

## **Knitting the parish together**

### **Trinity Club**

It takes more than a global pandemic to stop the Trinity Club! Since the first lockdown in March 2020, the Trinity Club has gone online under the name TrinityClub@Home in our effort to continue to provide a welcoming space in which to invite members of the congregation to meet others, have a coffee and chat, hear from a variety of speakers about some of the important issues of the day affecting the Church, the world and our local community. These monthly talks and discussion have included Venetia Howes on the London Livery Companies, Rev. Adrian Leak on whether the Church of England is 'middle-aged', the work of the North Guildford Food Bank, Martin Harris on life as a diplomat in Eastern Europe and Russia, Daphne Jefferies on the art of William Hogarth, and Brian Arbuckle on his career as a veterinary surgeon. Earlier this year (2021), because of the restrictions of third lockdown on the opportunities for friends in the congregation to socialise, we decided to make the online gatherings weekly. These meetings have comprised either general chat sessions, or short presentations by members of the congregation on the theme of *'What I have found helpful during this pandemic'*. These short presentations have revealed the wonderful creativity and resources which exist within our congregation, with fascinating talks on the themes of *'Health: Looking after the body'*, *'Creativity: looking after the mind'*, *'Working with the hands'* and *'Spiritual support'*.

TrinityClub@Home has been a great success and we have seen a doubling of the number of attendees. But more important it is clearly enjoyed by those who attend. It is especially lovely to see some former members of the congregation joining in not only from nearby Winchester but also from Cumbria. Thank you to all those who have contributed to the programme, and no less important those who attend and continue to make it an important part of parish life.

*Brian Roberts and David Uzzell*

### **Kwasa Group**

At the beginning of 2020, plans were underway for a youth visit from Holy Trinity and St. Mary's to Kwasa in the summer. A number of young people met in January for a meal hosted by Tom and Maria Vittoria Pote and a "Kwasa 2020" group of travellers was formed. A planning group met and reserved flights, accommodation and transport. The young travellers attended the first of a planned series of preparation sessions, designed a hoodie and started to fund-raise by making "Cakes for Kwasa". As the COVID-19 crisis developed it became apparent that the viability of the trip was in doubt and sadly the decision was made in May to cancel the visit.

Parishioners and friends have continued their sterling efforts in knitting woolly hats for the Kwasa pre-primary and primary school children. These were intended to be taken there by the Kwasa 2020 group, but will wait until another visit to South Africa is possible.

Like the UK, South Africa went into lockdown in March 2020. Kwasa College was at a significant disadvantage, being unable to offer any kind of e-learning or support. The PCC made an Outward Giving donation of £3,500 and received a further £5,000 donation from an individual and a total donation of £8,500 was sent to Kwasa College in June 2020.

### **Connecting with Zoom**

We give thanks for Zoom as the thread which has helped hold the St Mary's community together over the past year and, indeed, in many ways enhanced the sense of community. The services on zoom have maintained a sense of community (indeed, an enlarged community) and the integration of breakout rooms from early on has encouraged people to talk with a variety of people, not necessarily those they would normally congregate with after a physical service. Recognising that worshippers from other churches have participated on Sundays, we have supplemented this with social zoom gatherings every month or so. Advent and Lent reflections have gone well on Zoom and the discussion has, if anything, been more intentional than over shared tables in the Church, if tougher on the social interaction front.

At the same time, we have to acknowledge that a number of worshippers are unfortunately excluded from online events, but the first Lockdown did prompt a timely systematic review of pastoral care and some of our members have devotedly maintained regular contact with folks unable to participate in online activities.

*Jenny Nockolds*

### **St Mary's Choir**

St Mary's choir sang together as usual until early March, including a joint choir Ash Wednesday service at St Nicholas church. We resumed rehearsals on Zoom from May onwards, meeting once a fortnight to learn new repertoire & enjoy some social time together. In October we met twice in the church, with Covid secure arrangements, to rehearse & then record music to be played during Sunday services. We did this again in December, to record music for Christmas services, and a small number of singers also participated in the hybrid carol service. By the time we met in the church in October, the church was fully open after the building works & the organ finally uncovered from its protective plastic wrap.

*Helen Lee*