schools), making the overall hours up to full time. Please pray that the right candidate will apply. Otherwise, we will need to think seriously about the overall leadership of YP, with Lorraine Sansom feeling that she really needs to pass on this leadership to a younger leader.

One of the greatest joys for me this year has been the cultural prayers initiative. It is a great start in learning about each other's backgrounds and in celebrating the wonderful diversity we have in Trinity. I would love to see that rich cultural diversity increasingly influence how we worship on a Sunday morning, too – a foretaste of the all-nations worship in heaven!

Another highlight has been the start of some new home groups, most of which very quickly filled to capacity. A list of the groups can be seen in the Small Groups report later in this report. Home groups are a brilliant way to find support and friendship in church, so if you would like to be a part of a group, please speak to me or to Jill Holland. Some groups still have space for more members, and it would be wonderful to start some more new groups. So, please also speak to us if you are willing to host or lead a group.

The Trinity Family Events are another great way to deepen friendships with others. Again, it has been good to see these better attended in recent months. We try to have a variety of events during the year to appeal to different people, adults and children, families, couples and singles alike, and they are always wonderfully enjoyable. Our thanks to those who have organised this year's events.

All this aids our desire to increase the network of pastoral care within the church. The Pastoral Care Team, led by Janet Grist, continues to support those in greatest need in the congregation, including the housebound, and we would welcome new members with a heart for this work. But there are many others in the congregation who would benefit from more regular support and encouragement. Much of this is probably already happening behind the scenes, and if so, it would be helpful if you could let Janet or me know so we can see those members who are regularly supported and those who may be slipping through the net. Equally, if you are happy to offer your services to look out for a few specific people, please let us know. My own pastoral care is often given to situations of particular need or crisis (a sad bi-product of having only one minister is that there is less time for the everyday and mentoring forms of pastoral care). It has been a privilege to take three funerals this year as part of this care.

We are also in the process of reviewing and streamlining our church communications (written, spoken and on-line) with the help of a consultant, Karen Thatcher. The overall concept is to help us to think through who we are and want to be as a church, and how we most effectively communicate that, both internally and externally. We want to get to the point where everything we do and share is instantly recognisable as coming from Trinity. Karen should be attending our May Church Members' meeting to explain this better.

Please read my Outreach and Evangelism report for the various new and exciting ventures that are developing in this area. It was a personal delight to be able to baptise Erin in October. I long for more baptisms, but this will only happen if we all prioritise what the Early Church prioritised – sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have two candidates from YP on the latest baptism enquirer's course. Please also pray for them.

My thanks to everyone who has served in any way this year and to those who have faithfully prayed for the work of Trinity. I commend the other reports in this booklet for your perusal and prayers of gratitude. Let us press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenwards in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14). Yours in Christ,

Andy Banks

Pastoral Assistant's Report

Great is the love poured out for all. This is our God.

My role as the Pastoral Care Assistant is to support and assist Andy, our Pastor, in the overall practical and spiritual care of the congregation. My duties include visiting the folk who are in hospital, those who are housebound, taking folk to appointments, praying with folk and supporting those that are in pastoral difficulties.

I have weekly Pastoral meetings with Andy and a deacon. This is a valuable time that we use for praying for those experiencing or struggling with issues. This is a vital opportunity to keep up to date and exchange information on any matters arising that need attention.

I am very well assisted and supported by members of the Pastoral Care Team, who are willing to visit or phone people and generally keep in touch. Team members are, firstly our most recent volunteer, Betty Atkins plus

Elaine Camp, Ron and Eileen Jones, Cynthia and Isaac Osei-Kwame, Gareth Roach and Bryn Roach. We do try to meet periodically for a catch-up. I would like to acknowledge all of their commitment and hard work; thank you. I would also like to make reference to others who are not on the Pastoral Care Team, but give their time to visit others; thank you too.

When possible, we have implemented a delivery system, taking cakes and scones to housebound folk. This has been really appreciated by them. I am committed to my role, and find that putting a smile on faces and, making a phone call can make a huge difference in peoples' lives.

'The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.' (Psalm 29:11).

Janet Grist

Children's Leader

"Don't you see that children are God's best gift?" (Psalm 127:3 The Message).

This year has been one of great blessings for us in GodZone. We have seen our numbers grow as God has answered our prayers for more children at Trinity and we have several new families attending regularly. We have at least 50 regular attenders on our registers, between the ages of 1 and 13.

On a Sunday morning we split into different groups and meet in the halls at the back of the building. Alpha and Beta are currently still joined together, as we don't quite have enough to make two groups yet. This group is led by Debs Harmer and Etty Haworth, with help from Adam Harmer, Fiona Banks, Elaine Camp and Eileen Jones. Each week we learn more about the Bible through stories, songs, games and craft. We have a lively and enthusiastic group, who love to get involved and share their news with us.

Gamma meet in the main hall upstairs and are led by Claire Altman, Beth Kemp, Sadye Kemp and Kerry O'Sullivan. This group is for children in school years 3 to 5 and they explore the Bible through activities based on the Scripture Union resources. The group are keen to offer their thoughts and opinions and are developing a great knowledge of Bible stories.

Delta meet in the upstairs classroom and is led by Kerry-Ann Reid and Gareth Roach with help from Libby Isaac and Victoria Oluwafemi. The children move into Delta in Year 6 and stay here until they move into YP in Year 9. The children are encouraged to think more deeply about Bible stories and really consider how they can apply what they are learning to their own lives.

Last July we were lucky enough to be able to restart GodZone Camp after Covid. We took 26 children to Carrotty Wood in Tonbridge and had a weekend full of fun, laughter and learning more about God. I cannot speak highly enough of our children and they made the weekend what it was. We saw friendships developing and relationships with God deepening, confirming to me the importance of these weekends. I am deep in preparations for this year's camp and I would appreciate your prayers for another successful weekend.

We continue to run family events throughout the year. We had a very successful quiz night, as well as a board game evening, light party and museum trip. We have more events coming soon and I encourage you to come along to one if you haven't already, they are great opportunities to get to know others in a relaxed and informal environment.

I am very fortunate to have a brilliant team in GodZone, who give up their time to lead each of these groups. I want to thank them for all their energy and hard work, as I know many of them have busy jobs too. Thank you to Mandy Card, Paul Bryant and Monica Benson who are our emergency helpers and often step in to cover at short notice. I would also like to thank Sarah and Graham Beswick and Andrew Altman who have stepped down from the team in the last year, your contribution to GodZone is really appreciated. If you feel like you would like to get involved in the team and could offer your expertise, then please speak to me.

This year saw me complete my first full year in my role as Children's Worker at Trinity. I continue to be grateful to work with our children and have the opportunity to lead them closer to God. All age services are one of my particular highlights of this role, as I love to see the whole church family worshipping together and children becoming more confident to contribute and participate in the services. I always enjoy spending time with our children either in GodZone on a Sunday or at social events. I encourage you to get to know them and pray regularly for them, we have a really special group of young people. Pray for them as they develop in their faith and face challenges at school. I would also appreciate you joining with me to pray for even more families to join Trinity and that we would be a welcoming church where everyone, of all ages, can feel at home.

Debs Harmer

Administration

As Trinity's Church Administrator, I work three days a week, usually Tuesday – Thursday 9 – 3 pm. I am responsible for production of our weekly news sheet, maintaining the church diary, minuting church members' and deacons meetings, facilitating our website and Facebook presence, editing and producing this report and managing our Membership Software, ChurchSuite and I am involved with some building and maintenance tasks. I am also responsible for liaison with the Charity Commission and the Baptist Union who require us to take a census each year.

The weekly news sheet contains details of the Sunday service, prayer items plus news and events. This is sent out via email and a few copies printed for newcomers or those not online. I am looking to develop this further by using Mailchimp which will improve the look of the news sheet and make links to events easier to navigate.

We continue to use ChurchSuite for our database of members and friends, our calendar, rotas, children's and youth registers and logging attendance. Please contact me if you need access or any help getting the information you need.

During this last year I have continued to process DBS checks with help from Nikki Hall. I have attended deacons meetings to minute them and managed our social media presence. Social media remains something I hope to develop further in the next year; many people will check out our Facebook/Instagram presence as well as our website before coming along for the first time and we need to consider how we resource this.

This year I also worked on sourcing the new chapel chairs, purchased with money from the surplus we had in 2021. We tried to sell the old chairs without success and they were then donated via Freecycle to Borough Green Parish Council; thank you to Simon Davidson for arranging this.

I am currently working alongside Andy and Louise Brady, along with Karen Thatcher, an external communications consultant, on reviewing and improving the way in which we communicate and how that communication looks.

My work also involves aspects of building management; fire alarm checks, heating settings and contract management. Looking after a building of our size and age is no small task – if this is something you can help with, do let me know. We do thank Ian Lewthwaite for his help with this area of ministry this year when he was able to.

As staff we meet together each Tuesday morning for a short devotional and to pray together. It's good to spend time together and share news as appropriate. I find this a helpful time to pick up items needing prayer from around the fellowship which I then disseminate through the news sheet. If you have something for praise or prayer you would like included, do email or call me by midday on any Thursday.

Kerry O'Sullivan

Buildings and Maintenance

This past year has been one of undertaking regular maintenance and some more specific redecoration works. Church members agreed the upgrading of the flooring in the side entrance, stairs and landings to make the area more welcoming as it is the main entrance for many people taking part in our activities. This included minor repairs to the steps, some painting and door adjustments to suit the new floor finishes.

Also in the church buildings we undertook repair and redecoration works in the BCU office and the redecorated the ground floor toilets. Externally, blocked gutters were cleaned out and a cracked rainwater pipe at the rear of the building replaced.

We have undertaken works following a fire inspection and have provided door hold open devices to several doors. These are linked to the fire alarm system and allow the doors to close automatically if the alarm is operated. We have also had the church boilers and associated equipment serviced in March.

At 75 Standard Road minor repairs and maintenance have been undertaken and the conservatory roof, doors and windows have been overhauled as necessary to make the area watertight and fit for purpose in accordance with our obligations as landlords. In addition, sunken areas of the drive have been made good. At 75A Standard Road, various items of maintenance have also been undertaken.

In the coming year we are hoping to undertake long overdue repairs and redecorations to the church office. As always, thanks goes to people in the church who give their time and expertise; Rob Kemp and Jon French as well as to Kerry, who deals with the regular recurring maintenance contracts, such as fire extinguisher, fire alarm and other testing and who sets the times for the heating system operation each week.

Dave Camp

Health and Safety

Health and safety remains the responsibility of us all at Trinity and so I would like to start by thanking those who have brought to the Deacons' attention issues that have arisen over the year. We have a large building and two residential properties, and it would be a very difficult task to notice health and safety breaches without the input from church members. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding health and safety matters at church, please do not hesitate to contact me or another member of the diaconate.

Compared to the manic year that was 2020, this year has been thankfully fairly mundane, from a health and safety perspective, and of course we can give thanks for this. We undertook some works recommended by the

Fire Safety Report we had commissioned, including the installation of the automatic fire door closers throughout the chapel, and the removal of the additional fire exit in the vestry, given its use primarily as a storage facility now. The Deacons are considering other issues highlighted in the report, including how best to undertake a regular fire drill for church users. I would like to thank those who helped clear the moss and debris from the fire exits at the chapel – a task that must be undertaken each year.

The glass front doors of the chapel were of course replaced, after they were damaged, and thankfully the entire cost was covered through the church building insurance policy. We are also currently working through some fairly minor changes in the church building to bring it up to the best practice (including some tweaks to the church boiler).

It is of course important to seek to eliminate any accidents before they might happen, and so we have also undertaken various minor repairs to the church buildings, such as fixing slipping roof tiles at 75 Standard Road, as well carrying out checks of equipment in the chapel to make sure it remains in good order.

Thanks must go to Dave Camp and Rob Kemp, whose help in building and safety matters is invaluable to myself and the Deacons, and to Adam Harmer too, for lending his expertise in legal matters.

If you have skills which you believe God is calling you to use in the church, in areas such as building maintenance or health and safety, please do come and speak to me.

Jon French

Safeguarding

We take Safeguarding very seriously at Trinity as we want to make sure we keep our children, young people and vulnerable adults safe from harm as far as it is in our power to do so. This applies to all activities both in church, on trips, and during any social media communications.

Updated Safeguarding Guidelines

The guidelines that accompany our Safeguarding policy have been updated this year and have been reviewed on an annual basis. These are available to all DBS-checked adults to help them understand how child safeguarding works at Trinity and what to look out for to keep children and young people safe.

GodZone Visits

Nikki Hall and Debs Harmer have visited and reviewed the teaching and safeguarding practices within each GodZone team over this year.

Safeguarding Children Training Sessions

Safeguarding training has been running throughout the year with the majority of leaders completing the training, there are a few leaders who will need to update their training in the next few months. Following the changing over of the Safeguarding Trustee, Matt Harris will be taking over the delivery of the church's safeguarding training sessions.

DBS checks

Kerry O'Sullivan and Nikki Hall have been carrying out the DBS checks for all our children's and youth workers. Some of these have been in person and some by using Zoom. All leaders and helpers have current DBS checks.

Designated Persons for Safeguarding

Martin Sansom and Joy Sanger continue to be our Designated Persons for Safeguarding, for which we thank them. They are independent of the workers and if ever a safeguarding need arises, they can be contacted for advice. Please remember that the safety of our children is our responsibility of all of us. If you have a concern, please speak to Martin or Joy.

Safeguarding Trustee

This year Nikki Hall stepped down from the Deaconate and as safeguarding trustee and ETTY Haworth has taken over this role from November 2022. A full handover has taken place between Nikki and ETTY. We would like to express our thanks to Nikki for her excellent care and attention to this aspect of church life over the years.

ETTY Haworth

Trinity Tots

Trinity Tots is our weekly playgroup for preschool children and their parent and carers. It has been running for just over a year and during this time we have seen more than 80 families come through our doors! I have a brilliant and dedicated team including Linda Brady, Nikki Hall, Anne Linley, Irene Woosnam and Hilda Agyeman. Their commitment and enthusiasm each week is what has enabled the group to develop in the way that it has and for demand for places to remain so high.

Each week during term time, we meet in the middle and back halls of the church, where there are a range of toys and activities set up to cover all areas of development. We have quiet areas where children can enjoy a book and areas where children can develop their imagination through role play and small world play. The back hall is our 'loud and messy' area where children can ride bikes and climb, as well as explore craft activities, sand, water and a firm favourite – the rainbow rice! Children also enjoy a drink and snack, sitting down together as the adults enjoy tea and coffee and a chat. We finish each session with a song time and bubbles, which is the most exciting and popular part for many!

Our sessions are booked online on a weekly basis by our families and we often have a waiting list as sessions sell out so far in advance. Our aim is for no family to have left a session without having a chat with one of team and as a result of this we have been able to develop relationships with many of the families and have been able to offer prayer for some issues they are facing.

Please continue to pray for Trinity Tots, the team and our families. Pray for opportunities to talk to them and for the development of meaningful relationships. As a team we believe this is an important service to be able to offer to the community and know that we can plant seeds which, although we may not see the fruit now, could have a lasting impact.

Debs Harmer

Young People

The Youth Group at Trinity is known as Trinity YP. It aims to provide a comprehensive youth programme, through Friday and Sunday sessions, for teenagers aged 13 to 18 - school years 9 to 13. The teenagers meet weekly on Friday evenings (8pm to 10pm) and Sunday mornings, with an average attendance of 10 and 15 respectively. It was great to welcome new teenagers into the group this year.

The Leadership Team is made up of committed individuals with a sense of fun, an understanding of youth culture, and spiritual insight. It comprises of: Josh Dixon, Lizzie Hall, Matt Harris, Jesse Osei, Jack Sydee, Lorraine

Sansom and Emmanuel Wachira. Alan and Alison Pryor and Andy Banks provide a social space in their homes for the teenagers to meet each half term. At the start of the year, we said goodbye to Afia Owoyale. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Afia for her positive contribution to the Trinity YP.

The Leadership Team works diligently to provide Bible-based teaching, social activities and pastoral support. The Friday session is primarily a youth social. Activities are selected to provide opportunities for the teenagers to deepen their friendship, as well as to enhance their soft skills and life skills. They readily take on 'bake off', engineering and other team building challenges with enthusiasm. They are even learning how to produce their own short videos!

Sundays are Bible-based teaching sessions - engaging, interactive and practical teaching with the purpose of helping each teenager to develop their own faith and commitment to Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. We are consistently asking the question, "What does your faith mean to you and how does this transfer into your everyday life?"

One of the high points of the year was the weekend away in September to West Watch in Sussex. It included a day at Blackland Farm Activity Centre. The theme for the weekend was "The Kingdom of God - God's people, in God's place, under God's rule, and therefore enjoying God's blessing." Our thanks to Andy Banks for leading the sessions, James Martin and Ron Jones for the wonderful worship, and to the Leadership Team who worked hard to make the time away enriching for the all the teenagers. A special thank you must also go to Helen French and Eileen Jones for the wonderful meals they provided, and to Ron Jones for driving the mini bus throughout the weekend. The teenagers, leaders and helpers would agree that the weekend was lovely - a fun, rewarding and spiritually uplifting time away.

Prayer underpins all that we do. So please continue to pray for the teenagers as they grow their faith and try to live it out in the real world – an exciting yet challenging place for them. We thank God for:

- Erin getting baptised in October 2022.
- A successful relaunch of YP Serving on Sunday (YP SoS). The teenagers are now actively involved with the refreshment team, welcoming team and tech/sound team.
- Teenagers attending the baptismal classes led by Andy Banks and a YP Team Leader.

Going forward, please pray for:

- The teenagers and leaders, particularly that more people step forward to be helpers for the Leadership Team.
- A designated Youth Leader to lead and grow the Trinity YP work and the Leadership Team.

Lorraine Sansom

Oasis

Oasis is Trinity's Coffee Morning. We open every Tuesday from 10.30am - 12 pm. Janet and I have a great team who take on different roles: Setting up, baking, serving, washing up and clearing away. The baking team at present are Joy Sanger, Monica Benson, Angela Roach, Alison Pryor, Geraldine Alliston, Claire Altman, Irene Woosnam, Sarah Mills, Kerry O'Sullivan, Steph Harris and Kim McColl. Our servers are Anne Linley, Scilla Stirling, Jill Holland and Pam Mills. Washer uppers are Roy Burman, Bryn Roach, Beryl & Stan Hutson, Kim McColl and Joan Hildick. We have a group who take turns in putting all the boxes and tables away and return the chairs to their rightful place ready for Sunday Morning. They are Paul and Tracy Sydee, Gareth Roach, Jason Vaughan, Andrew Altman, Sarah Mills and Simon Davidson. We want to thank all our helpers for their hard work and commitment.

All the money raised goes to support Bexley Foodbank. In this last year we have donated £1425.50. We can always accommodate more helpers, but also it would be good to see more Trinity folk joining us on a Tuesday morning on a regular or occasional basis.

Elaine Camp and Janet Grist

Student Liaison

Trinity currently has 13 students studying a range of subjects either from home (2 students), different parts of the UK (10 students) and abroad (1 student). For some, this is their first time away from home, for others it is a return to further studies, and for most it is a time of approaching exams and deadlines for work to be completed and handed in. Our role is to establish a link with the students, to keep in contact while they are away and welcome them back in holiday times. This year we have been able to make contact with newer members of the church and make ourselves known to them during their term breaks.

Our greatest prayer is that all the students will find Christian fellowship and friendships as they go through this important part of their lives, and also that they become part of a church and/ or Christian Union so that their faith can develop, grow and blossom!

It was with great delight that we heard of the outreach at Nottingham University (via Charlotte Kemp) and the positive impact the good news of Jesus had on the lives of others. We were glad to be given the opportunity to share our “role” with you in church this year. To help you share in our prayers we have put up a map in church so you can see which student is where, what they are studying and their current year. Please take one of the little cards attached to the board if you would like to pray for a specific student.

How great it is that we have a God who is there for us in all stages of our lives!

‘The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.’ (Psalm 121:8).

Angela and Gareth Roach

Trinity Mission Team

Several of the overseas mission friends we pray for, have experienced change during this year. Dave and Michelle Mahon and their children (BMS World Mission) have moved from the steamy jungle at Iquitos in Peru to the Northern coastal city of Trujillo. From overseeing and mentoring seven small churches, some along the river they have moved to a bible seminary where they will be teaching Peruvian students about cross cultural mission – quite a difference but one they are enjoying. Their children will now be able to attend the international school.

Janet and Peter Dallman (OMF) went back to Tokyo in January 2021 but they moved to a completely different part of that huge city, so as well as a new neighbourhood they needed a new flat, a new church and new local friends. God has blessed them through these many changes. It has been interesting praying for them and seeing God’s plans being fulfilled.

Louise Brady has left OMF this year and now works for London City Mission as Mission Mobilisation Manager. Jeff Hall has also finished work with OMF and we pray for him as he seeks God’s guidance for his future.

During this year we have also begun to pray for Helen and Ilir Dervishi in Kosova. Trinity is now giving some financial support but they have been approached to work for a Dutch organisation called De Brug (The Bridge). This is much more practical ministry, delivering food and hygiene needs to elderly folk in their area. Through this ministry they hope to develop new contacts and opportunities to witness to the people of the town of Bajrarn Curn. They still continue as worship leaders in their present church.

The mission group meet every couple of months to pray for these folk as well as Andrew and Sara Harwood, the Penny's in New Zealand, Dave Camp (when on his travels) and the situation in Ukraine. You would be welcome to join us, contact me for more details.

Beryl Hutson

Outreach and Evangelism

The Church was an evangelistic movement before it was officially a Church. This happened both spontaneously and by Jesus' commission. In John 1, two of John the Baptist's disciples heard him declare Jesus to be *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* and so spent time with Jesus. We read: *"Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus."* (John 1:40-42a). No-one had to tell him to bring Peter to meet Jesus; it just burst out of him because he was so excited to find the long-promised Messiah!

Then at some point (probably a bit later), Jesus formally called both Peter and Andrew to be his disciples with the words: *"Come, follow me ... and I will send you out to fish for people."* (Mark 1:17). Jesus personally commissioned them for the task of evangelism, as he did again in Mark 6:6, and again just before he ascended back into heaven (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18). All God's people are called to share the good news of Jesus. But we don't all always find it easy. That is why we were so delighted to participate in the God Loves You tour last year. At the event in the Excel Arena alone more than 700 people came forward to respond to Franklin Graham's message, many of them children and young people, including some who had travelled on our buses from Trinity. A few from within our midst also had the privilege of helping responders through a decision for Jesus and of praying for these new converts. Franklin was so encouraged by what he saw that he decided to return for two nights to the Excel again this year on 26th and 27th August. This time, BGEA are supplying their own buses to transport people to the venue, and we have been granted one of these for free. In exchange, we are asked to fill it, ideally with half and half Christians and seekers. Please be praying about who you could invite to meet Jesus.

Perhaps of even greater value was the Christian Life and Witness course, which some of us attended and we also hosted. I was so impressed by the course that I sought permission to preach a series of sermons based on it last summer. Central to the methods expounded in the course is the example of Andrew above – the simple message of *"Come, see and hear for yourselves."* I'm delighted that we will again be hosting this course, but this time over two Tuesday evenings (16th and 23rd May), with David Linley delivering the material. By the time you read this it may well have happened, but I hope that many of you will choose to participate.

Since September, we have also begun monthly services at St. Margaret's Residential Home in Sidcup. On the strength of the pastoral relationship that Janet Grist, in particular, had built up with the home whilst visiting one of our members, we were invited in by the management to run the services for the residents and their families. Typically, these services include a few songs (mostly hymns they will know well), some printed liturgy, a reading and very short talk (2-5 minutes), with some intercessory prayers. Afterwards we chat with the residents and guests over tea / coffee and cake. We have a few hecklers from among the residents, but in

general the event is extremely well received by both staff and residents (they particularly loved Jason's puppet at Christmas!), and we have a wonderful time. We are also seeing some softening among some of the as yet non-Christian residents. 7 or 8 of the team attend each month on a rota basis, and we are always open to additional team members with a heart for older people. In particular, we would love to have some more musicians. Please pray for the effectiveness of this ministry.

It was brilliant to be able to run the Alpha Course in person once more. The team were a joy to work with, and our thanks, also, to everyone who cooked meals for us. In total, we had nine guests who stayed for the whole course, of whom: three were members of the YP; and two were not yet Christians. Although we did not necessarily see any conversions as such, we did see spiritual progress in those who attended. Please go on praying for them, and also for who you could invite to our next course, which we hope to run in the Autumn term. We plan to run a two-week taster this term for Trinity people only, which will be an opportunity for anyone unfamiliar with Alpha to experience how it works and for anyone who might be interested in helping with the next course to understand what is involved. Dates to be confirmed.

One further event to tell you about is a planned praise event on Erith Pier that is being organised through Transform Bexley Borough (TBB) for Saturday 15th July, 2-6pm. The event has two primary objectives: to begin to change the spiritual atmosphere in the area through praise; and to directly reach out to non-Christians on the day itself. It is being planned with youth and young adults especially in mind, with worship bands and a choir, and possibly some drama, dance or other features during the four hours. The idea is that people can come and go, rather than stay for the whole time. James Martin is now our liaison person for this event and we are hoping to supply a band and members for the joint-churches choir.

Lastly, the Outreach and Evangelism Committee has met a few times to plan and strategize together for mission. As well as planning the events and initiatives listed above, we are prayerfully reviewing how to make our outward-facing written communication (website, welcome pack, news sheet, etc.) as accessible as possible, and how to make the experience of church on a Sunday morning as welcoming and understandable as possible for newcomers, especially for those for whom church is a new concept. We are also exploring the pathways that we offer that could help someone from initial contact with a Christian or the church through to committed discipleship, so that we can be more intentional in inviting people to take each next step, rather than just assuming it will happen. We believe this strategic thinking will eventually bear much fruit, but at this stage much of it is unseen.

Please pray with us for revival, both within the church as we experience the Holy Spirit's work in our own lives, and through us, reaching those currently outside the church. Pray that God will open a door for our message and that we may proclaim it clearly as we should (Colossians 4:3-4).

Andy Banks

Foodbank

As last year, we are still operating out of the back hall making up the food parcels in advance of the arrival of the clients. The Bexley foodbank phone line for the voucher codes is still operating five days a week, Monday to Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm. Margaret Kemp continues to organise this service with Margaret, David Bingham and myself being responsible for one of the mornings. The voucher code can be used in any of our four foodbanks but it is assigned to one of the centres, at the choice of the client. Since the vast majority of our clients use this system we have a good idea of how many clients and their families will be attending each session.

Anne Linley, Jean Nixon and Paul Bryant have been regular volunteers at Trinity but other members of the church have volunteered their services at particularly busy times such as Harvest and Christmas. At Trinity we still receive the majority of our donations from the baskets placed at the front of the checkouts at the supermarkets Asda and Sainsbury in Bexleyheath, Lidl in Welling, Tesco in Welling and Sidcup. We also receive donations from the churches local to Bexleyheath including Trinity for which we are very grateful. Bexley foodbank has been fortunate to receive grants and money for buying in goods on which we have become increasingly reliant as the calls upon our services have increased.

During this past year we, at Trinity, have fulfilled a total of 1007 vouchers helping 1345 adults and 1192 children. This is a 20% increase over the numbers for last year, but the foodbanks in Bexley saw an increase of 55% in demand over the same period. We processed 34,395kg of goods coming in and distributed 24,782kg.

We were given a second-hand freezer to help with keeping fresh food from one session to the next but it ceased to work after a couple of months. We have been promised another to replace it, hopefully it will arrive soon.

We managed to get funding for a CAB (Citizen's Advice Bureau) counsellor to be present once a week at each of our Bexley foodbanks. She has been proved to be very helpful for many of our clients.

We are grateful to Trinity for the continuing support we receive in food and cash donations as well as the understanding when we cannot move crates of food off the premises as quickly as we would like. As our central storage has just moved from Erith to Crook Log we hope that we will find it easier to move things about.

I would like to express my appreciation for the continued support we receive from Gill Bates, the Bexley foodbank co-ordinator; we would find it difficult to continue without her presence as a team leader and being able to transport goods to and from the central storage.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Martin Sansom

Bexley Winter Night Shelter

In 2016, a collection of churches in the Bexley borough banded together to address homelessness and, thus, Bexley Winter Shelter ('BWS') was born.

Since the pandemic, BWS has been discouraged from operating its original 'dormitory' model and, again, this year we worked with a local B&B establishment whom we paid to provide safe and warm accommodation for up to a dozen guests – male, female and occasionally children. To this end, we were supported with a grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities which assisted in funding accommodation, food and our (paid) Guest Case Worker.

Our immediate aims are to provide warm shelter, nourishment and a friendly face. Once again, Trinity has contributed – both in terms of new volunteers (thank you, Linda Brady!) and making available its kitchen and middle hall to welcome and cook for our guests on Tuesday evenings.

One of the other two venues in 2023 was the new Salvation Army Church Centre in Lion Road. For me, it's been a positive experience collaborating with a Christian organisation that has over 150 years' experience proactively living out the Lord's words in Matthew 25:35-40 amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged – starting in East London.

Last summer I was reminded of three harsh realities of rough sleeping:

- (1) it is often accompanied by poor mental health and / or addiction,
- (2) It's not just the homeless who are affected by homelessness and its causes and
- (3) A warm bed, sufficient food, compassion and encouragement will not always be enough to turn these lives around. I paid my respects at the funeral of a male former guest whom we had supported in successive years and, although the average life expectancy of a male rough sleeper is a shocking 42 years, he was only 35 when he passed and seeing his grief-stricken young son made a lasting impression on me.

It is encouraging though to know that the steadfast support we receive from Trinity is mirrored by others in our community. Debra and I shook buckets for BWS in Sainsburys and, on another weekend, I publicised this volunteering opportunity at the Bexley Voluntary Service Council Volunteers' Fair. Both times, an appetite to know more about and support for our aims were evident although, in some cases, only after we had assured people we are not a division of the Bexley local authority!

We were also stunned by unexpected and significant financial donations to help build momentum in the direction of our stated ambition (see below). Please continue to keep BWS in your prayers and, particularly, as we look to:

1. Recruit two suitable members of staff to start work soon and sufficient volunteers for January
2. Identify and rent or purchase a permanent static venue for BWS

Finally, I'm occasionally asked "what should I do if I find someone sleeping rough" and my first response is: 'notify Streetlink'. We receive referrals from them during the winter but they operate all year round and will investigate sightings with a view to offering support. Their app can be downloaded for all smartphones and makes it very easy to raise your concerns. In the meantime, do let me know if you have questions about the work of BWS or the opportunity to volunteer.

Sean Knights

Prayer

During the last year, we have seen changes in the way we pray together. It has been a story of Zoom encounters and face to face learning about our Multi Cultural family and fellowship. We have been spoilt with tasty treats from all over the world! And we have learnt some interesting facts, as well as being led to pray for pressing needs from each other's heritage. It has been a privilege to pray for these countries. I will always be amazed at God's faithfulness and goodness in the way he answers prayer. It is evident that God is building our church as we watch and pray, even with all the crises we have felt and seen in our world, nation, and local community. There are many countries at war, violent uprisings and political unrest across the world, but all through these times, God has been a very present help in trouble. Jesus encourages us to leave our anxieties and burdens with him, not because we want to offload them, but because he loves us and cares for us. Our response to pray and trust him with them means that we have access to a peace which cannot be found in the world, but only through him. Let us trust him?

Prayer Opportunities

SUNDAYS: Prayers before the service at 9.30am in the lounge upstairs.

WEDNESDAYS: (see the details on the news sheet): Either Gathered or Zoom Prayers every 2 weeks. Just as the Bible in one year is blessing us, so are these sessions of Prayer each month. Join us?

PRAYER MINISTRY TEAM: The team supports those who need personal prayers. We are available to pray with anyone at the end of Sunday services please sit in a seat at the front to indicate this. We will also pray for needs that are emailed to us during the week, which is particularly useful for needs that might be too personal to want to share with the whole prayer chain. We'd always appreciate new members of the Prayer Ministry Team; please talk to Caz or Scilla if you are interested.

PRAYER CHAIN: The Prayer Chain continues to be used and is a blessing and a privilege. Scilla has recently started an occasional 'Coffee Break Prayer'; which is an optional request to pray for wider world issues. If there is a need for a small team to pray for a sensitive or personal issue, please contact a member of the prayer team. If you are not on the prayer chain list and would like to be, please email me (priscillastirling@yahoo.co.uk) and I will add your name. Requests are emailed to everyone and in order to comply with data protection I ask that after we have prayed, we delete the emails as they obviously contain personal information.

Caz Kirby-Smith and Scilla Stirling

Small Groups

Small Groups, or House Groups as they are often known, form an essential part of any healthy, thriving church fellowship. They provide a safe place for friendships to be formed and deepened and for pastoral care at grass roots level. A group will typically have around 10 - 12 members and joining is open to anyone who attends Trinity regularly.

Group numbers dwindled following lockdown and while Trinity was getting back on its feet. Thankfully, we are now back up to speed and, having successfully launched three new groups in early 2023, we currently have five Small Groups meeting on different days and times, including one via Zoom. They all follow a similar pattern, allowing time for fellowship, bible study and prayer.

Details are below and availability of spaces is indicated:

Tuesday evenings. 7.30 - 9.00 pm. Fortnightly in Sidcup. Currently full.
Host: Linda Brady; Leaders: Eileen and Ron Jones.

Thursday afternoons. 2.00 - 3.30 pm. 2nd and 4th week in each month at Trinity. Limited space.
Hosts and Leaders: Caz Kirby-Smith and Jill Holland.

Thursday evenings. 7.30 - 9.00 pm. Weekly in Welling. Currently full.
Hosts and Leaders: Jayne and Steve Furber.

Thursday evenings. 8.00 - 9.30 pm. Weekly in school term time in Belvedere. 2 or 3 spaces.
Hosts and Leaders: Steph and Matt Harris.

Thursday evenings. 8.00 - 9.30 pm. Weekly via Zoom. Spaces available (!)
Hosts and Leaders: Pat and George Garrett

If you would like to join a group, please contact the hosts directly or speak to Jill Holland. If you would prefer a different day or would be willing to lead a new group in the future please also speak to Jill; we will be pleased to start further groups if enough interest is shown.

Jill Holland

Worship

Through the words projected, the sound produced, or the playing of instruments, the worship team helps the congregation to worship. Our hope is that it will help us engage our hearts in worship, across all generations and races. This year we developed our technology set up, with new software for words and new equipment, set up by Leo Beaumont. We reintroduced our choir for the carol service; thank you to Liz Bryant for all the hard work of previous years. We have also begun displaying some visual aids around the chapel that we made in our all-age services. My hopes for this year are that the worship team will grow closer, and share unique ideas that enrich our worship times.

One new direction I hope we will take is giving more time for reflection. This came from a conversation with another worship leader. Through these times of reflection, I hope we will begin to apply what we have heard and that this would impact our whole week and transform our hearts by the work of the Holy Spirit among us.

I also hope that our worship times would reflect our multicultural congregation. The recent cultural prayer meetings have highlighted the diversity of our church and I feel it's important that our Sundays do too. I hope that we can learn from each other's ways and sounds of worship, and grow in unity together.

Thank you to those who have joined the team this year. They include Phil Haworth, who has come back to the sound desk. Joseph Bakundukize (Sound technician) and Annabelle Bamisaye (word projectionist) have joined as a part of YP's SOS. David Isaac has begun leading worship, and Rosemary Isaac has begun singing with the band too. Thank you to Femi Owoyale for his service to the livestream team, and we wish him and his family all the best in the future.

We need livestream technicians and sound technicians in the coming year. If you feel like you have fairly good computer skills or would like to learn how to operate the sound desk then please get in touch.

Thank you to everyone who has served on the worship team this year, and made the continual sacrifices involved. I am very glad to have all of your support. Also, thank you to all who have given encouragement to the worship team and worship leaders.

James Martin

Women's Ministry

It was great to be able to host another Advent for Women in December 2022, our first in-person event since the pandemic. We welcomed over 80 ladies, from churches across the borough and beyond, to Trinity for worship, teaching, prayer, laughter, cakes and craft. Our speaker was Liz Thatcher and she shared a very honest and moving message reminding us that, in all the familiarity of Christmas, it is important that we never lose the wonder of that first Christmas. It was great to be back and we hope many were blessed and encouraged by the time spent together. I would like to thank all those involved in making the event a success – we couldn't have done it without you!

Looking ahead to 2023 we will be hosting a full day women's conference on 14th October entitled "Be still and know that I am God". We have another great speaker lined up in Tracey Campbell who ministers at Emmanuel Community Church International in North London. I first heard Tracey speak at a Premier women's conference and she is a passionate and inspiring teacher with a heart for worship, discipleship and helping all people young and old. The conference will also include worship, prayer, creative spaces, seminars, stalls and much more, so

save the date in your diary. We would appreciate your prayers for organising the event and please let me know if you would like to be part of the team.

Meeting together as women of God to share, encourage, laugh, cry, learn and grow is very special and I feel very privileged to be part of this ministry at Trinity. I have been reminded recently of what God says of you and me, that you are:

Beautiful - Psalm 139:14
Chosen - 1 Peter 2:9
Made for a purpose - Ephesians 2:10
A precious child of God - John 1:11
Loved forever - Jeremiah 31:3

May you be blessed and know His love in your heart.

Helen French and Louise Brady

Finance

We are grateful to God for all that we have and get financially and continue to trust and look to him to provide for our needs as a church. Praise the Lord indeed we have exceeded our budgeted income by about £12k (£162k vs £150k). This will be seen with a greater degree of accuracy once the financial insert is available.

We are unique and blessed by Jesus as a body in his name and like any family, the church needs money to do its job as God wills it and take care of its members. We are very grateful to all who give generously and will have to continue to do so to enable all to carry out his mighty and glorious work in and through us. We know that the money coming into our church is given by all of us faithful people who long to serve God, build his kingdom, and who believe in our church's mission. With that in mind we understand that we have a great responsibility to be as wise with how that money is being distributed and spent.

We have stepped out in faith to set a budgeted income from Gifts and offerings of £165K, in order to fund the ministries that God has given us to perform and to meet our legal and organizational obligations as a charity with properties to steward. This is a stretching target, especially given the resignation of a few members and the extent of the rising energy costs. However, we are confident that God will provide all our needs and give us what he knows we need to continue his mighty work here on earth for his Glory and Honour.

A few ideas we hope to implement and have already implemented are listed below.

- Card machine for those who wish to donate other than bank transfer with gift aid has been installed.
- Fellowship offering as requested by members has been reinstated.
- Cash collection – We still need minimum 4 volunteers (church members) to make this happen – to date we have 2 volunteers.

Gift-Aid

Many of us do this already. But if you don't and you pay tax, please do speak to me. Any gifts received under the Gift-Aid system allow us to claim an additional 25% of the gift from HMRC, at no extra cost to the giver. I am happy to say that at least 90% of our income is gift aided.

Our sincere thanks go to those who are involved with the responsibility and hard work of maintaining and producing the finances of the church.

- Isaac Osei-Kwame – Payroll – who has diligently worked on this role ensuring all our obligations with staff costs are met.
- Daniel Kwalombota – Examiner of accounts.
- Ron Jones – Banking / Bank issues – Great help with operating the Coop Bank and all its intricacies and help with the banking of Cheques / Cash etc.
- Lou Brady – Banking – Off to Pastures new with London City Mission.
- Isaac Amoateng – Statutory Accounts – who has stepped into this role and is working with me to achieve the production of the statutory accounts.
- To the Deaconate and Pastor for their help with managing the finance in an often-tricky period.

Yohan Keerthiratna

Trinity Baptist Church, Bexleyheath Financial Year to 31 March, 2023	GENERAL FUND BUDGET				
Mar-23					
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	%	£	%
CATEGORIES	22/23	YTD	Rec'd/ Paid	Var to Bgt 22/23	Var to Bgt 22/23
SUMMARY					
INCOME	222,032	223,755	101%	1,723	1%
EXPENDITURE					
Ministry & Evangelism	91,915	80,091	87%	11,824	13%
Giving & Support	44,396	44,395	100%	1	0%
Operating Expenses	52,944	63,776	120%	(10,832)	-20%
Balance Sheet Items	32,776	36,436	111%	(3,660)	-11%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	222,031	224,699	101%	(2,667)	-1%
PROFIT / (LOSS)	0	(944)		(944)	
INCOME ANALYSIS					
Gifts and offertories	165,000	164,922	100%	(78)	0%
Tax Recoverable	36,713	35,432	97%	(1,280)	-3%
Rental Income - Manse	17,809	20,171	113%	2,362	13%
Rental Income - BCU	2,500	2,500	100%	(0)	0%
Rental Income - Bexley Winter Shelter	0	690	0%	690	0%
Other Income (deposit interest)	10	40	398%	30	74.89%
	222,032	223,755	101%	1,723	1%
EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS					
Pastor & Expenses	37,496	36,970	99%	526	1%
Evangelism & Special Events	2,000	1,514	76%	486	24%
God Zone & YP	2,500	1,550	62%	950	38%
Pastoral Assistant	12,088	10,139	84%	1,949	16%
Deficit Recovery Contributions	9,350	2,556	27%	6,794	73%
Pulpit & Guest Speakers	300	315	105%	(15)	-5%
Children's Worker	10,229	10,098	99%	131	1%
Administration	17,952	16,950	94%	1,002	6%
Ministry & Evangelism - subtotal :	91,915	80,091	87%	11,824	13%
Appeal Response Fund	7,400	7,400	100%	0	0%
AZAR	1,168	1,165	100%	3	0%
Baptist Missionary Society	3,188	3,191	100%	(4)	0%
CRIBS	7,272	7,272	100%	0	0%
LBA - Home Mission Fund	2,709	2,711	100%	(2)	0%
Operation Mobilisation - Andrew Harwood	10,863	10,861	100%	2	0%
Overseas Missionary Fellowship - J & P Dall	11,796	11,796	100%	1	0%
Giving & Support - subtotal :	44,396	44,395	100%	1	0%
2nd Manse (75a) rates & utilities	4,000	5,054	126%	(1,054)	-26%
Building maintenance & repairs	10,917	18,889	173%	(7,972)	-73%
Catering	1,500	344	23%	1,156	77%
Chapel cleaning & upkeep	9,163	9,901	108%	(738)	-8%
Chapel rates & utilities	10,500	13,552	129%	(3,052)	-29%
Eqpt maintenance & repairs (and small item	3,000	3,523	117%	(523)	-17%
Governance	525	375	71%	150	29%
Insurance	5,000	5,174	103%	(174)	-3%
Manse rates & utilities	390	316	81%	73	19%
Stationery & Postage	1,000	104	10%	896	90%
Subscriptions & Licences	4,200	4,023	96%	177	4%
Sundries	500	430	86%	70	14%
Training	250	245	98%	5	2%
Web-site	2,000	1,846	92%	154	8%
	52,944	63,776	120%	(10,832)	-20%
New Equipment	2,500	2,108	84%	392	16%
Loan And Interest Repayments	30,276	34,328	113%	(4,052)	-13%
	32,776	36,436	111%	(3,660)	-11%