

# Looking back over 2021

*Written by Revd Phil Cansdale, and taken from the Annual Accounts*

2021 began in lockdown and uncertainty, and in some ways finished in a not dissimilar place with the arrival of the Omicron variant at Christmas. But during the year we were immensely pleased to have some greater opportunities to gather together, both online and in person. We remain committed to working out our vision of “growing faith, proclaiming hope and living the love of Jesus” in this ongoing season of recovery.

Looking back over the journey of 2021 there are many things that might be said. In particular:

- **A learning journey.** We provided space – on Sundays, midweek, in small groups, one-to-one, prayer labyrinth around the churchyard etc – to reflect on our COVID journey. Based around four key themes of “thankfulness, lamenting, learning and praying” this gave people opportunities to orient themselves and consider their journey of faith during a time of profound upheaval.
- **An online journey.** We continued to learn much about life online, and how ‘being and doing church’ could include a facebook congregation alongside those gathering in the building. Pyjama Church, Sunday gatherings, and the daily six o’clock live provided the core foundations of our hybrid church, as well as opportunities for ZOOM meet-ups or Whatsapp groups. We particularly welcomed the way our work with baptism families and wedding couples was supported by life online, and have continued to meet baptism parents online since the lifting of many of the restrictions.
- **An all-ages journey.** Our work with children and youth remains an essential priority, and we have continued to invest staffing and volunteer resources towards this area of our life together. We said ‘goodbye’ to Judith Clarkson and welcomed Cerys Hughes as the new Children and Families Minister in 2021, and have appreciated in particular the emphasis on work with toddler groups. We also welcome ongoing opportunities to work in local schools, as well as our partnership with Shrewsbury Town Council in youth provision
- **A prayerful journey.** Over 2021 we often found opportunities to ask how people’s faith had grown and deepened during lockdown, and in particular we were encouraged that many talked about a deepening of their prayer life and a strengthening of their spiritual life. Small groups continue to have a crucial part to play in this, as will the establishment of new patterns of praying for each other in our Sunday services at this stage of our COVID recovery.
- **A hospitable journey.** We’ll have occasions elsewhere to celebrate the work of the Trinity Centre and of Café Connect, each in their own ways being an integral part of our vision at Trinity. They have both inevitably felt the impact of COVID, and it may take some more time for each of them to return to the healthy financial ‘footing’ which they were on before 2020. The signs are promising, and we continue to work towards finding new initiatives and vision in these areas of our life together.
- **A supportive journey.** I hope it fair to say that we have been learning about how small acts of service can go a long way, and how Christ-shaped ministry means we are to look out for those who are vulnerable in loving service. The Wellbeing Journey at the beginning of 2021 saw over sixty people think about what practical steps to put into place to keep a sense of wellbeing in an anxious world. We continued to see over a hundred households locally receiving food support, and a network of nearly 500 people from across Trinity Churches being part of a pastoral phone network.
- **A shared journey.** As the year began we were six months into our ‘supportive relationship’ with the neighbouring parish of Holy Trinity Belle Vue Church. This continued throughout the year, and we remain committed to working together to be missionally active and mutually supportive.

At the APCM – and elsewhere – we will have opportunities to outline some of the priorities we are living with and challenges which we are facing. In particular:

- **Lifelong and whole-life discipleship** remains an important theme for us at Trinity, and “everyone, everywhere, everyday and in everything” being equipped to follow Jesus Christ.
- **COVID recovery for the Trinity Centre and Café Connect** remains a priority, and finding a new wind of ‘vision’ to carry us through into a new season of life. We are looking again at some of the aspects of Café Refurbishment, as well as some plans for improving areas of the Trinity Centre.
- **The Glebe Field** project is gaining momentum again, and the working group have made some good progress in conversations with local residents, key stakeholders and the Town / County council. We hope to be able to have wider discussions as the summer approaches.
- **Our stewardship and financial health** in the midst of the many challenges faced locally and nationally, the cost of living “squeeze” and the fact that 2021 has seen another deficit accounts and we are forecasting the same for 2022. You’ll read how we have healthy reserves at the moment, but in the long-term we do need to be making sure that we are encouraging the sort of radical generosity which we see Jesus speaking of and which we need pray is lived out across Trinity.

As always we would want to pay tribute to colleagues on the PCC and staff team for hard work and perseverance over the last twelve months.