

December/January
2023/2024



The Messenger

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,
As I write to you today, I have just returned home from carolling with the Churches Together group at Upminster's Christmas Kick-off event. Like similar celebrations in many of our communities, it was a festive evening marked by bright lights, cheerful music, wonderfully-smelling food, and lots of over-excited and well-sugared young people. As the costumed characters made their rounds for photos with the kids, it was hard not to smile and be in a joyful mood.

But for many in our church families and communities, the holiday season is not necessarily a time for joy and cheer. Depending on life circumstances, Christmas may not bring the joy that it once did. And the constant barrage of joyful music and well-wishes can make some people feel left out and excluded from the celebrations others seem to enjoy so much.

It's important to remember that the very first Christmas was not all that joyful either. Mary and Joseph were miles away from their home as Mary neared the time when she was to give birth. They had no place to stay...no place to

sleep...no help with the labour and delivery of the baby. They had to have been lonely, scared, frustrated and angry.

Even though we like to sing "Silent night, holy night," the reality is that it probably didn't feel like much of either of those to Mary and Joseph.

If you can relate to some of these feelings, I invite you to join me on Friday 22 December at 7pm at Trinity URC for our first "Blue Christmas" Service. It will be a time to meditate, to pray, to reflect, to remember, and most of all, a time to remind ourselves that it is only in times of darkness that we can most clearly see the light of the world. I hope you will join us for a time of reflective worship followed by light refreshments and camaraderie.

I have found Blue Christmas services to be among the most powerful services that I've led, and I look forward to sharing the evening with all of you.

Blessings on your Christmas celebrations,

Brian

Advent Bible Study

Advent Bible studies are running on Tuesdays at 9:45am in the Roope Hall for four weeks:

Tuesday 21st November

Tuesday 28th November

Tuesday 5th December

Tuesday 12th December

Brian is leading the study, which is based on the Book of Ruth. Everyone is invited to attend if they are able and the sessions will be recorded and made available on YouTube.

If there are any questions regarding the study, please contact Brian directly.

buschkill@gmail.com; 07548447067; 01708 784701

Christmas Cards

There will be a board in the Sanctuary for the congregation to place Christmas cards expressing wishes to the church family, instead of individual cards. This will be near the organ on the left of the Sanctuary.

There will be an envelope for donations towards Water Aid in lieu of card costs.

Prayers in the Park

Churches Together continue to hold prayers in the park on the first Sunday of each month from 7pm to 8pm.

The next meeting will be held on 1st October.

Advanced Notices

Gift Service

At our Nativity Service on Sunday 10th December, we will be collecting gifts for Sunflower Court as usual. These should be unwrapped, please. Gifts of sweets, toiletries and socks are welcome, but no scarves or tights please.

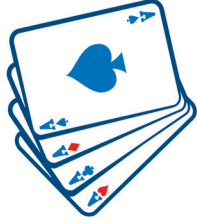
Liberty Singers

The Liberty Singers present their Christmas Concert to be held at Trinity on Friday 15th December at 7:30pm. Tickets cost £7.50 and are available from Sonia. The price includes delicious Festive refreshments.

Blue Christmas

A service will be held at 7pm on Friday 22nd December, the shortest day of the year. This service will recognise that the Christmas period is not just about joy and gifts, and all memories and emotions are important over this period, even if they are challenging, and this is an opportunity to acknowledge in God's presence. The service will be led by Rev Brian Busckill and further details will be announced.

Are you in need of some
TLC
Trinity Leisure Club



Join us for tea, biscuits
and indoor games.

£1 per session

Find us in the Roope Hall
Trinity Church, Upminster

1 - 3 pm

Every Thursday

THE LIBERTY SINGERS

PRESENT A

Christmas Concert

7:30pm FRIDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2023

TRINITY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
STATION RD, UPMINSTER, RM14 2SJ

Tickets available on the door or online
from ticketsource.co.uk

£7.50 including refreshments.

Craft and Coffee Mornings

Our Craft and Coffee mornings take place on the second Saturday of each month from 10am to 12pm. Money raised from the craft sale goes towards our church charity for the year, Harold Hill Foodbank.

Upcoming Craft and Coffee Mornings:

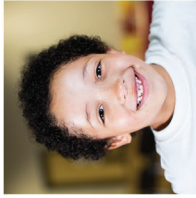
Saturday 9th December



Please continue to support The Harold Hill Food Bank by leaving your gifts of food in the box in the South Porch.
This month particularly needed are:

Tinned tomatoes
Pasta Sauce (Jars)
Long Life Milk & Fruit Juice
Tinned Fruit
Tinned meat
Tinned Fish
Tinned Rice Pudding
Instant Mashed Potato

A Big THANK YOU



Trinity church, Upminster

for supporting Harold Hill foodbank

with 127.5 kgs of Harvest food and £275 donation

Your donations make a **BIG** difference
to local people in crisis.

Harold Hill foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust's UK wide foodbank network.



Letter from the Moderator

Dear friends,

It feels like everyone is getting ready, getting ready for Christmas. Christmas Trees going up (even as I write!) cards being written, presents being bought, menus being planned and food being bought. Although sadly, and increasingly, for some they are not able to prepare to celebrate and certainly not in the way they might have hoped. They have a deep concern as to how they can simply heat their homes and feed their families this winter. That is if they even have a home to live and eat in.

In the past I have had the privilege of volunteering at a winter night shelter. What struck me was that everyone's story was different as to how they found themselves homeless. It taught me not to make assumptions. Some had been estranged from their families, got behind with their rents and evicted, couldn't afford to put together a deposit despite working, experienced broken relationships and so the stories could go on.

Some churches will be hosting winter night shelters, arranging warm hubs and providing hot drinks and meals to not just those who are homeless, but also to the lonely and vulnerable. As Christians we cannot close our eyes and ears to the needs around us as we prepare to celebrate Christmas. We cannot welcome Jesus and shun our neighbour. As Jesus himself said 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

The nature of Jesus' birth highlights who these brothers and sisters are. Jesus himself was born homeless with parents who were dependent on the charity of others to give them shelter and food. The story worsens as the family had to flee and become refugees in Egypt. Yes, Jesus was a refugee! When we fail to look out for those in need, we are hurting God.

Today our hearts and the heart of God is breaking looking at what is happening in the place of Jesus' birth. The violence and suffering in Israel and

Palestine makes us stop and think, pray and act even as we prepare for Christmas. In our sanitised Christmas we usually miss out the story of the massacre of the innocents just after Jesus's birth which is recounted in Matthew's Gospel. But we can't turn a blind eye to the massacre of the innocents in the current conflict.

Martin Leckebusch in his variant of a popular carol, 'O West Bank town of Bethlehem', asks the question:

'How violently, how violently the hope of peace is riven; can God impart to these torn hearts the blessings of his heaven? Who now recalls his coming to this dark world of sin?'

As Christians we believe that peace is possible, the hungry can be fed and the homeless find shelter. And we can work together to achieve it and thus truly remember and celebrate the God who came to earth as a baby to transform a troubled world.

I would like to wish you a peaceful Christmas as you celebrate and seek to play your part in bringing about transformation in this world.

Yours in Christ,
George
Synod Moderator

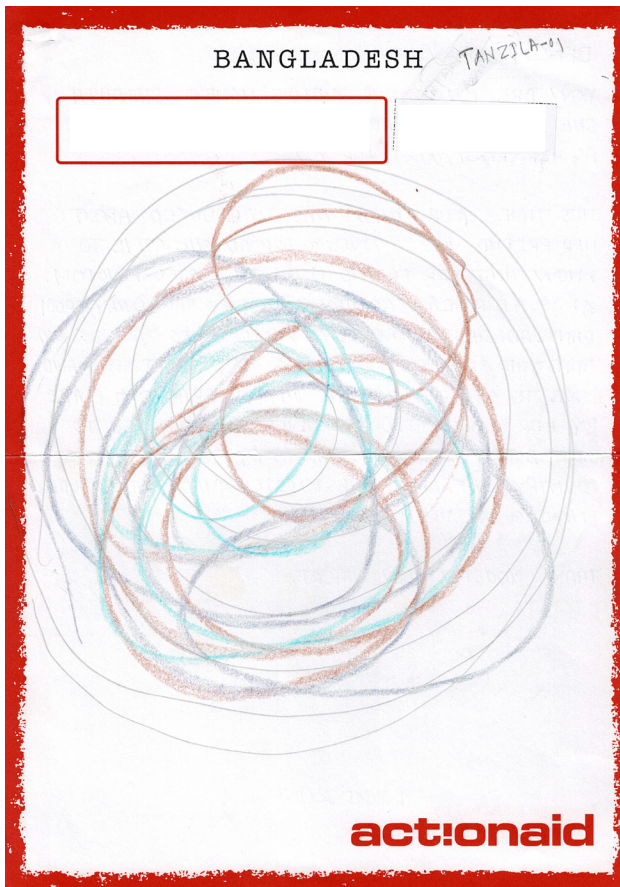
Prayers

We are asked to pray for:

- Crisis - homeless charity
- Ukraine and Russia
- Palestine and Libya
-
- Water Aid

Action Aid

Trinity has received our first letter from Tanjila, the 4 year old girl who we support in Bangladesh via Aid Action by our giving of five pence pieces on a Sunday Morning. If anyone would like to send a letter to Tanjila on behalf of Trinity please speak to Linda.



DEAR FRIEND,

HOW ARE YOU ? YOUR CHILD'S NAME IS TANZILA
SHE WANTS TO SHARE THIS BEAUTIFUL DRAWING
AS HER FIRST GIFT FOR YOU.

THIS TIME , YOUR CHILD WAS INTRODUCED ABOUT
HER FRIEND WHO IS LIVING ABROAD. SHE CAME TO
KNOW THAT HER FRIEND LIVES IN UNITED KINGDOM.
IT IS A EUROPEAN COUNTRY AND VERY FAR AWAY FROM
BANGLADESH. BUT TANZILA'S FRIEND LIKES HER SO MUCH
THAT THE FRIEND WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT HER AND
LOVE TO GET HER UPDATE WITH A DRAWING MADE
BY HER. YOUR CHILD HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED TO
HAVE A FRIEND LIVING FAR AWAY IN A FOREIGN
COUNTRY. THEREFORE SHE EXCITED MADE THIS BEAUTIFUL
DRAWING FOR HER NEW FRIEND.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

Message collected by: LAXMI RANI

Sunday Services

December

3rd	Communion	Rev Brian Busckill
10th	Nativity	Worship Group
17th		Rev Brian Busckill
17th	6:30pm	Carols by Candlelight
24th		Rev Brian Busckill
25th	10am	Christmas Day Service
31st	Songs of Praise	Worship Group

January

7th	Communion	Rev Brian Busckill
14th		Rev Brian Busckill
21st		Rev Ann Woodhurst
28th		Michael Lawrence

December's Communion offertory will be for Crisis.

All services start at 9:30am unless otherwise stated.

Trinity URC, 29 Station Rd, Upminster RM14 2SJ
www.heathandhaveringurc.co.uk