



Trinity Baptist Church

News Sheet

Sunday 23rd May 2021

Welcome to Trinity!

From 10am Zoom meeting led by David Linley; details in Kerry's email to you.

10.30 am Morning Service. Led by Andrew Evans. Reading: Mark 6:45 - 56

'Jesus Walks On Water.'

 **YouTube** Click here to watch the service streamed live: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8vTabe_7Y0_2Ka7BtCdRUQ

12.15 pm Annual General Meeting via Zoom - joining instructions and agenda was emailed to church members on May 13th.

Maureen Hubbard's Funeral

Maureen Hubbard's funeral will take place on the 28th May at 2pm by invite only. Details of the live-stream of the service are as follows:

Website <https://www.obitus.com/>

Username qibi7891

Password 465257

In-person Services in June

Tickets are now available to book for services in June. You can book through your ChurchSuite login or through the Trinity website diary page. Contact Kerry if you need any help with this or don't have internet access.

For Your Prayers

- Praise God for sustaining Trinity through an incredibly difficult year.
- Pray for God's clear leading in our discussions in the church members' meeting.
- Pray for the guests and leaders of the Alpha course as they explore the topic 'How and why should I pray?' this evening.
- Pray for wisdom for the government as they continue to assess the risks posed by the Indian Covid variant within the context of the effectiveness of the vaccine programme.
- Pray for those who are housebound or increasingly frail.

Trinity Diary

Monday 24th May	1 pm	Foodbank
Friday 28th May	10.30 am	Foodbank
Sunday 30th May	10.30 am	Morning Service

BMS Birthday Scheme

Thank you to all those people who sent me money for the BMS Birthday Scheme. In the past year I have been able to send £1,525 to BMS, helping to care for newborn babies at a hospital in Chad. If you would like to join the scheme just give me a call. Beryl Hutson.

Trinity Baptist Church Staff

Pastor: Revd Andy Banks

020 8301 2890 andy@trinitybexleyheath.org.uk

Pastoral Care Assistant: Janet Grist

020 8308 1446 janet@trinitybexleyheath.org.uk

Administrator: Kerry O'Sullivan

07801 627031 kerry@trinitybexleyheath.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1130034

Pastor's Message

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that *does* bear fruit he *prunes* so that it will be *even more fruitful*. You are already clean [or pruned] because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you *will* bear *much* fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:1-5 (emphasis mine).

If you have read my annual report, you will recognise this passage and that which follows. I make no apology for repeating it here. An AGM gives us the opportunity to reflect upon the year past and look forward to the year to come. I firmly believe we should see this moment as a moment to actively cooperate with God's pruning process, both individually and corporately.

Ronald Dunn in his book, *Don't Just Stand There ... Pray Something*, highlights that branches do not *produce* fruit, they merely *bear* fruit. It is the life contained in the *vine* that produces the fruit, which is why the branch must abide (or remain) in the vine to bear fruit. How do we abide in the vine? Jesus explains (John 15:7) it is by *reading* God's word regularly and *obeying* it. Christians, by definition are already pruned by our acceptance of Jesus' words. But, if we stop reading or stop obeying God's word, we risk becoming unfruitful and useless to the vine.

However, Dunn goes on to say that the vine-tender is never satisfied with a vine that produces *some* fruit. A branch that is alive he will *prune*, not just cutting out the bad, but radically cutting back the good, to make it *more* fruitful. Indeed, eventually a healthy, regularly pruned, branch will be *much* fruit. It is inevitable, so long as the branch remains in the vine.

We have an opportunity, having stopped a number of our activities, to seriously and purposefully ask ourselves the following questions about each one: 1. What is its purpose?

2. Was it fulfilling its purpose as effectively as we would like (i.e. how much fruit was it bearing)?

3. Is it now fulfilling a different but equally important purpose from when it was first established (i.e. are we looking for the wrong kind of fruit from it)?

4. How can it be made more fruitful?

These can be painful questions to ask if we approach them defensively or consider them to be a criticism of the way things have always been done. But if we approach these questions as means of *pruning* what we do, then the result will be even more fruit in what we continue. Let's have the courage to actively participate in God's pruning process, and to identify and pursue new shoots that God is developing within our life together.

My love to you all, and my sincere thanks to all who have enabled us to get through this last year still bearing fruit.

Andy.