

Trinity Cheltenham 2021

Counting all God's Blessings

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

EPHESIANS 1:3



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Counting all God's Blessings

Trinity has been given a vision to see people become committed followers of Jesus who change communities and nations for him. As we reflect back on 2021, there were obvious challenges but also truly wonderful opportunities to live out God's calling, with his provision and the Spirit's leading.

Through 2021, Covid-19 continued to bring distress and loss but also many more outpourings of love and practical care. Disruptions to many aspects of 'normal' Trinity life had to be faced; however, with the Spirit's leading, we were able to innovate and develop online worship and we were given new ways to gather such as Church at the Farm. The urgent need for the new church roof created a big financial target but we saw God's perfect provision and the minor miracle of a building project completed on time and on budget. Faith and Christian community were sorely tested for some but we also welcomed and shared the good news of Jesus Christ with others who felt prompted with a new desire to connect with God.

Everything we were enabled and empowered to do as a church family involved sharing in worship, prayer, time, gifts and finance. In giving God all the glory, I hope we will rightly celebrate the impact we were able to have on individual lives and across communities. A massive thank you to all, on behalf of us all.

In a large and busy church family it is almost impossible to give a complete summary of all the ways in which people serve. God though sees it all! Here are just a few headlines from the leaders of some of our ministries to give a flavour of the challenges and celebrations of 2021, and hopes into 2022.

With love in Christ,

Andrew

ALPHA

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Online Alpha was very worthwhile during Covid. People came, connected and heard the Gospel, but the biggest challenge was building friendships beyond the screen.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Partnering with other churches across Cheltenham. Coming off the back of Carols by Carlight we hosted a Love Cheltenham Online Alpha which was great fun! Even more fun was the chance to do Alpha in person in Autumn 2021 and we joined with St Nick's Bristol and Love Church Bournemouth for our weekend away. Guests came to faith, encountered the Spirit and connected deeply with others. Beautiful!

BIGGEST HOPE

To see more people come to faith in Jesus through a range of courses in 2022.

GLOBAL MISSION

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

There was no worldwide travel; so we were unable to visit or host any overseas Mission Partners.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

The worldwide church continued to share God's hope through WhatsApp, television, the internet and good old face-to-face when possible! Praise the Lord for Zoom! Trinity members were able to continue prayerfully & financially supporting our Global Mission Partners via technology.

BIGGEST HOPE

To work face-to-face with our partners once again and also for Trinity members who have a call to mission abroad to take their next step. Emma Holland will be one of those in August 2022.

KIDS

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Responding and adapting to the consistent and changing covid requirements so as to provide safe arrangements for Trinity Kids, and maintaining connections with families.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Establishing a greater all age/intergenerational component to our Sunday celebrations. Firstly with "The Four" running in Trinity House, then going online from the church building and now fortnightly for in-person gatherings.

BIGGEST HOPE

For the children to thrive with each other and with God in the context of intergenerational practice.

PRODUCTION

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Creating and developing a way of providing an online live stream alongside the in-person gatherings in Church. Finding the easiest way for team volunteers to control all aspects of the equipment and journeying with them as they learnt a new way of doing things.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

To have secured a permanent space on the top floor of Trinity House for our purpose-built live stream sound studio which is used every week and will be a fantastic resource for audio recording and songwriting development for the worship team.

BIGGEST HOPE

That we can continue to develop the ways that Production can help our congregation to engage with what Jesus is doing with minimal distractions. We also want to continue raising up new leaders/volunteers within the team to grow and develop their gifts as well as grow in relationship with one another.

STUDENTS

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Alongside mental health and pastoral care needs increasing through the pandemic, students struggled practically in many ways, including where to live and what was expected of them on their courses.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

From September 2021, meeting monthly with St Paul's students at School House Cafe has enabled the equipping of students more effectively for life as a follower of Jesus on campus. Particularly excited by seeing students who are exploring faith coming along regularly on Sundays as well as midweek.

BIGGEST HOPE

To grow the community through life groups, enabling them to encourage and equip each other to be rooted in Jesus, so no matter what circumstances come, they are walking with Him, unshaken.

NEW WINE DISCIPLESHIP YEAR/FORM

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Balancing shielding and different restrictions for different locations meant that teaching, serving and national New Wine weekend gatherings were heavily impacted.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Being able to gather together again in the same room for teaching was a big moment of celebration for us!

BIGGEST HOPE

As we explore and dream about what a new tailor-made programme could look like for Trinity (known as FORM), we hope to increase the number of opportunities for people to access the teaching and mentoring that has been central to previous internships at Trinity. This is all to particularly encourage those aged 18-23 to know and trust God more and to continue to walk with Him to become more of who they were created to be.

OPERATIONS - SUNDAYS & EVENTS

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Looking at what hospitality (particularly hosting) looks like in times of pandemic. Also, how to care for our ageing premises.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Church at the Farm! There was so much energy from the day of conception to the packing up of the chairs afterwards! We also saw people from the church family step up with our various building projects, sharing their wisdom, expertise and their heart for the many premises that God made us stewards for.

BIGGEST HOPE

For a new generation of 'host team' brothers and sisters and a re-alignment of our premises (buildings) use, based on God's vision for our church family in the future and in line with Trinity's heart for a 'greener'/eco-friendly building and land management.

OPERATIONS - SAFEGUARDING TEAM

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The design and initial implementation of the Volunteer Registration System which will enable us to better manage our 270 volunteers. In particular, this new system will enable us to comply with the Church of England Safer Recruitment Policy for all volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Getting the volunteer registration system underway coupled with an improvement in delivering safeguarding training due to the new online safeguarding courses. Equipping the volunteer with all the skills they need is essential and this improved training, together with rapid DBS checks due to the online application form and ID checks, means that volunteers can take up their roles quickly.

BIGGEST HOPE

To continue to raise the awareness of safeguarding, not just for those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, but with the whole church family so that safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility.

PASTORAL CARE

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Having a clear sense of where the pastoral priorities lay during COVID and how to reach people effectively when in-person connections are limited.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Each time someone felt blessed, seen, heard and encouraged by someone else in the family reaching out.

BIGGEST HOPE

Discernment of a renewed vision for pastoral care, and the team to move things forward under Sue McLean's leadership.

LIFE GROUPS

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Facing obvious challenges of trying to maintain connection and mutual encouragement alongside pandemic fatigue.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Any moment where a Life Group Leader said of any Zoom meeting "We had a good time"!

BIGGEST HOPE

For places of rich belonging and growth... (re)connecting & going deeper.

MEN

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Reconnecting with men post COVID-19 and working out what the new normal looks like for us.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Being able to run a Dads' and Kids' overnighter with games, sharing and gathering around the fire.

BIGGEST HOPE

As we reconnect and process all that has happened over the last couple of years, we can increasingly look outward to reach other men with the good news of Jesus Christ.

TRANSFORM - KINGS TABLE AND STREET TEAMS

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Our biggest challenge was seeing our guests seem to break the cycle of addiction (finding new homes, living life hope-filled), only to lose it all in an instant, ending up back on the streets after taking some addictive substances again. Also, dealing with the loss of members of the King's Table community who have tragically died far too soon, due to drugs and mental health issues.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Our biggest celebration was guests who came to faith in Jesus and grew in their faith. Sometimes quickly others slowly moving towards God. Also when sometimes guests come back to visit, after moving on when no longer needing support, many because they remembered the love they felt at kings table.

BIGGEST HOPE

To see more of the above, more lives saved and being turned around by God. To see more guests helping guests, joining the team. In this all, God being glorified as his serving saints from the church family, far and wide, love the lost, broken, vulnerable, and marginalised with a love so real and radically infectious that other organisations and groups are also touched and inspired to join in or do similar.

TRANSFORM - PRIME TIME

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Covid-19 preventing Prime Time from meeting in person.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

When Prime Time did finally reunite for a wonderful Christmas meal!

BIGGEST HOPE

For Prime Time gatherings to be re-established with fresh vision and regularity, as a place of Kingdom belonging for older people inside and outside the church.

TRANSFORM - MONEY MATTERS

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Having to continue to support most clients remotely, when they really require face to face support/help and the additional work this made for us. Trying to invest and train volunteers remotely. Unfortunately, this didn't work out and due to other factors, we lost their services/time.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Being able to maintain a service to help people who desperately needed our help, eg) being able to maintain contacts within Kings Table and help several attendees.

BIGGEST HOPE

We are hopeful to be able to restart some outreach services we started before COVID at Kings Table. We also want to look at serving at other ministries as well as other locations in town, which in turn may bring in volunteers.

YOUTH

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

For Youth Ministry, the biggest challenge in 2021 was the constant feeling of anticipating change every 6 weeks or so. The Pandemic was still looming large and have huge impacts on what we could and couldn't do for and with young people. The difficulty was felt most when we were having to set plans and then change them when the covid case rates would take sharp increases. In a season of life where young people need stability and predictability, this was difficult.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

The biggest celebration was that despite the challenges we faced our young people continued to grow in their relationship with God in ways that were unseen.

BIGGEST HOPE

Our biggest hope for 2022 was to see the multiplication of groups that were accessible to young people who have no faith whatsoever.

YOUNG ADULTS

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Building a sense of wider connection between Young Adults themselves and the wider church community.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

Welcoming and connecting a whole load of new young adults into the church community - especially through connections with the Armoury and Alpha.

BIGGEST HOPE

That the 5 life groups that were launched in January 2022 grow in depth of relationships and discipleship, and that each member feels that they are known and belong.

WOMEN

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Communicating and engaging with women during the lockdown/restricted times, especially as not all women use social media.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

The Fuelled session at the Church Big Weekend - about 70 women, across generations, worshipping together and connecting. We gathered lots of ideas for women's ministry as well. The Facebook page 'Trinity Women' has also become a key way of being community with information and encouragements being shared.

BIGGEST HOPE

A network of women and events for women under the banner of 'Fuelled' that will support women across the generations and life experiences.

WORSHIP

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Desperately trying to invest in team well (including a DY student) when navigating the heavy restrictions of COVID.

BIGGEST CELEBRATION

We changed the direction of approach stylistically for Christmas 2021, being released with a dream to partner with someone from our team to create unique bespoke arrangements to enable a special time of worship.

BIGGEST HOPE

To see new songs come into the life of the church, by developing songwriters and securing a publishing deal. All this is to step into the prophetic word of the Lord that we would tell a new story.

**MAKING COMMITTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS WHO CHANGE
COMMUNITIES AND NATIONS FOR HIM**