

# Wye Connect



The joint magazine of Trinity & Cores End  
United Reformed Churches



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Sunday worship

**January 2022**

## ***Pastoral letter***

Dear friends,

Many of us will be glad to see the back of 2021 – a year when the Covid19 pandemic continued to impact on so many lives directly and indirectly and where governments, industry, organisations, agencies and media often failed to act decisively on the big issues of inequality, racism, corruption, injustice and climate change. We enter 2022 recognising that the pandemic is far from over and there is so much to be done in the work of God's kingdom of justice, peace and compassion.

As the United Reformed Church enters its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year the denomination is also recognising that it is facing huge challenges to its life and work. You can read more of this on page where we have a report of the URC Church Life Review Group.

We know some of these challenges in the life of both our churches. Generous giving over the years mean that the finances are in a fairly good state and people bring many talents to our church life, but we also know the difficulty of finding enough people to fulfil the work we want to do. We know that our mission and evangelism has been limited in its impact and our work with young people is on a small scale.

It's interesting that the URC Church Life Review Group notes 'We don't believe that the United Reformed Church as a whole can or should develop some kind of 'mission strategy'. The forms of worship, witness, evangelism and service that are called for in any one context can only be successfully determined in that context. We believe we are better to concentrate on how the wider church best resources those front-lines of mission, rather than attempt to pre-determine what local churches should be doing.'

How do we see our 'front-line of mission'? It is clear that there will be areas of overlap and commonality between our two churches, but also major differences. The town of High Wycombe is a large and complex urban area, with a huge variety of population and many social and spiritual needs. Trinity is looking to its own vision for the future – and a small group is being formed to do this (to be chaired by Alan Yates). Part of our vision is likely to be how where we might be able to partner with other churches and groups in the town to better serve the vulnerable and share good news with all. The use of our buildings are part of that vision but only part. The groups using the building have been slow to return and part of our vision must address what part they will play in our future work.

For Cores End, the church is linked in many ways to the three growing villages of Bourne End, Wooburn and Flackwell and part of its future work will be in partnership with the other churches in that area. The church grounds played a significant part during lockdown and those times when the church building was closed and the use of them for the Meadow Eco Project and now as part of the Quiet Garden movement give opportunities to reach out to those who might not consider coming inside a church building. Hopefully connections with all ages can be built in the year ahead.

We know that 2022 will have its uncertainties and its dark times. The good news is not a magic wand that removes all our difficulties, but rather the knowledge that God is in our midst, has entered the messiness of our world in the life of Jesus, loves the world to the very depths and pours out that Spirit of love, joy and peace into our lives again and again. Happy New Year!



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Contact: - [minister.trinity.coresend@gmail.com](mailto:minister.trinity.coresend@gmail.com)



01628 525076

The minister's day off is Friday every week. Please contact your elder if there is a particular need to seek assistance on a Friday.

The next edition will be published on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January. Contributions by Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> please.

[editor@trinity-urc.org.uk](mailto:editor@trinity-urc.org.uk)

## **Worship in January**

**Every Sunday at 10.30 am at both churches**

Our thanks to all who led worship during December and especially those who read at our Carol Services on 19 December.

Covid19 cases in our area and in the UK as a whole remain high, with the spread of the Omicron variant causing new concerns. As church communities we continue to proceed cautiously and slowly, to ensure risks are minimised and the vulnerable are kept safe. **Please continue to take care when at church** (social distancing, wearing masks as appropriate etc) and of course do not attend if you have any Covid symptoms (or test positive).

You can read the latest URC advice on the Covid situation at [Covid Plan B: Synod Moderators' updated guidance - United Reformed Church](#)

### **BE AWARE THAT GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS MAY CHANGE – KEEP SAFE**

The law now requires us to wear masks in church unless there is a medical exception. The advice also urges us to wear masks while singing (apart from small groups/choirs leading the singing – with due care). We very much hope that such restrictions will enable us to continue meeting for worship in the weeks ahead. Thank you for your patience, care and prayers.

We are continuing to review precautions regularly at both churches, ready to tighten or loosen them as appropriate. If you have any concerns or questions, don't hesitate to contact the minister or elders.

We are also continuing to stream the service from Trinity every Sunday so that those who are still confined to home can watch the service. Our thanks to the Techie team for enabling this to happen week by week.

### **Worship online and in church**

**10.30 am at Trinity Church and streamed service** – the link is [bit.ly/trinityhw](https://bit.ly/trinityhw)

2 January	Worship with Holy Communion led by Terry Hinks
9 January	Worship led by Bridget Powell
16 January	Worship led by Terry Hinks
23 January	Worship led by Dr Josephine Prior
30 January	Worship led by Peter Green

### **10.30 am at Cores End Church**

2 January	Worship led by David Reynolds
9 January	Worship with Holy Communion led by Terry Hinks
16 January	Worship led by Geoff Cronin
23 January	Worship led by Terry Hinks
30 January	Worship led by Derek Holland

There are materials for children and families at <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/>.

### **ADVENT REFLECTIONS IN HIGH WYCOMBE**

*It was good to share Advent reflections with our friends at the Methodist Church in High Wycombe. Our thanks to Richard Goldstraw, Deacon in the Circuit for arranging this series.*

## Praying Together

### **Prayer Chains**

Both churches operate Prayer Chains so do use these. The first point of contact is:

- David Reynolds or Terry (at Cores End)
- Kate Yates or Terry (at Trinity).

**Trinity Prayers** (Wednesday Mornings, via Zoom) 9.30 am on **5 and 19 January**. More information from Kate Yates, Sue Thorne or Terry Hinks.

**24/7 Prayer for Wycombe** contact Jane Franklin [prayer@ccfh.org.uk](mailto:prayer@ccfh.org.uk) if you would like to go on the mailing list. The latest Prayer Sheet contains many groups to pray for and this focus for January: **Praying for peace** - at the start off the New Year, as we have just celebrated the birth of the Prince of Peace, let's unite in praying for peace in our world.

- Pray as God leads for countries where there is war or conflict
- Pray for the vulnerable: the poor, hungry, homeless
- Pray for all working for peace and reconciliation

*"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end." Isaiah 9:6-7a*

### **WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

Joint Online Reflection, Discussion and Prayers on 24 January (7.30 – 8.30 pm)

hosted by Terry Hinks – for members of Trinity and Cores End URCs and other local Christians

### **Praying for Churches Together in High Wycombe Town Centre**

Please pray for the churches as we move towards the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Churches are:

- Union Baptist Church, Easton Street (and the Hub),
- Trinity United Reformed Church, London Road
- Society of Friends Quaker Meeting House, London Road
- St Augustine's Roman Catholic Church, Amersham Hill
- Wesley Methodist Church, Priory Road
- The Salvation Army, Frogmoor
- All Saints Parish Church, Castle Street
- The Romanian Church (meeting at Union)
- New Testament Church of God (meeting at Union)
- Wesley Holiness Church (meeting at Wesley)
- First Church of our Lord Jesus Christ (meeting at Trinity)

***A Prayer Walk is being arranged for 20 January; more details to come***

### **And Praying for the Wye Churches:**

- Christ Church Flackwell Heath
- The Community Church
- Cores End United Reformed Church
- Flackwell Heath
- St Dunstan's Catholic Church
- St Paul's with St Mary's Wooburn
- St Mark's Bourne End and St Nicholas Hedsor
- Bourne End Friends' Meeting

***The first Community Prayer of 2022 will take place on Wednesday 12th January at 4pm. Contact Terry for more details.***

## Reaching out

### Link to Hope - Shoebox Appeal

Our thanks to Daphne Stopforth for organising our collection at both churches. If you weren't able to make a box this year you can still make a donation to Link to Hope directly. You can find out more about the charity at <https://linktohope.co.uk/>

### Wycombe Refugee Partnership

Trinity sent a Christmas donation of £100 to Wycombe Refugee Partnership and received this message of thanks:

*Dear everyone at Trinity URC,*

*Thank you for donating again to support refugees and asylum seekers in urgent need in High Wycombe.*

*You have continuously ensured refugees and asylum seekers won't feel neglected by our current asylum system and that they are offered the care and compassion that supports them in resettling into their new lives. Thank you for standing with us and those that have come from unimaginable beginnings.*

*As part of our community of supporters, you will receive regular updates as to the activities you have helped fund for refugees and asylum seekers. Alternatively, you can look at what we're up to via this link: <https://www.wycombe-refugees.org/>.*

*Thank you again for welcoming refugees and asylum seekers into society, your kindness goes a long way. Best wishes, Everyone from WRP*

### Compassion UK

Trinity sponsors two children - Mary and Cristian. Donations to support Mary and Cristian and the wider work of *Compassion UK* can be sent to the Trinity Treasurer, Sue Thorne [treasurer@trinity-urc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@trinity-urc.org.uk) 01494 564635.

More information about *Compassion UK* at <https://www.compassionuk.org>

**Trinity Church Meeting:** Church meeting agreed to give £1000 to charity over 2021, with £100 each to Crisis at Christmas, Wycombe Homeless Connection, Wycombe Women's Aid, Wycombe Refugee Partnership, One Can Trust, Torch Trust (sight loss friendly church) and Christian Aid; £50 was also Wycombe Youth for Christ (and £200 to Lighthouse earlier in the year).

**Trinity Carol Service** raised funds for Embrace the Middle East [Embrace the Middle East \(embraceme.org\)](http://embraceme.org)

**Cores End Christmas Carol Service**, cards and the joint Christmas day service raised funds for Christian Aid.

**Cores End Charity Coffee Morning** raised £701 for Commitment for Life (Israel/Palestine projects including P.A.R.C.) and Wycombe Refugee Partnership. Thank you to everyone who helped arrange the event and supported it. Great result for two important causes.

### Acting on the URC's resolutions on the plight of the Palestinian People

General Assembly, Resolution 31 encouraged local churches and members "to contact their constituency MPs to express concerns about the actions of the Israeli government with respect to settlement expansion and house demolitions, and to ask what the UK is doing in response". If you'd like to know more, join a friendly Zoom meeting on 11 January 2022 from 2-3.30pm. For more details, please email the URC Sabeel Kairos Group: [sabeelkairos.urc@gmail.com](mailto:sabeelkairos.urc@gmail.com)

## **Church Correspondence**

The Work of Church Secretary is being shared by elders and minister at present. Church Correspondence should be sent to

**Sue Thorne (Trinity)** [secretary@trinity-urc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@trinity-urc.org.uk)

**Geoff Britt (Cores End)** [berylgeoffbritt@gmail.com](mailto:berylgeoffbritt@gmail.com)



## Christmas & New Year Greetings



### At Trinity we have received greetings from:

Sue Thorne  
 John and Joy Standfield  
 Kay Evans  
 Ian and Lesley Bogart  
 Norma Garden  
 Marian and Martin Drake  
 Pippa (Harry's sister) and John  
*Donations given to Sightsavers and other charities*

The Jackson family  
 David and Rosemary Bailey  
 June and Geoff Cronin  
 Geoff and Beryl Britt  
 Ruth Thompson  
 David and Wendy Langford  
 Jean Ririe  
 Peter and Marie Willingham  
 Ali, Stuart and Jacob Wheeler  
 Sylvia and John Marsh  
 Ann Wilkinson  
 Debbie, Jorja and Evie Townsend  
*Donations given to Christian Aid*

### And at Cores End from

Lesley Husselbee

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### Greetings to all at both churches have been received from

Terry and Elizabeth Hinks  
 George Watt, Synod Moderator

### And a whole variety of organisations including

Suzanne from Torch Trust (Sight Loss Friendly Churches)- *on behalf of everyone at Torch, may I wish you a happy and blessed Christmas.*

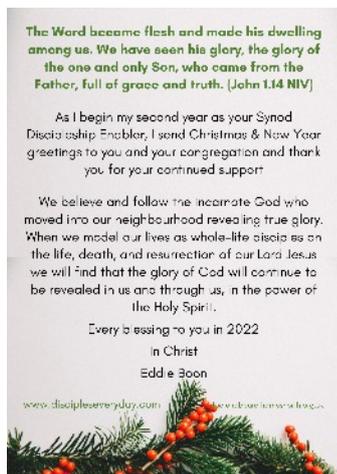
The Bible Society

A Rocha (Christian Conservation Group)

Eddie Boon, Discipleship  
 Enabler,

the URC Chiltern Group

One Can Food Bank Trust



## **Cores End Toy Service** Supporting Boost - Connection Support

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the Toy Service at Cores End in December. We collected almost 100 toys and gifts for children and families who are currently being supported by Boost - Connection Support (an Early Help service in Buckinghamshire).

We were also able to give four £25 Tesco Vouchers to help some families with Christmas food shopping. Thank you so much for your gifts and please do continue to pray for these families and the work of Boost - Connection Support. [see message from Boost below]



*Dear Debbie and Cores End Church Congregation*

*Thank you so much for organising the toy collection and for your continuous support to all the families we are helping at Boost.*

*A special thank you to the congregation for their generosity.*

*We have now sorted and delivered all the presents to the families. They were so delighted and absolutely amazed, they thank you from the bottom of their heart and wish you all happy Christmas and New Year 2022.*

*From the Team at Boost Connection Support*

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## **Safeguarding snippets**

### **Safer recruitment**

To work with best practice and to treat people fairly and equally, those taking on a new role in church will be asked to participate in the “safer recruitment” good practice in the URC’s safeguarding policy. This involves us:

- asking applicants to complete an application form
- providing workers with job or role descriptions and person specifications
- completion of self-declaration forms
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for eligible roles and positions
- taking up two references (not from family members)
- interviewing candidates
- providing workers/volunteers with written contracts/agreements.

This is very similar to what happens in the workplace today but may seem a bit “overkill” in a church context. Depending on the role it will vary as to who needs to be involved as well or instead of the Safeguarding Coordinator. We will make the process as painless as possible!

### **Safer election of Elders**

At Assembly Executive (the new name for what was Mission Council) in November 2021, it was agreed that it would also be wise to have a process for the safer election of Elders. Obviously the “safer recruitment” process is not appropriate because of how Elders are called, ordained and inducted into this vital and unique role. Further information will come from the Church House on this in due course.

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## **Thank you for your Generous Giving**

Thank you for your generous support of the churches’ work, through your regular giving and donations. If you would like to give to the church by Standing Order, bank transfer or cheque please contact the treasurers for more details:

David Bailey (Cores End) - [dandrbailey@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dandrbailey@tiscali.co.uk) 01628 520848  
Sue Thorne (Trinity) - [treasurer@trinity-urc.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@trinity-urc.org.uk) 01494 564635



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Having got past Christmas, you might be wondering when the next **Bank holidays** are! (England & Wales):

3 January Monday New Year’s Day (substitute day)  
15 April Friday Good Friday  
18 April Monday Easter Monday

## Trinity Church update

### **Church Vision**

As part of the discussions on the future of our church we are going back to basics and looking at our underlying vision (and then how people and buildings fit in with that). The small group is to be chaired by Alan Yates and if you would like to contribute in any way to the group's thinking do contact Alan

### **New Tenants in 75 Cressex Road**

A local family moved into our Cressex Road house, having urgently needed to find accommodation. They are so grateful and of course this helps them and us. Thanks to everyone who has been involved, especially Julia whose quick-thinking got this moving, Simon who has been sorting some practical things, Kate Yates for her work on setting up the agreement and Muna Levan-Harris at the URC Thames North Trust for getting the tenancy in place. It very much felt like an answer to prayer.

**The mental health support group** – a new group run by Marian Drake on behalf of Trinity – was able to meet together for its Christmas party. It is also looking to restart the Pilates class that followed the group's fortnightly meeting. To find out more about the group and its work please speak to Marian. Please keep this important work in your prayers.

### **Reopening building for groups**

Groups have been slow to return and the present Omicron variant situation is likely to further delay their return. Some groups have been meeting and there are new enquiries too. Thanks to Jeany and Kate for their work in this area of our church's service to the community.

### **Polish Lutheran Church**

The Polish Lutheran Church will not be returning to worship at Trinity, as the congregation has dwindled to very few in number. This congregation has met in our church building for many decades (and Angus has played the organ for them over 30 years too). We hold the fellowship in our prayers.

### **CRCW Update**

As reported to the November church meeting a candidate had expressed interest in our project and a meeting had been arranged to show them around the two churches and area (and introduce them to the work of Wycombe Refugee Partnership). The vacancy committee, comprising Marian Drake, Kate Yates from Trinity and Ali Wheeler from Cores End together with Terry Hinks as minister and Alan Yates as Interim Moderator, met with the candidate at the end of November. They had quite a good view of both churches and. It was a well organised visit, but the committee decided not to move forward with the candidate. It is unlikely that we will be offered another candidate for at least a year; this will give both our churches the opportunity to review the project as part of our vision for the future. Our special thanks to Alan for his work in this and guiding us through the complicated introduction process.

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### **Faith and cultural awareness Training 2022**

Churches Together in High Wycombe Town Centre are planning Faith and Cultural Awareness Training, to be led by Peter Tate – a Faiths & Cultures Trainer. The simple training session to deepen our awareness of other faiths and cultures (given online and followed by visits to other faith places of worship). It is hoped that this can be held in February: more details to come.

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If you have been collecting used postage stamps and don't know what to do with them, you can take them to any Oxfam shop. (Other charities are available!)

Stamps should be trimmed to a quarter inch (4mm) all round. Charities sell the stamps on by weight, so excessive trimming will reduce the amount they get.



## **NEW YEAR JOINT ONLINE SOCIAL**



### **QUIZ FOR ALL AGES** **Saturday 8 January** **5 – 6 pm**

**Following the success of last year's Social / Quiz we are holding another this January for all ages, with our two Quizmasters Ian Bogart and Dave Kimber. We hope that lots of you will be able to be involved.** Do encourage friends and family to join in. **We'll send out the Zoom link** nearer the time by e mail (for more information contact Terry Hinks).

#### **The Timetable:**

- 4.45 pm Arrivals (Zoom room open so come early for a chat!)
- 5.00 pm A Prompt Start! Welcome!
- 5.10 pm First Quiz by Ian Bogart from Trinity
- 5.30 pm Break – a few fillers (cracker jokes?!) and refills
- 5.40 pm Second Quiz by Dave Kimber
- 6.00 pm Closing remarks by Terry Hinks and all depart
- 6.15 pm Zoom Room closes.

### **People News from the Churches**

**Christmas and New Year Greetings** to Trinity Church have been received from many friends including Pippa (Harry Bates' sister).

Christmas good wishes have also been received by Cores End Church and cards have been displayed at the back of church. They include a card from the Jackson family who also thank the church for maintaining the graveyard so well.

#### **Prayers for our church families**

We continue to pray for all those who are unwell or in difficulty at this time.

At Trinity we continue pray in particular for Iris Hook and Marianne Hillson (in care homes), John Aspinell, Aurelia Awuku, Michelle Butler, Dawn Cornwall, John Hillson, Andrew Lewis, Olive Shepherd, John and Joy Standfield, Pauline Starck and Rosemary Taylor.

At Cores End Church we pray for Jessica Brown, Trevor Henry, Chrystal Wright and Betty Toovey (in care homes), David Langford, Sylvia Marsh, Jean Ririe, Betty Stephenson and Rena Utterson. Shirley Moran has now moved north to be closer to family

**Happy Birthday** to everyone with a birthday this month – in both churches.

**Our sympathy to the family of Cynthia Houchin** (a member of Cores End Church) who died on Thursday 9 December in Amersham Hospital having been diagnosed with cancer a few months ago. passed away this morning in hospital. Her funeral is being arranged for at Cores End Church followed by a committal at Chilterns Crematorium. Cynthia's ashes are to be buried in the churchyard. We keep Cynthia's daughter Julia and son Jonathan and all the family in our prayers

**Our sympathy to family of friends of Edna Walker** who died on 7 December, aged 90. Edna had contributed to Trinity Church's life over many years and had a great knowledge of its history. Unfortunately she felt strongly about the loss of pews with the sanctuary redevelopment and would not return to the building after that. Then her memory loss meant she needed greater care at Little Oaks Residential Home. Church members and minister had kept in touch with her, visiting when able. Her funeral service will take place on Wednesday 29 December 2021. We give thanks for her life and her faith and commend her to God's safe keeping.

## DEC Afghanistan Crisis Emergency Appeal



The severe crisis in Afghanistan is pushing 8 million people to the brink of famine. In this freezing winter, vulnerable women, men and children urgently need your help. **Families are struggling to survive.** For many years, I've been working on Christian Aid's response to emergencies, and this is one of the gravest humanitarian crises I have ever seen. My colleague in Afghanistan reports that "We are witnessing suffering like never before". That's why we're joining forces with DEC charities to respond to this disaster. With your help, together we can save lives now. Right now, we're working tirelessly with our longstanding local partners in Afghanistan to be ready to support people of all faiths and none. We're acting fast to bring emergency food, hygiene kits and shelter to vulnerable people, especially women and girls who are most at risk. **But we need your help. If we don't act now, many lives will be lost in this freezing winter.** With sincere thanks, Michael Mosselmans Head of Humanitarian Christian Aid.

Donate at church or online at [DEC Afghanistan Crisis Appeal - Christian Aid](#)

Our Christmas collection for Christian Aid will go towards this and other work by the agency. Donations are welcome during January too.

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### Church Meetings in January

We hope to hold our January Church Meetings in person, but will need to monitor the pandemic situation. The plan at present is to hold:

A short Church Meeting at Cores End Church on Sunday 9 January after morning worship

A Church Meeting at Trinity Church after worship on Sunday 16 January after morning worship

*Confirmation of these arrangements and agendas will be sent out in January*

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As Trinity's AGM approaches (to be held mid-March) it is again time for the various groups to prepare Annual Reports. It is appreciated that many will not have met during the year, or only just re-started, but any report, no matter how small, is important, so that the congregation is aware of what goes on "behind the scenes". Please send reports to me by 6<sup>th</sup> February. (I need to have them before I start on the March magazine.)

*Angus*

## URC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2022



5 October marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of the United Reformed Church, following the approval of a Uniting Declaration by the Assembly of the then Congregational Church in England and Wales and by the General Assembly of the then Presbyterian Church of England. Further unions took place with Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ in 1981 and the Congregational Union of Scotland in April 2000, to make the URC what it is today.

There will be a series of events in 2022 to mark the anniversary, culminating in a Jubilee Service on 1 October. Tickets are now available for this:



Image: Colin/Wikimedia

Free tickets are now available for the United Reformed Church's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving taking place on 1 October 2022, at Methodist Central Hall Westminster, London. The venue is where the Uniting Assembly of the URC took place in 1972. The intergenerational Communion service is free and open to all in the URC. To ensure adequate provision is made, tickets for under 5s, 5-11s, 11-18s, and wheelchair users are available. Find all you need to know and how to book tickets on the URC website [URC 50th anniversary service tickets available - United Reformed Church](#)

### Remembering Peter Pay with thanksgiving

Peter Pay, Moderator of the URC General Assembly, a former Synod Clerk, an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher and member of Salisbury URC died on 18 December. The Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of the URC General Assembly, said: "Peter has been a valued colleague and friend in various capacities over the years. His clear thinking and ability to ask pertinent questions has been a real asset to the life of the United Reformed Church. He brought a serious mind, tempered by a well-developed sense of humour to dealing with difficult issues. He will be much missed within Wessex Synod, the wider URC, and ecumenical partners.



## Update from the URC Church Life Review Group

'The context of the Covid-19 pandemic has heightened that sense that all is not well. One of the difficulties we face, which surrounds all other issues at the moment, is that we do not know how much of what we are experiencing in this precise moment is about the impact of the pandemic, and how much represents a 'new normal' already. Only time will reveal that, but in the meantime we must attend to the issues that we know we face.'

This quote comes from a paper brought to the URC Assembly Executive in November 2021. In it the Church Life Review Group summarises its thinking so far in this way:

The Church Life Review Group believes that faithful response to the gospel call of God requires us to face squarely the many challenges the United Reformed Church faces. These are primarily:

- Questions surrounding our identity and our discipleship.
- The significant decline of people, particularly in terms of volunteers and ministers.
- A significant lack of clarity about the overall financial functioning of the family of the United Reformed Church.
- An oversized General Assembly Committee Structure and a Church House staffing structure that does not neatly align with that Committee Structure.

It proposes two pieces of partnership research work: With the think-tank Theos, to engage in careful qualitative research involving careful listening to a representative sample of local churches to understand their identity, hopes and dreams, the barriers to their realisation, and their understanding of what they need from the wider church. A piece of financial research work with Moore Kingston Smith to analyse the income, expenditure and assets of the family of the United Reformed Church, to fully understand our financial situation, seek potential economies of scale, to enable better support of local congregations and new pieces of mission work in the longer term.

There are four pieces of in-house work the Group intends to pursue:

- To ask the General Secretariat to make a quick, provisional review of our structures to see where immediate rationalisations might be made, pending longer-term work.
- To begin a process to reflect on theology and money, and the underlying biblical and theological principles that shape the way we believe we are called to use our resources as the family of the United Reformed Church.
- To initiate a piece of work that might lead to a clear definition of the minimum requirements for a local church to be able to function as such, along with possible solutions where that minimum cannot be met.
- To pursue, over time, a range of more ad hoc initiatives that might act as accelerants to the flourishing of the whole United Reformed Church.

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Greetings from Lesley Weston (Janet Roake's daughter)

Just a little message to wish all at Trinity a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2022. Once again I would just like to thank you for your support throughout this year, it was very much appreciated. I have done lots of little touches around the house to remember my mum.

Best wishes,

*Lesley, Neil, Ollie & Harry Weston*

# Wycombe Homeless Connection Update

## Winter emergency shelter project



On 1<sup>st</sup> December, we opened our winter emergency accommodation. We have twelve guests who have been given a safe place to stay and are being supported by our frontline and volunteer team with food, clothing, other essentials plus the help and hope they need to stay healthy and find a home for good. These people would otherwise very likely be sleeping rough right now.

Our homeless health worker, Bee, is busy ensuring all our guests have the healthcare they need. She makes sure they are registered with GPs, can get appointments and referrals, and that their prescriptions are ordered and filled. Just this week she has been assisting one guest who needed urgent dental care and helped another with poorly feet to see a chiropodist.

We are also working with our guests to help them find secure, long-term homes. And we will be helping anyone else who is found to be sleeping rough to access our emergency accommodation if they do not qualify for any other support.

None of this is possible without your support and God's grace. Thank you.

**Winter appeal** [www.wyhoc.org.uk/winter-appeal](http://www.wyhoc.org.uk/winter-appeal)

We need your help to make sure that our extra-special emergency accommodation and support and help is provided during the coldest, most dangerous months of the year so people do not have to sleep on the street and that they can be helped to find a home of their own. Any gift will make a difference. Please give generously. Thank you.

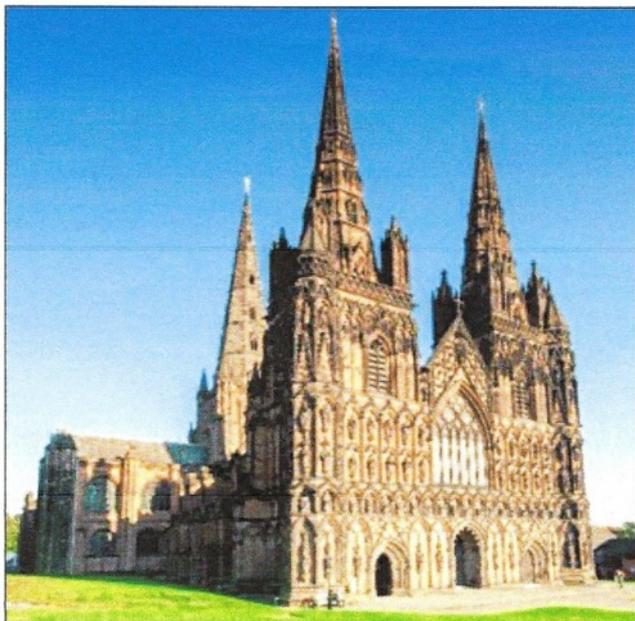
### **Please pray:**

- For the people we serve who are in our emergency accommodation that they feel welcomed and safe.
- For all those in our community who are facing increasing financial hardship and are worried about losing their homes. Please pray that we are able to connect with everyone who needs our help.
- For our staff, volunteers and trustees, especially as together we begin our winter project in unsettled circumstances.
- Please pray that we are able to ensure all our services remain accessible and open for everyone who needs them.
- Give thanks for our volunteers who are delivering food, calling clients to offer support and help, and raising awareness of the services we provide. Give thanks for their wonderful generosity and hospitality.
- Give thanks for all the support our community is showing us at this extraordinarily difficult time and for God's blessings, provision and steadfast love.

### **Contact us**

For more information on anything in this update please contact us at [contact@wyhoc.org.uk](mailto:contact@wyhoc.org.uk), via our website, [www.wyhoc.org.uk/contact](http://www.wyhoc.org.uk/contact) or give us a call on 01494 447699.

Thank you, The Wycombe Homeless Connection Team



**Recruiting choirs and  
individual singers**

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**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18–25 January 2022**

## ***We Saw His Star in the East...***



Original photo of Nablus (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0): Dr. Michael Loadenthal

### ***Introduction to the key text for the week - the story of the Wisemen (Matthew 2.1-12) chosen by the Churches of the Middle East***

The story of the Magi visiting the Holy Family in Bethlehem is one very familiar to us. Indeed, we have recently celebrated Christmas; the Feast of Incarnation and Epiphany. The Magi have sometimes been seen as a symbol of the world's diversity – different religions and cultures – that comes to pay homage to the Christ-child. The story might therefore represent the unity of all created that God desires. The Magi travel from far-off countries, and represent diverse cultures, yet they are driven by the same hunger to see and know the new-born king and are gathered into the little house in Bethlehem in the simple act of giving homage. In this we can find a metaphor for Christian unity: that is, of different Christian peoples drawn together in their common search to recognise Christ, to know him and to worship him and witnessing to wider need for unity and to overcome injustice.

This text has been chosen by the churches of the Middle East, the history of which was, and still is, characterized by conflict and strife, tainted with blood and darkened by injustice and oppression. Since the Palestinian Nakba (the exodus of Palestine's Arab population during the 1948 war) the region has seen a series of bloody wars and revolutions and the rise of Islamic extremism. The story of the Magi also contains many dark elements, most particularly Herod's despotic orders to massacre all the children around Bethlehem who were two years old or under (Matt 2:16-18). The cruelty of these narratives resonates with the long history and difficult present of the Middle East.

It was in the Middle East that the Word of God took root and bore fruit: thirty and sixty and one hundredfold. And it was from this East that the apostles set out to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The Middle East has given thousands of Christian witnesses and thousands of Christian martyrs. And yet now, the very existence of the small Christian community is threatened as many are driven to seek a more secure and prosperous life elsewhere. Like the light which is the child Jesus, the light of Middle Eastern Christianity is increasingly threatened in these difficult times.

Today, more than ever, the Middle East needs a heavenly light to accompany the people. Serving the Gospel today requires a commitment to humankind, especially the poorest, the weakest and those marginalized. The churches need to cooperate to provide relief to the afflicted, to welcome the displaced, to relieve the burdened, and to build a just and honest society. This is a call for churches to work together so that we can all build a good future according to God's heart, a future in which all human beings can experience life, peace, justice, and love.

More information at [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2022 \(ctbi.org.uk\)](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)

## **Council for World Mission – a partnership of Christian Churches in God’s mission**

**Vaccines:** The United Congregational Church of South Africa Executive Committee met 21-23 Sept 2021, is deeply aware of the unprecedented circumstances created by the coronavirus pandemic throughout the Southern African Region. The Church profoundly regrets the untimely deaths of hitherto very healthy people as a result of COVID-19 virus infections.



**Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand celebration:** The Rev Rose Luxford of Oamaru was elected Moderator designate of Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand during its General Assembly held on 30 September. This will make her the fifth female leader of the PCANZ in 120 years, which she says is both daunting, humbling and an honour.

**Malaysia:** Indigenous people in Malaysia were among the most severely affected by the Movement Control Order implemented during the pandemic, as they ran out of food and lost their jobs. Even though local churches raised funds to purchase and distribute food and sanitation items, these were insufficient to cover all the villages.

**Jamaica and Cayman Islands: OBITUARY:** Rev. Dr Norman Francis 63, a minister of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands and a former Partner in Mission to the Congregational Federation (UK) and from 2004 to 2008, passed away at the University Hospital of the West Indies, Jamaica on Sunday 12 September, after a brief illness.

**Tuvalu:** Funafuti, an atoll and the capital of Tuvalu where Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu headquarters is located, has been more vulnerable to the pandemic as it is the main hub where people arriving or departing from Tuvalu make their first landing. Its position near the equator has also made it susceptible to tropical cyclones.

**Pacific Conference of Churches launches climate advocacy campaign:** The Pacific Conference of Churches General Secretary Rev. James Bhagwan, accompanied by PPC staff, unfurled a banner denouncing fossil fuels at sea in Suva, Fiji on 14<sup>th</sup> October. In conjunction with Greenfaith, he was launching a climate change advocacy campaign ahead of COP Scotland.

**Bangladesh (Rajshahi):** Following the end of the COVID-19 lockdown a few months ago, the Christian Mission Hospital operated by the church of Bangladesh has seen more patients and increased their field efforts. Field eye camps are now frequently being organised in selected communities, for example 3,000 children in Tanore Upazila under Rajshahi.

**Myanmar:** When the third wave of the COVID-19 hit Tahan, Kalay Town Myanmar in June 2021. The Presbyterian Church of Myanmar organised a public mask campaign, as many people were exhausted from buying masks and some could not afford it. Volunteers were deployed to several locations to distribute 30,000 adult’s masks and 8,000 children’s masks.

**Ecumenical leaders urge G20 to take urgent climate action:** In a letter to 20 leaders, heads of Christian organisations which represent half a billion Christians in over 100 countries, have called for deep seated transformations towards net-zero economies by the middle of the century within a framework of justice and solidarity. Many of our congregations are already experiencing devastating and intensifying climate impacts.

**Protestant Church in the Netherlands organises national door to door collection:** Tens of thousands of children live in tents, without clean water, sanitation and medicine - or hope – across refugee camps in Greece. Committed to combatting poverty and injustice worldwide, Kerk in Actie, the diaconal program of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands focuses on victims of disasters and conflicts, especially trapped children.

*Rosemary Taylor*

*For any further information go to the website:- [Home - Council for World Mission \(cwmission.org\)](http://cwmission.org)*

### Healing Leaves – Article on Trees from Green Christian



Fruit Trees in foreground – on a Green Christian group visit to Baildon Methodist Church, Bradford

Why is the very welcome planting and preserving of trees becoming so widespread?

- First, it is an action we can all do to reduce global heating: who does not know that trees give off oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide?
- Secondly, the Queen is leading the way. The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy was begun in 2015 and embraces Epping Forest together with forests in Canada and Antigua. The use of the evocative word "Commonwealth" is apt; trees are a vital, long-lived part of our natural common heritage, our commonwealth or, better, our common well-being, the original meaning of 'wealth'.
- Thirdly, for Christians, trees are part of our religious fabric. In the hot dry climate where the Bible was written, trees can frequently be the only green life visible in a dusty landscape. God's word is alive even when the soil around it is arid. From Genesis to Revelation, trees illustrate God's purposes.

Genesis 2:9 reads "The Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food". Humans are often likened to trees: in Psalm 1:3 those who delight in the law of the Lord are "like trees planted by streams of water which yield their fruit in its season and their leaves do not wither." "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life" says Proverbs 11:30. Jesus saw the tree as a symbol of the kingdom of God: "it is like a mustard seed... sowed in the garden. It grew and became a tree and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." In Luke 6:43, Jesus said "No good tree bears bad fruit... For each tree is known by its own fruit... The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good." As has often been remarked, the Bible begins and ends in a garden. In Revelation 22:2 there is a glorious description of the heavenly city in which "on either side of the river is the tree of life... And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

Big trees, like the elephants they so often resemble, evoke awe. Moreover, both can live longer than us. We know that trees can communicate with each other underground and warn of threats. And yet fifty years ago virtually all large elms in our country died – although there is, in the Museum Gardens of York, one flourishing Wych Elm still. Ash trees are dying by the million. Fires are burning forests worldwide. Thus our planting and care of trees are never more needed than now.

Christians are involved in cherishing trees. Here in Bradford, Yorkshire, Baildon Methodist Church has forty fruit trees in its garden, some of which are of unusual old varieties. St Francis said to a tree "Speak to me about God." And it blossomed. Richard Rohr wrote in 2021, "Once we become aware of the generous, creative presence that exists in all things by their very nature, we can honour the indwelling spirit as the inner source of all dignity and worthiness.....The true and essential work of all religion is to help us recognise and recover the divine image in everything."

*John D Anderson. Member of Baildon Methodist Church, Bradford. 23.11.21*

From [Green Christian – Ordinary Christians, extraordinary times](#)

## Cores End Meadow grows a hedge



Volunteers from Cores End United Reformed Church and its community planted another thirty mixed native hedging plants (donated by the Woodland Trust) to add to the forty planted earlier in the year. One more planting in the Spring should complete the hedge around the Meadow area, being developed as a nature area to be enjoyed by church and community.

The Montessori nursery school that meets in the church hall has also planted a wild cherry tree donated to them as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee 2022.



Cores End URC grounds are now registered as a Quiet Garden and listed in the Quiet Garden on-line directory and has its own page on our website at: <https://quietgarden.org/gardens/cores-end-urc-quiet-garden/> The grounds are open to anyone who wants to come and experience a place of peace and reflection, with seats around the grounds also provide points to 'stop and stare.'



# The Quiet Garden Movement

## The Out-of-Lockdown School of Cookery



This soup is economical, as every bit gets used and the ingredients are all cheap. The proportion of ingredients is not critical. The following is simply a guide.

Packet of "cooking bacon" (900g)  
Carrots (500g)  
Lentils (150g)  
1 large onion  
2 litres water  
Chilli to taste (optional)

Boil the bacon in the water for about 20 minutes. (Make sure it is a good rolling boil).

Remove the bacon and set aside.

Put the lentils, with chopped vegetables into the pan and bring back to a rolling boil. Skim off any foam that rises to the top.

Meanwhile, remove the fat from the cooked bacon. (The birds will appreciate it!) Put some (or all) of the bacon back in the pan, depending on how meaty you want it.

Once the lentils are cooked and the soup has cooled a little to make it easier to handle, add a fresh chilli or chilli paste of your choice and then blitz with a blender. Even just a touch of chilli enhances the soup, but it can be left out if you prefer.

Depending where you get the bacon, the pack size will vary. Use the above as a guide.

You can obviously adjust the consistency of the soup by altering the amount of water.

If you don't put all the bacon into the soup, the remainder can be made into a tasty paté blended with cream cheese - so every scrap is used!

Angus



## Lumen Centre Manager

*It is really good to see the Synod has put together a plan to continue work at Lumen Centre following the congregation's decision to cease to meet there. Please keep this appointment process in your prayers. The Synod has advertised the post with 5 January as a deadline for applications. See below:*

Thames North Synod are looking to recruit an innovative and inspiring person to manage and develop the

Lumen Centre as a key resource facility for the synod.

The Lumen Centre is located in Central London (Tavistock Place). The Lumen Centre, is a building that is strategically situated to play a key role in the development of the local community, building bridges with the people and with the church and until recently, was home to a small congregation.

The postholder will have responsibility for developing the vision of the Synod for the use of the building, and will work closely with the Synod Discipleship Enabler, Training Officer and Children and Youth Development Officer to make the most effective use of the building.

*A fixed term contract for 2 years at a salary of circa £37,000 - £40,000 per annum based on experience. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010: Part 1, Schedule 9, there is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check*

For a more detailed description of the position and application form please contact:

Colleen Fraser, URC Thames North Synod, Newton Road, London W2 5LS

T: 020 7799 5000 E: [office@urcthamesnorth.org.uk](mailto:office@urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

W: [www.urcthamesnorth.org.uk](http://www.urcthamesnorth.org.uk)

**Closing date for applications:** 12 noon, 5 January 2022.

# Prayer Page



We have travelled with the wise men to Bethlehem.

Lord, you have guided us. Sometimes we have gone astray as they did but you have always welcomed us back.

Like them we have worshipped you and offered what gifts we are able to.

Lord, thank you for blessing and refreshing us.

They returned to their homes a different way.

Lord, we journey into different futures this new year; bring us safe home to you. *Amen.*

We pray for the church throughout the coming year that it may beam the light of the gospel throughout the world and remain steadfast in the face of persecution. Bless it we pray so that it becomes a blessing to others. In Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Lord of Creation, we are amazed by your wonderful works of winter from the tiny snowflakes and petite snowdrops, icy roads and frozen streams, to storms and high winds which blow down trees and cover the ground with snow. We see a bleak landscape and are tempted to feel desolate although we know that underneath, life is preparing to flourish again for another year. Grant us eyes to see the buds waiting to burst into flower and the faith that this hurting planet can be made whole again if all the nations work together to heal it. *Amen.*

On the hungry and homeless,  
*Lord have mercy.*

On the friendless and forgotten,  
*Lord have mercy.*

On refugees and asylum seekers,  
*Lord have mercy.*

On the bereaved and the mourners,  
*Christ have mercy.*

On doctors and nurses,  
*Christ have mercy.*

On ambulance drivers and paramedics,  
*Christ have mercy.*

On scientists working on Covid19 and vaccines,  
*Lord have mercy.*

On police and firefighters,  
*Lord have mercy.*

On governments throughout the world,  
*Lord have mercy.*



[*Olive Shepherd*]

## Picture Page



Churches Together Christmas Tree (with the minister) at All Saints Tree Festival



Christmas flowers at Cores End



Christmas display at Trinity Church



Beryl Britt and all the Christmas gifts ready to go out to Cores End members and friends

.....  
Please continue to send in your photos to [photos@trinity-urc.org.uk](mailto:photos@trinity-urc.org.uk)

## Some brain teasers for the holidays

9					7	2
		3		5		
1	4		9			
		2	4		3	
8			5	1		9
		6		8	5	
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			3		1	
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				2		1 3
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	7 3		8			4
	9		7			2

## London Underground stations

To complete the story, simply fill in the blanks with the names of tube stations. (No cheating by looking at the Tube map!)

Rules: There may be more than one answer to each missing station but a tube station may only be used once.

During last year's \_\_\_\_\_ Common tennis championships, (not played by the \_\_\_\_\_ rules), Tobermory was knocked unconscious when surprised by an \_\_\_\_\_ ball which hit him on the \_\_\_\_\_. However, with \_\_\_\_\_ to look after him a quick recovery was assured. While unconscious he dreamt of entering a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ through an impressive \_\_\_\_\_. His route was lined by fearsome \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ dogs, but he felt safe whilst his guardian \_\_\_\_\_ was by his side.

When Tobermory had recovered, Orinoco announced his intention of getting married and they all celebrated by going to \_\_\_\_\_. Orinoco liked the clowns best. After a visit to the \_\_\_\_\_ to get some money, it was time to get down to the wedding preparations. Madame Cholet \_\_\_\_\_ for the bride to wear and helped her \_\_\_\_\_ dress's hem up. Tobermory bought a bouquet at \_\_\_\_\_

The wedding took place in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ cathedral. A touch of levity was added to the solemn proceedings when the \_\_\_\_\_ hat fell off and he made a \_\_\_\_\_ of the tongue when he said Tobermory had met his \_\_\_\_\_. The reception, being televised, was held in \_\_\_\_\_ School. The wine served was Australian Shiraz and tasted of \_\_\_\_\_.

Uncle Bulgaria's present, a \_\_\_\_\_ car, was just what they needed to take them, via the \_\_\_\_\_ Gyrotory, on their honeymoon in the Alps. Their beautiful, but very secluded \_\_\_\_\_, was approached after paying a toll, along \_\_\_\_\_ by crossing the river by a colourful \_\_\_\_\_ at the very end of a very \_\_\_\_\_ in the ancient Swiss town.-

When they returned to England after staying in such a small cottage their home, entered through a \_\_\_\_\_ which had a latch too high for Orinoco to reach, seemed more like a \_\_\_\_\_ but they all lived happily ever after.