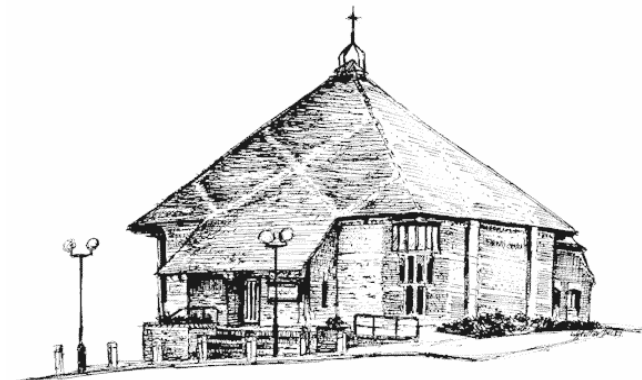




Parish Profile
for the ecumenical parish of
Earley Trinity



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INTRODUCTION

TRINITY CHURCH: AN OVERVIEW



Trinity Church is a well established, modern, flourishing church with a thriving membership and a wide range of activities within the heart of Lower Earley, Berkshire. It is an ecumenical partnership between the Church of England, the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Connexion. We meet and worship together as one congregation. Trinity is a Church of England parish in its own right.

Our aims are described in detail within this Parish Profile and we are working hard to find new ways to reach out and provide a spiritual centre and resource for the community of Lower Earley.

The present church building dates from 1987 and is currently being redeveloped and refurbished. There is a sharing agreement for the building, with the formal ownership vested in the Diocese of Oxford. The church seats 250 worshippers and worship is designed to draw from the riches of liturgy from all three denominations and more widely, with a strong emphasis on involving lively and often modern music. We are working towards an increasing involvement of local lay people in leading worship.

Trinity Church, constitutionally, has a defined set of lay officers and a system for decision making, which is organised on several levels including Church Meetings (for decisions), Church Council (for executive management) and a range of specialist committees for different aspects of church life and activities. Stipendiary ministry is provided by the three denominations on a rotating pattern, with each minister in turn serving for a period of about eight years.

THE MINISTER

We are now seeking a full-time Anglican Priest-in-Charge to succeed the present Methodist minister and to lead Trinity with vision and move the church forward. The minister must be ecumenically minded and be committed to working alongside people who come from different traditions.

The ideal candidate would be someone who:

- challenges the church with the word of God and makes it relevant today
- will develop and engage in effective strategies for evangelism
- encourages spiritual growth and greater trust in the Holy Spirit
- enables others to use their gifts creatively in the service of the Lord
- embraces and utilises the liturgy from all three denominations and from a range of other sources
- supports everyone, including the young and old, in the experiences of our daily lives.

We expect this minister to have enthusiasm and a commitment to the Trinity Visions expressed in the Parish Profile. In terms of churchmanship we believe that the position would best suit, in Anglican terms, an open evangelical with broad sympathies.

A snapshot through numbers

- 23,000 people living in Lower Earley
- 10,000 people in the parish of Earley Trinity
- 1 congregation
- 3 denominations
- 195 people in church on the Church Census day in May 2005, spread fairly evenly across the ages

Under 11	11 – 19	20 – 29	30 – 44	45 – 64	65+
34	23	4	42	56	36

- 10165 hits on the church website
- 59 young people in school years 6 to 13 in regular contact at Trinity
- 50 new members during the last six years
- 10% of all income given to worthy causes
- About 6 Trinity weddings per year
- About 12 Trinity funerals per year
- 720 baptisms since the church opened (on the Cradle Roll)
- In May 2006 it took 77 hours and 103 people to read the Bible continuously, which raised over £6000 for the Building Fund.

VISIONS AND MINISTRY

OUR VISIONS FOR TRINITY

We start from the belief that there is much about Trinity's life and worship that is good, and our vision for the future is based in continuing what is good. In various areas of our current activities we would like to see more people involved and present, and we would like to see a Trinity that has a wider recognition in the whole community of Lower Earley. On this foundation there are a number of areas where we have a vision of change and development, and these are summarised under five headings below.

1. To develop greater engagement with, and service to, the community

We want to make Trinity the natural place for people to turn to for help, care, ideas and spiritual encouragement. We feel this is our most important vision, and that which needs the most work.

There are two aspects to this:

1. Our capacity to help non-church individuals and families should improve as our own internal networks develop. Local neighbourhood help groups could be formed on an *ad hoc* basis to meet the needs that members in the area, or ministers / lay workers, become aware of. We should try to work with local members of other churches in this. Communication is important.
2. At the institutional level, we are currently investigating ways in which our trained listeners and counsellors can work with the local surgery (a Christian practice) and we have some links with the Salvation Army. Otherwise we have rather poor links with our neighbours at the District Centre. At present we also have little contact with our Town or District councillors. Both groups should be relatively easy to engage with but to be useful we would probably need to inspire more of the membership to be prepared to give time to community service.

2. To make the new chapel a spiritual “open door” to the community

Our vision is of a wide-ranging and diverse use of the new chapel or prayer room in our church, to provide support and challenge to people in developing opportunities for prayer.

The church development includes plans for a new chapel or prayer room (see page 13). We hope that individuals will be able to use the prayer room for prayer at many times. We hope that groups will grow to use the prayer room in imaginative ways. We also hope to offer a “prayer shop” to the community, where they may come to discover ways of satisfying their needs for prayer, at times of particular stress or of loneliness.

3. To be a place where everyone is known and loved

Our vision is of a church community within which all feel known and loved, and all those coming to the church as strangers feel welcomed and rapidly integrated into the fellowship.

Assigning each person in the Church directory to a named “Pastoral Link” is helping us to avoid people losing contact without being noticed. However, this is a new system and we hope to learn from each other the best ways of developing and maintaining these pastoral relationships.

We believe that small groups, of various sorts, both social and spiritual, are, for many people, the best way of facilitating mutual care and support, but many people do not at present belong to a group. There is the potential for some of the Pastoral Link groupings to start meeting together and we are also working on connecting people who live near each other and may not know it.

4. To provide exciting opportunities for people to grow through study and service

Our vision is of everyone connected with the church growing in spiritual strength each year.

We want to continue to provide Alpha courses or similar introductions to Christianity but also to supplement these with discipleship courses. We should encourage the groups that work well to continue as home groups beyond the duration of the courses. We need to continually try new ideas for study groups (Lent, Advent, Bible study, Media stimuli).

The church should be encouraging its members to increase their understanding of the big issues (global warming, third world and domestic poverty, housing, social exclusion etc.), and to debate the position that Christians should be taking and what they should be doing. Some of these talks and discussions should result in personal or group commitments to action and may also involve the wider community. Talks and debates may be one-offs or held as series; they may be open to the public or just to the church. Home groups may form for, or as a result of, common interests revealed or aroused by, these discussions.

5. To provide stimulation and challenge within worship

Our vision is of an increasing diversity of forms, times and leadership for services at Trinity. In a very real sense it is only through challenge and stimulation within worship that any of our other visions can be realised.

We are fortunate to be able to use several traditions of form and content, but services nevertheless can become too predictable and comfortable for our spiritual good. We need to find more ways of gently jolting congregations into a wider awareness of the meaning of discipleship, with love and humour.

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Few people without a church background of some kind visit our services, but we must be aware that an increasing proportion of society may not feel comfortable with traditional services and we should be sensitive to the spiritual needs of the wider community, providing alternative ways of meeting those needs.

MINISTRY

Staffing

Trinity Church has one full-time stipendiary ministry post, although the assumption is that there would also be non-stipendiary ministers in the Trinity ministry team. Ideally, if not always practically, these non-stipendiary ministers would be from the denominations not providing the stipendiary minister. Trinity also looks to supply candidates for the ministry.

Currently the ministry-related people at Trinity are:

- a new Anglican non-stipendiary curate in her first year, who will be expected to remain at Trinity for a further three years
- a non-stipendiary associate minister from the URC who is a member of the church and has recently retired from more substantial ministry locally
- a member of Trinity who is currently in her second year of training for the stipendiary ministry in the Church of England.

There are also paid lay workers working at Trinity. At the present time there are:

- a lay worker for pastoral care, who is employed at the present by the Methodist circuit, and is also a URC Elder at another local church. The arrangements for funding the lay worker from September 2007 have yet to be determined.
- a part-time Minister's secretary, who is employed by Trinity, and is a member of Trinity.

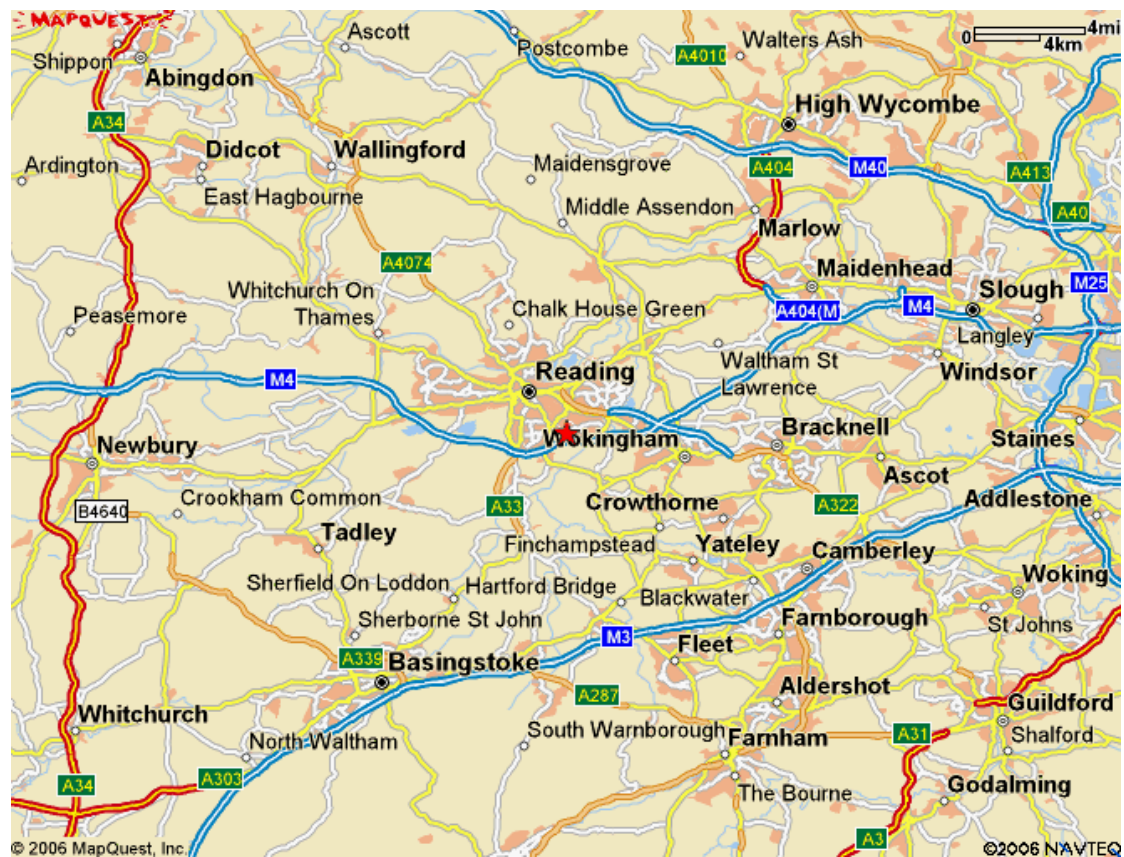
Trinity's Leadership Team, which includes the ministers and churchwardens, meets informally monthly and acts as a support group for the stipendiary minister. We assume that the minister coming to Trinity would enjoy working as the leader of a team of ordained and lay Christians.

THE LOCALITY

READING AND LOWER EARLEY

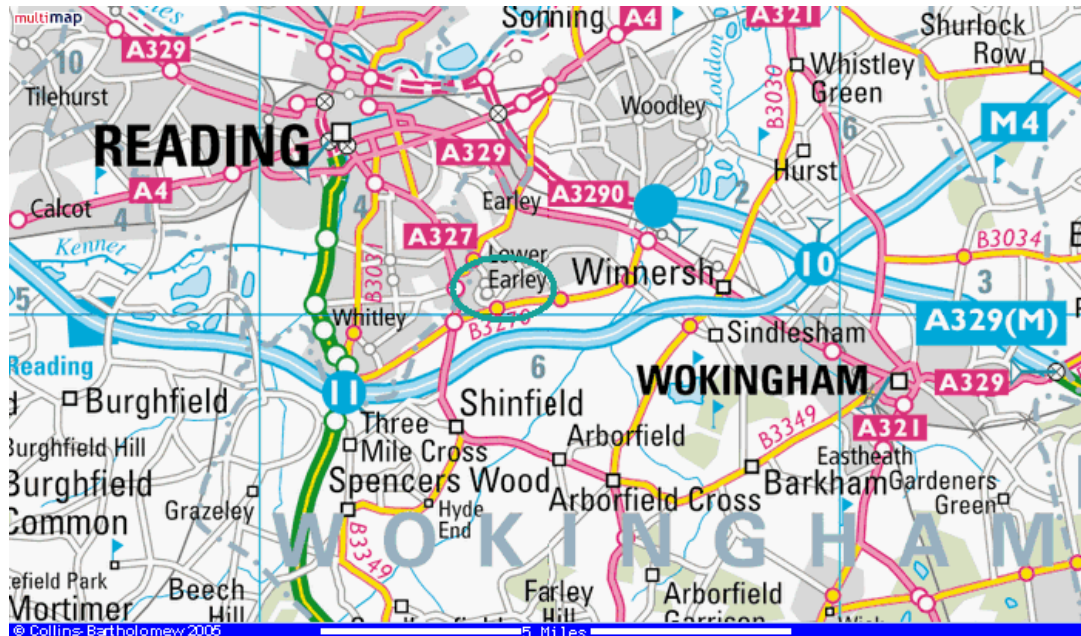
Although officially a town in its own right, Earley sees itself as a satellite of Reading, which is noted for its Abbey (in ruins), its gaol, its old industries of “beer, biscuits and bulbs (Suttons seeds)”, its IT industry, university — and now its football team!

Reading is situated on the River Thames. It has excellent rail services to London (25 minutes to Paddington and a stopping service to Waterloo), Bristol and the southwest, Cardiff, Oxford, Birmingham and further north, Basingstoke, Southampton and the south coast. There is a regular rail-air link coach service to Heathrow airport as well as a direct line to Gatwick airport. In addition, the junction 11 of the M4 lies 3 miles to the south, effectively forming the southern limit of Lower Earley.

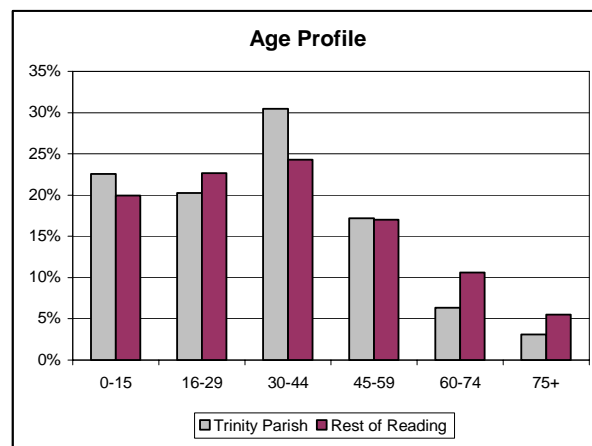
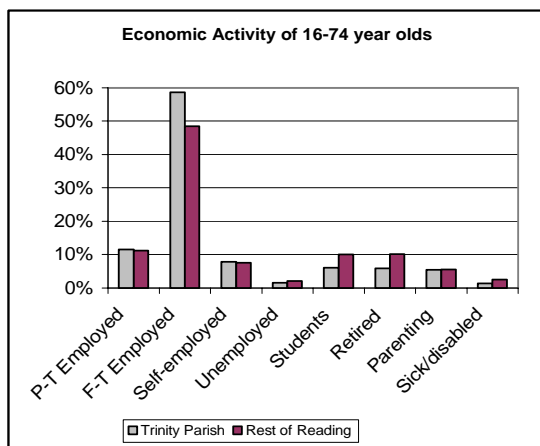


LOWER EARLEY

Most of Lower Earley was built as a major development (Western Europe's largest) in the 1980s and 1990s, with a broad mix of housing types from studio flats to modern mansions. It is widely regarded as well planned, and is free of major social problems.



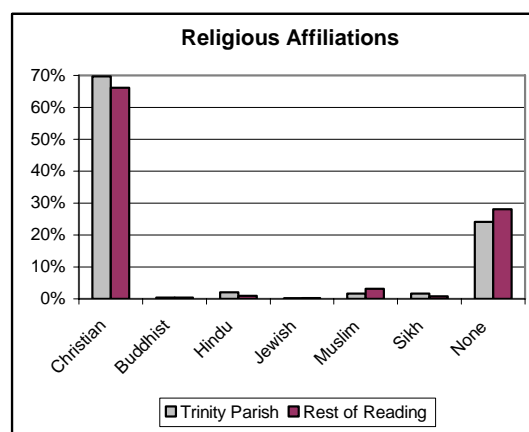
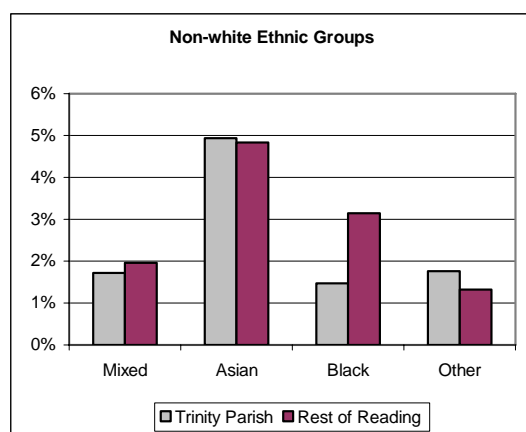
Compared with the Reading area as a whole (and the rest of the country) the parish has a higher proportion of young families and fewer elderly people. Most people work relatively locally, and almost 60% of people within the parish work full time. There are many well-known companies and businesses within Reading (e.g. engineering and IT companies, the hospital and the university) and in the wider Thames Valley area, but a sizeable number of people commute to London or elsewhere.



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Housing costs are amongst the highest in the country outside London, with a one-bedroom starter home costing about the average price of a house in England. This leads to significant financial pressures on a large proportion of people living in the area, and usually requires both parents in a family unit to go out to work.

Within the parish there are several old people's homes and small areas of council housing together with a university hall of residence housing predominantly mature overseas students. The proportion of other residents belonging to ethnic minorities is small, with correspondingly few devotees of other faiths.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN LOWER EARLEY AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

Lower Earley is provided with a good level of facilities. The District Centre, of which the church is a part, also has a surgery, leisure centre (with swimming pool), pub, library, youth and community centre, hypermarket (Asda), newsagent, post office, chemist and a number of smaller shops. A mile to the east is another small parade of shops, Maiden Place, which boasts, *inter alia*, a dentist, community centre, pub, restaurant and a couple of good takeaways. Nearby there is a community centre and a large police station.

Other local recreational amenities include parks, a nature reserve, sports clubs, a multiplex cinema and the cinemas, theatres, restaurants and clubs of Reading are all close to hand.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

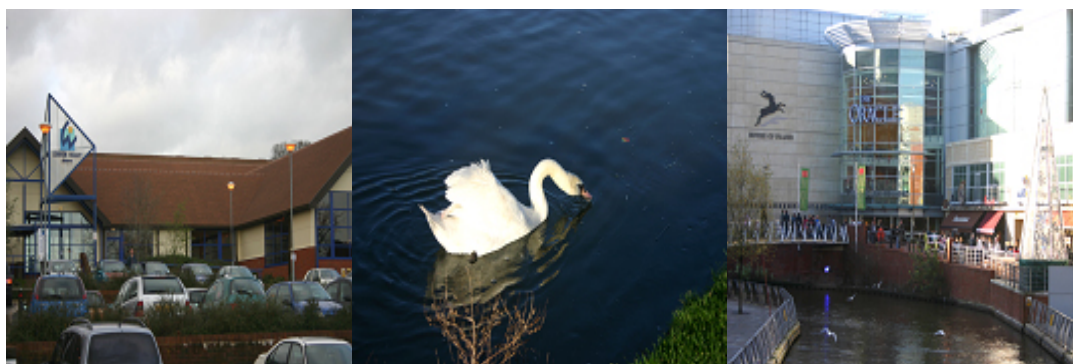
Within Lower Earley, there are several nursery schools and playgroups, as well as three primary schools (Whiteknights, Hillside and Radstock) in the parish, and seven in total in Earley. There are four local comprehensive schools between one and six miles away: Maiden Erlegh is the closest, The Piggott School (C of E, in Wargrave), Bulmershe (Woodley) and Ryeish Green (south of the M4). There is no state

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comprehensive school within Lower Earley. These schools all come under the Wokingham LEA, which consistently comes within the top five LEAs nationally for GCSE/A level results. More detailed information about the schools can be accessed via the Wokingham District Council website: www.wokingham.gov.uk

Locally there are also two selective (grammar) state single-sex schools: Reading Boys and Kendrick (girls), and local private and boarding schools including Leighton Park (mixed, Quaker), The Abbey School (girls) and Reading Blue Coat School in Sonning (boys and mixed 6th form). Most schools in the local area have an excellent reputation and many have a high position in the Government's school league tables.

Reading University is on the fringes of the parish and other places of tertiary education, such as the Reading campuses of Thames Valley University, are nearby.



SOCIAL ISSUES

- The chief concern of the local police is the vandalism caused by groups of youths, particularly at Maiden Place.
- Loneliness is a problem, especially for many of those without school-age children to provide social connections.
- As housing is generally expensive, most people are relatively money-rich but time-poor, so materialistic consumerism is the norm.
- There are many marriage break-ups, which seem to affect church members no less than they affect other residents.

TRINITY CHURCH AND PARISH

Trinity is the main Anglican presence within Lower Earley. Although its only formal “catchment” is its Anglican parish, it is the closest Methodist and URC church for many people beyond this area, including the whole of Lower Earley. To an extent, Trinity acts as a “gathered church” for non-conformist members from a relatively wide area. Some Anglicans with ecumenical views also come from further afield. Some background on the ecumenical nature of Trinity, which may be helpful in understanding how Trinity works, is on pages 26 and 27.

TRINITY CHURCH BUILDING

The Present

Trinity Church is fortunate in having a modern church building located at the heart of the community it serves. The building itself is constructed of modern materials and is split into two main sections. There is a light and airy church (which holds some 250 worshippers comfortably seated) with a main entrance including a unisex toilet. The sanctuary is equipped with microphones and a loop system, which are used mainly during worship services. The altar table and chairs are moveable, allowing for flexibility in worshipping arrangements.

The rest of the building comprises the vestry (which doubles as an office and is equipped with a PC), a kitchen, a hall that can accommodate about 100 people standing, two smaller meeting rooms (one used for prayer and as the crèche; the other as a printing/photocopying room and also a youth lounge), a storage cupboard and toilets, including an accessible toilet.

There are no grounds to speak of; this is both an advantage (no maintenance or graveyard to tend) and a disadvantage (no outside area in which to hold events, provide a play area, etc.).

The building is used by church groups (including Boys' Brigade, Pilots, Parent and Toddler groups, Junior Church, Youth Net, etc.) and outside groups looking to use modern and well-equipped facilities. We are often receiving enquiries to use our facilities, and in some cases have had to turn away groups.

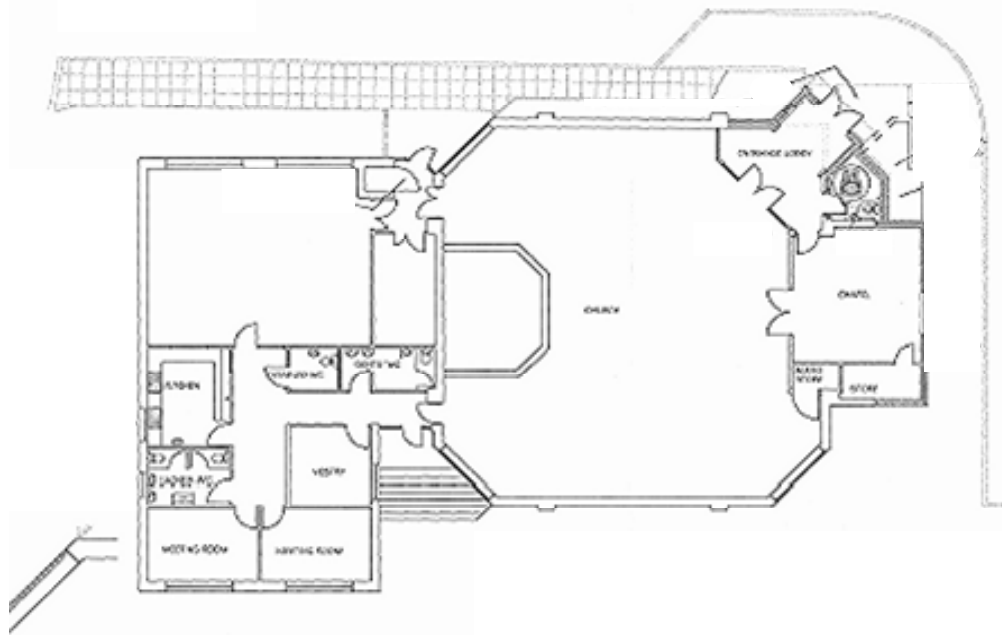


The Future

The building is now being updated and refurbished to make it more welcoming, to provide a chapel or prayer room, modernise (and move) the kitchen and toilets, comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and, in particular, provide a new main entrance (to give the church a more prominent front, and to allow better access for less mobile people). An artist's impression of the church, showing the proposed new entrance, is given below:



These changes will cost in excess of £200,000. We are planning to commence the building works, which are expected to take 16 weeks, in early 2007. A plan of the new layout is shown below:



Once the project has been completed, we will have a building fit for the 21st century, in which we can continue to worship and work with the local community.

THE VICARAGE

The vicarage is owned by the diocese and lies in Caraway Road, a five-minute walk from the church. It is a modern detached house with four bedrooms, a study, large living room, dining room and medium-sized garden. For the last year it has been let to private tenants.



OTHER LOCAL CHURCHES

Roughly in order of their proximity to Trinity, there are the following worshipping communities:

- a Salvation Army Citadel at the District Centre
- a Baptist congregation, which meets in Maiden Place Community Centre but is hoping to build its own church soon
- another Anglican church, of a liberal Catholic tradition, whose parish includes the eastern half of Lower Earley
- a large Kings Church congregation, with its own building at the opposite end of the development
- a Roman Catholic church within two miles.

Trinity combines worship or swaps preachers with the first three about once a year, but has little formal contact with the others. We have always been involved in the work of Churches Together in Earley and East Reading and as an LEP we are sponsored by Churches Together in Berkshire.

CHURCH ORGANISATION

Governance

The primary decision-making body of the church is the Church Meeting, which meets quarterly. The executive body of the church is the Church Council (doubling as the Parochial Church Council), which meets seven times a year and which manages the activities of the church. The Church Council delegates much of its detailed management to a number of committees, whose responsibilities are described in the sections that follow.

Church Officers

The senior lay officers of the church are the Church Secretary, Senior Steward and Church Treasurer. The first two are also appointed as churchwardens. Together with the ministers of the church, they form the Leadership Team, which meets monthly to provide support for the stipendiary minister, and to guide the life of the church.

The Church Stewards are the main work force for managing the church and provide stewarding for church services. Together with the ministers, the senior officers, the Property Administrator, three representatives from those serving on denominational bodies and another three church members, they constitute the Church Council. Church stewards and senior officers are normally ordained as Elders in the URC tradition.

Stewards, senior church officers and all appointments to particular responsibilities and committees, are elected at a Church Meeting. This is usually the Annual General Church Meeting, which incorporates the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and the Annual Meeting of Parishioners.

Communications

Trinity has a website, which provides a good deal of current and recent historical information (www.trinityyearley.co.uk). The Trinity magazine is published each month except January and August. The church office circulates information including both internal notices and external affairs by e-mail (trinity@waitrose.com) each week. The e-mail lists currently include some 120 addresses, which cover over half of the membership of the church. Much of the business information of councils and committees uses e-mail, though this is supplemented by postal deliveries for members without access to e-mail.

The Trinity church notice boards present a great deal of information about current activities, rotas, youth and children's work and external meetings and courses. Internal papers are distributed through the pigeonhole system or by collection from tables within the church.

TRINITY LIFE AND ACTIVITIES

TRINITY CHURCH AIMS

Trinity Church developed these aims a few years ago and they infuse and charge our spiritual life here. Through explaining these further we intend to describe some of the present patterns of worship and organisation. They are closely associated with our visions for the future.



With God at the centre of what we are and a focus for what we do, the aims of Trinity Church are to encourage and foster growing; caring; unity and community.

Growing

In faith and following Jesus Christ through discovery, worship and learning.

“...ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give you the Spirit, who will make you wise and reveal God to you, so that you will know him.”

Ephesians 1:17

Caring

By demonstrating the love of God through the welcome, care and acceptance of all.

“...And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.”

John 13:34–35

Unity

Through being open to all, united in the love of God and celebrating the richness and variety of our different traditions.

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you.”

Ephesians 4:4

Community

By being rooted in, reaching out to, and serving the local and world-wide community.

“You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl; instead he puts it on the lampstand, where it gives light for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14–16

GROWING AT TRINITY



We are responsible for the spiritual growth of all members of our congregation. We aim to achieve this through worship (in particular through preaching and teaching within worship), through various forms of small discussion groups, through training courses and through our children's and youth activities.

WORSHIP AND SERVICES

Worship at Trinity is diverse, reflecting, to some extent, our denominational roots, but mostly adapted to maintain an equal emphasis on the traditions of our three denominations. Thus the three Sunday services at 8am, 10am and 6pm are not denominationally "badged". Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic wine is always provided at Communion and at a third of Communion services elders take the bread and wine to the congregation, in the URC tradition.

The largest Sunday service is the 10am, with a congregation usually of 120–150, including children. A service includes a time of all age worship and teaching before the children leave for their own lessons. Once a quarter there is a family communion service when the children remain for the whole service. Communion is served once a month at the 10am service. Some sample worship leaflets are at the back of this Parish Profile.

The weekly 6pm Sunday service also includes Communion once a month and on third Sundays uses a non-traditional form of worship. To make Sunday Communion available every week there is an 8am Communion twice a month. The 6pm and 8am services usually have congregations of between 10 and 20.

There are four 10am Parade Services a year, when local children's and youth organisations and our own Pilots and Boys' Brigade attend and share their news with the rest of the church.

Baptisms take place either during the 10am service or at 3pm on Sundays. In either case, the service is on the first Sunday of the month.

All 10am and 6pm services are followed by tea and coffee, providing a time for informal fellowship.

The stipendiary minister takes most services. Our curate and URC minister (both non-stipendiary) each take, or share, an average of two services a month. In addition, about three times a month worship at one of the Sunday services is led by a visiting minister or preacher or by lay members of the church. Lay members lead intercessory prayer at most Sunday services. Trinity has two Methodist lay preachers, one minister in training and about half a dozen other laity trained in leading worship.

Most of our sung worship is taken from *Mission Praise* and our own *Trinity Worship Book*, which contains mainly modern songs and hymns. For services with smaller

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congregations the church has copies of some sections of *Common Worship*, a URC communion service and the *Methodist Service Book* available. We have a good group of organists and pianists and a lively band that plays at about half of our 10am services.

Other regular services are weekly prayers on Wednesday mornings, with communion once a month (attendance 8 to 10), and a weekly Nursery Service (8 to 10 mothers with their children), led mainly by laity.

We have recently successfully experimented with services that include a meal (such as Passover on Maundy Thursday), and intend doing more of this.

A Worship Committee meets quarterly to discuss various aspects of the provision of worship: service content, musical variety, provision of readings and so on.



PRAYER

Prayer is supported and encouraged at Trinity in various forms.

Intercessory Prayers

Prayers of intercession are included in most of the services held, including those delivered outside the church building. Whilst at some services they are prepared and delivered by the worship leaders, on many occasions the laity do this, sometimes accompanied by soft background music. Anybody can volunteer to prepare and deliver prayers of intercession at services; currently at least 15 people do so on a regular basis.

Prayer Ministry

Prayer Ministry has become well established over the past five years, since we held a weekend training course to explore how such a ministry could and should be part of the everyday life within Trinity. Whilst we should all pray every day of our lives, prayer ministry offers those attending our services (and at other times) the chance to seek prayer for a need for themselves, to pray through a concern they have for others, or simply to share in giving thanks for God's blessings to them.

How does it work?

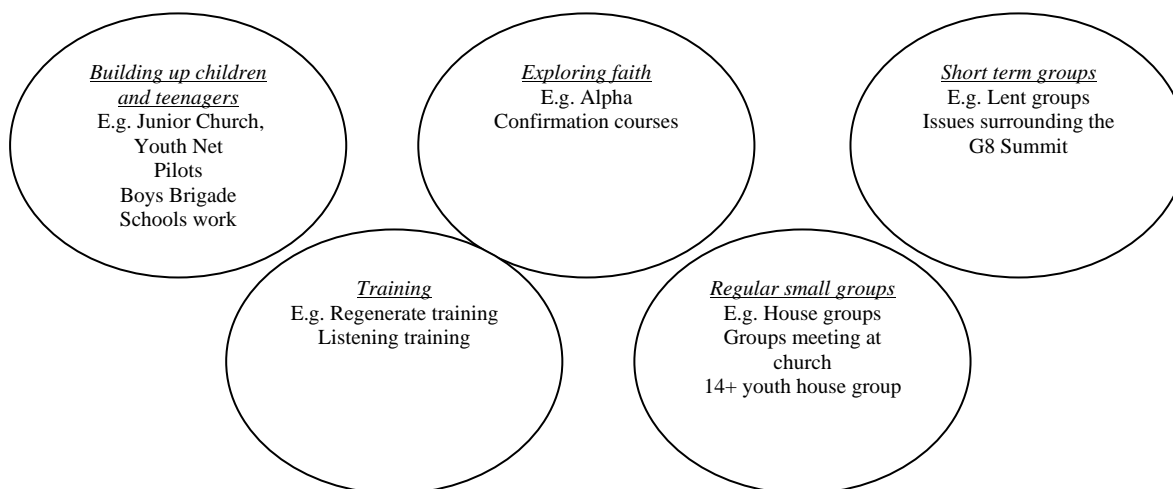
As in many churches, Prayer Ministry is offered at a number of our Communion services (both morning and evening to make sure everybody has an opportunity to come forward for prayer). A team made up of a number of men and women who have been called to Prayer Ministry provides it; the Minister and other members of the church affirm these people. Before a service at which Prayer Ministry is to be offered, team members will meet in prayer themselves, to pray for each other and those who come forward, and also to ask the Holy Spirit to be with them as they fulfil God's work. As Communion is taken, the team will take up their places, working as teams of two (one male and one female) and wait for people (singly or as a couple) to come forward for prayer, stating their request if necessary. Those from the Prayer Ministry team will then pray, often laying their hands on an individual's shoulder, their thoughts and words being directed by God through the Holy Spirit. At the end of the prayers, a card is offered setting out other pastoral services that are provided by Trinity, as well as two prayers for the individual's use.

GROWING THROUGH SMALL GROUPS

Trinity recognizes that small groups have great benefits for spiritual growth. Therefore, there is a range of smaller groups, which can be tailored to meet specific needs. As all people are different, these groups tend to be quite fluid in their aims, as they mould to match the people who make them up. It is impossible to give a definitive list of groups that meet at Trinity, as groups start, evolve and end depending on demand and need.

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The diagram shows five very loose categories, with examples of the types of groups that they encompass.



Building up children and teenagers

These groups provide activities and discussions that aim to build the character of the children and teenagers, and enable them to grow more into the person God created them to be. They aim to give a positive view of God, Christianity and the church, and to enable children and young people to feel they have a safe place where they can explore and question the world around them, including faith and values.

Junior Church

On most Sundays the under-14s leave the 10am service after approximately 20 minutes; they are divided into four classes, which use Scripture Union teaching material. The average attendance is about 30 and about 30 church members are on the teaching and helpers' rotas.

Youth Net (11-18)

This group meets fortnightly for worship, Bible study, prayer and fellowship. The average numbers are about 15, although mainly from other churches. On the intervening weeks the leaders, including some of the older teenagers, meet for "Leaders' Net", to study, pray and plan.

Pilots (5-12)

This URC-affiliated group, with about twenty children, meets weekly in the hall for games, crafts, cooking etc.

Boys' Brigade (4-18)

There are three meetings each week, for different age groups. In total about 20 boys attend, for games, table tennis, drill and badge work.

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Trinity also has links with several groups that use the church building. These include:

Brownies, Guides and Sea Scouts

Members of the church are involved in leadership of these local groups and, although they meet elsewhere, are pleased to bring them to join with the Boys' Brigade and Pilots in Trinity's quarterly Parade Services. The Brownies also help to look after the flowerbeds at the front of the church and regularly have a stall at our Autumn Fayre.

Exploring faith

Trinity offers Alpha courses to those wanting to explore faith for the first time, or just go back to looking at the basics of their faith. These courses have included people who have been in Trinity for many years and those who have had no previous contact. The previous two Alpha courses have led onto other groups that further explore issues surrounding Christianity. Trinity offers confirmation courses for those who wish to make or are considering making a public declaration of their faith.

At present members of Trinity are involved in *Regenerate*, the Reading wide mission initiative for 2007. This is being spearheaded by The Bishop of Reading in an ecumenical year of mission. At Trinity, we are planning to hold two or three "targeted" events to draw people to the church, and also to run a course to help church members to share their faith.

Regular small groups

These groups meet regularly to develop the faith of those involved. The group studies may be based on Bible passages or other books or booklets. Groups meet in the evening or during the day. These groups include adult groups meeting in homes or at church and Youth Net. This is an area Trinity is hoping to develop more in the next year, so that more people can be involved in a small group that will support them and encourage them to grow in their faith.

Short term groups

Lent and Advent groups are run annually at Trinity. There are also groups that are formed for a specific event (e.g. Voices from the South, which was a 5-week course looking at the issues leading up to the G8 summit), and one-off sessions, such as an evening looking at the use of sign language in worship.

Training

Trinity aims to provide training to equip members of the church to grow through service. Training may be in-house, such as the Philippi Trust Listening and Responding Skills course, and training for the junior church staff. Trinity also actively participates in training provided externally through the parent denominations, such as Training for Learning and Service (a course provided by the URC to train people in leading worship, pastoral care and prayer) and Soulnet (a youth leaders' training weekend run by Soul Survivor). Training is also being provided in connection with *Regenerate*.

CARING AT TRINITY



We are responsible for the pastoral care of all members of our congregation and, more widely, of the parish. We have a dual approach of proactive welcoming and befriending those already in our congregation and who make contact with our church, and responsive support for those with particular needs.

PASTORAL CARE

As a large church, pastoral concern and care is high in our priorities at Trinity and we have recognised this in our Vision. To reflect this, pastoral care has recently been reorganised with established groups being reinvigorated and new ones encouraged and supported. Some of the specific ways of doing this include:

Pastoral Committee

The Pastoral Committee is a group of church members who, together with the Minister, manage the overall pastoral care of the congregation and the parish. This group meets three or four times a year.

Lay Pastoral Worker

In September 2006 a lay pastoral worker was appointed to work alongside the Minister for fourteen hours per week. Her specific job is to work with newcomers to the church and people on the fringe (e.g. those who attend the fortnightly Nursery Service, those who come to Parent and Toddlers groups and those who need follow-up visits after baptisms and funerals). This arrangement is supported by the Methodist Circuit until August 2007 and will be reviewed in the spring of 2007.

Pastoral Link People

Twenty-six church members (the pastoral links) each hold a list of about a dozen people. Their specific role is to get to know people on their list as friends and greet them in the church and community. When a more involved pastoral need arises, the pastoral link is asked to refer the matter to the Pastoral Care Coordinator, who can arrange for a visit to be made by a member of the pastoral team or the Minister. As this is a new system the pastoral links plan to meet as a group four times a year, to share news of the whole church family and to support one another.

Team of Pastoral Visitors

Members of the pastoral visitors team who have special expertise can be called upon to provide pastoral visits as and when specific needs arise.

Pastoral Care Coordinator

The Pastoral Care Coordinator liaises with the Minister on matters of pastoral concern and, when approached by a pastoral visitor, pastoral link or member of the congregation with a specific request, ensures that the appropriate person makes a visit or series of visits.



CARING THROUGH PRAYER

Part of our caring ministry is conducted through prayer. This is organised in various ways, including:

Prayer Meetings

A number of members of the church attend a monthly prayer meeting, which is designed as a time of open prayer focussing on the life and direction of the church, as well as the needs and joys of individuals attending. Often people attending the prayer meeting will ask those there to pray for them or those known to them. The meetings are also a great time of fellowship.

Prayer Notes

Many members at Trinity receive daily prayer or Bible-reading notes, or access them via the Internet.

Prayer Board

A prayer board is sited in the sanctuary area of the church; people are encouraged to fill in requests asking for prayers for themselves or others.

Prayer Chain

Trinity Church has a well-established prayer chain, which provides a quick way for people to get a number of individuals praying for a particular situation or concern. The prayer chain members meet from time to time as a group to pray together about recent requests and concerns of their own.

E-mail List

The e-mail circulation lists run from the church office can be used to request prayers for particular situations and people.

Trinity Monthly Magazine

The magazine lists people we should pray for, including those in our local streets and the streets where members live.

OTHER GROUPS

Other groups meet regularly at Trinity Church. They include:

The Chalfont Club

The Chalfont Club, organised by church members, meets weekly on the church premises on Thursday afternoons. It has a total membership of approximately 50 people, most of whom are retired. Members arrange for speakers on a variety of topics, outings and short services at significant festivals of the year.

Empty Nest Group

This group is organised by members of the church as a support group for families whose student sons and daughters have left home or are experiencing difficulties. This group meets in members' homes four times a year.

Walking Group

The walking group meets monthly during the year. A different member leads each walk. In addition, a church walk and picnic is arranged on August Bank Holiday Monday and a group holiday is arranged each spring.



Beating the bounds of the parish

Coffee Mornings

Coffee mornings are organised by church members on Wednesdays (weekly) and Fridays (fortnightly), from 10 am until 12 noon. They are open to the local community.

Trinity Concert Band

The band uses the name of the church because it practises in the sanctuary each week. One or two church members play in it, but there is little other connection.

It should be noted that some members of several church-run groups (e.g. Chalfont Club, Boys' Brigade, Pilots and coffee mornings) have little other contact with the church.

TRINITY AND THE COMMUNITY



We must have more influence on our community, finding ways of taking the Good News to more people, supporting local initiatives, and, through financial and other means supporting the spreading of God's love throughout the world.

Trinity Church tries to express God's love for his people and creation in several ways, both locally and in the wider world. This work is strongly allied to our most important vision of developing greater engagement with, and service to, the community.

The Missions Committee arranges events and appeals to help raise some of the 10% of the income that is given away, and recommends how most of it is spent. Its two main events are an Autumn Fayre and Harvest Supper, with the latter including a talk about a particular charity and an auction of much of the harvest produce to raise money for it.

We support many international and national charities through regular donations and specific appeals. We have a long-standing link with a hospital in Kagando, Uganda, where we provide the salaries of two staff, and we support with both manpower and money an ethnic reconciliation youth project in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina. We participate in the annual Christian Aid and NCH door-to-door collections.

We are a FairTrade church and hold Traidcraft stalls after 10am services once a month, and occasionally at other times. A small group within the church have been active in the Jubilee Debt and Make Poverty History campaigns.

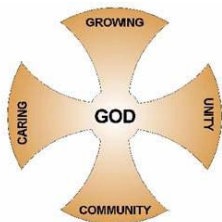
From 1996 to 2005 our previous vicar devoted 25% of his time to work in schools. From this a major initiative with churches working in schools grew in Earley and East Reading. Trinity has continued to be involved with this work both financially and through the time given by several members working with children, in the classroom and on church visits.

Ten years ago Trinity helped to set up, and still provides nearly half the volunteers for, a Child Contact Centre, which meets at the Salvation Army.

Church members have played key roles in the formation and continuing success of the local Crescent Resource Centre, which provides meeting space and other facilities for several groups (the Red Cross, a learning disabilities group, etc.) within the community.

We provide facilities for recycling of certain items, but do not yet have any specific policies on environmental stewardship; however, we would like to consider ways of doing this.

UNITY AT TRINITY



We are inevitably part of the visible unity of the church, and must strive to learn more of what our parent denominations can offer us, and seek to find ways in which we can help Christians in all denominations grow closer together through being close to God.

THE HISTORY OF TRINITY CHURCH

Trinity Church is a thriving example of a Local Ecumenical Partnership. This has its beginnings in 1983 when a small group of Methodist and United Reformed Church members began worshipping in the Radstock Community Centre. Six lay leaders from Christ Church, Woodley and Park URC in East Reading formed the basis of an organising group. Local people from Lower Earley gradually swelled the numbers of the local congregation. At a fish and chip supper in September 1983, it was resolved to establish a local worshipping congregation, as a Local Ecumenical Partnership, and to apply for formal recognition by the Methodist and United Reformed Churches. A minister of the Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit initially provided pastoral oversight ministry.

Later, it was agreed to build a new church, financed jointly by the Methodist and United Reformed Churches and the local church, and work on this was begun in 1986. Also during 1986, the Church of England appointed a new vicar at Earley St Peter's; and shortly afterwards, the Church of England began negotiations with the young church, with a view to joining the LEP. During 1987 agreement was reached that the LEP should be expanded to include the Church of England and the Church of England agreed to bear one-third of the cost of the new building. In November 1987 the new Trinity Church building was opened.

During the early development of Trinity, the three denominations were very generous in providing ministerial support at Trinity. Methodist ministry from the circuit continued and in February 1988 a full-time Church of England minister was appointed. In September 1988 a non-stipendiary United Reformed Church minister was ordained and inducted at Trinity. The congregation at Trinity was growing fast, with a large increase in all numbers, in services and activities. In 1992 Trinity became a Church of England parish in its own right.

With time, as Trinity Church became better established, the denominations gradually re-organised the pattern of ministry. In the early 1990s it was agreed that there should be two full-time stipendiary ministers, one Anglican and one alternating between Methodist and United Reformed Church. Later in the 1990s it was agreed that the total stipendiary ministry should be reduced to 1.5 (75% of the time of two ministers, with the same denominational pattern as previously). Finally, in 2003, it was agreed to move to the present pattern. There is now a single stipendiary minister in a rotating pattern (Methodist – Anglican – URC – Anglican – Methodist), with each minister

Trinity Church, Parish Profile

serving a fixed term, normally of eight years. As part of the agreed reduction in stipendiary ministry, it has been generally agreed that the denominations should seek to provide non-stipendiary ministerial support at Trinity.

During the period of rapid growth at Trinity, the new membership was drawn from all three denominations, with many of those joining the new church being people without much recent involvement in a church. Large numbers of baptisms occurred (between 60 and 80 per year in the early years; now more like 20 per year). Gradually, the numbers of newly confirmed Christians, who were inevitably members of all three churches, increased, and the denominational origins of membership for many of the congregation are now difficult to identify. Joint (Ecumenical) Confirmation Services became the method through which new Christians joined the church, while members continued to transfer from churches elsewhere.

Through the whole development of Trinity, the church has endeavoured to be a responsible church within each of the three denominations, maintaining good relationships with our parent denominations. However, we worship as a single congregation. Individual services may be recognisable as having particular denominational liturgies, but most worship also has a clear ecumenical flavour. Particular arrangements for the pattern of Communion services were agreed early in the expansion, to recognise the different needs of all three denominations.

Trinity developed most of the attributes that would be expected of a local church fairly quickly. Boys' Brigade and Pilot companies were formed. Parent and Toddler groups were established. Social groupings developed and were formally recognised. Methods of fulfilling some of the needs of the local community were initiated and supported.

Now as we change and develop our church buildings, we hope that the new entrance and chapel will be visible demonstrations of our three denominations working together to provide a worshipping community in the heart of Lower Earley.

FINANCE

The finances of Trinity Church are generally sound, with income usually roughly balancing the expenditure to which we are committed. A brief summary of the accounts is given below. A full copy of the church accounts for 2005–2006 is available as an appendix to this Parish Profile and will be sent to all short-listed candidates.

During the last two years, we have been raising money for the building extension, and this has provided serious competition to the regular giving to the central finances of the church. During this period, we have made efforts to increase giving only in respect of the Building Fund for the building extension, assuming that the anticipated reduction in giving to the main church account could be managed by using reserves. The money raised by the church for the Building Fund during the last two years has been £118k. In 2005-2006 regular income giving to the church has dropped by about £6k compared with 2003-2004.

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The amounts due to the denominations through Parish Share and Assessments are calculated using the policy defined by Churches Together in Berkshire. During the last few years, the total has increased at a rate rather greater than inflation. In particular, the amount for 2005-2006 was about £8k more than in 2004-2005.

The combined effect of the drop in income and the increase in assessment payments to denominations has led to a deficit on the main church account in 2005-2006 of £10.5k compared with an excess of about £1k in 2004-2005. The deficit problem is being urgently addressed, on both the regular income and assessment fronts, and we expect the main church accounts to be in balance in 2006-2007, while also expecting to complete the raising of the necessary money for the Building extension.

A major principle in the use of income at Trinity is that 10% of total income shall be given to charitable causes, both overseas and local. This applies to all income.

SIMPLIFIED SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS

(excluding moneys for the new building development funds)

Income

2000-1		2005-6
£45,339	Envelopes/Standing Orders	£50,782
£10,447	Loose cash	£11,216
£11,385	Tax refunds	£10,982
£1,263	Lettings	£2,566
£4,456	Special collections	£737
£2,628	Other	£4,398
£75,518	Totals	£80,681

Expenditure

2000-1		2005-6
£47,634	Denominational assessments	£62,186
£1,932	Minister's secretary	£4,355
£5,706	Charitable giving	£7,887
£2,509	Power, water, phone, etc	£3,715
£5,538	Stationery, photocopying, books, etc	£1,999
£4,318	Building costs	£5,996
£817	Insurance	£1,057
£7,309	Other expenses	£4,116
£75,753	Totals	£91,221