

# TRINITY NEWS & VIEWS



*“The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork”*

**January 2026 Issue 68**

## **A message from Rev Sam Funnell**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of TNV for 2026!

One might wonder, 'Where did 2025 go?' and long to linger a little longer in some of the special moments of the previous year. Or maybe we're glad to see the back of the past year and are looking ahead with eager anticipation or simply relief and hoping for better, easier times to come.

Whatever your situation and perspective on the turning of the years, or just this one in particular, a new year does give us all the chance to start again, start over, reframe life and how we live it. This is especially so in the Methodist Church when we also have our traditional annual Covenant service alongside the New Year. As we might be thinking about New Year's Resolutions, the Covenant service calls us to resolve to focus on the covenant relationship we are offered by God – the love behind the giving, the privilege of its gift, and the responsibility/opportunity we are given through it.

It makes me think back to the wonderful Nativity service that the 'Kids and Big Kids' of the Trinity Church Family (Messy Church, Junior Church and Morning Congregation) put on for us on the 7<sup>th</sup> December.

In that simple, rhyming re-telling of the birth of Jesus, we

heard these words:

*So what could we do, and what part could we play,  
To brighten up Christmas, or just someone's day?  
So please think about it, let's all play our part -  
To give what we can and warm somebody's heart.*

and

*Just open up and listen to what God has to say.  
Then be a part of the unending story, from today.*

I commented that the play, and its message prompt us to consider two questions in response:

*"What is God saying to you/me/us, this Christmas?"*

and

*"What can you/I/we do, to be part of sharing God's love  
this Christmas?"*



It strikes me that these questions are also relevant to the New Year and Covenant time, as these are not distinct from our Christmas celebrations but closely linked in time and meaning. What we've marked and taken to heart at

Christmas, ought to lead into and shape what we do and who we are in these early events of the New Year, and hopefully all the days of 2026 to come.

So, to revisit and reframe my questions of Christmas 2025 for New Year and Covenant 2026:

*"What might God be saying to you/me/us, this Covenant Service?"*

and

*"What can you/I/we do, to be part of sharing God's love in 2026?"*

May God's HOPE, LOVE, PEACE and JOY attend you as you ponder these questions and travel into all that 2026 will bring!

With love and prayers,

*Sam x*



## Dates for your diary

Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	Covenant Service (10.30am)
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> January	Circuit Prayer Session by Zoom (7.30pm)
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February	Church Council (7.30am)
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> March	World Day of Prayer Service at Trinity (10.30am) (see page 7)
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	Circuit Mission Supper at Trinity
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> March	Circuit Meeting
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> April	Maundy Thursday
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Good Friday
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter Sunday
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> April	Neighbourhood Party (see page 6)



## Circuit News

As has been previously announced Rev George Quarm will be leaving the Circuit in July 2026 and Rev Paul Glass will be relinquishing the role of Superintendent and stepping back to a part-time role. At the same time Rev Paul Tabraham will be joining the Circuit from Eastbourne.

This is the text of the announcements from the Circuit Leadership Team.

*"The Circuit Leadership Team are delighted to announce that following a successful visit to the Wey Valley Circuit last weekend, Rev Paul Tabraham has accepted our invitation to take up the role of Superintendent minister commencing September 2026. Paul will have pastoral charge of Knaphill, Merrow and Stoughton. We look forward to welcoming Paul and his wife Claire to the Circuit."*

*"The CLT are pleased to announce that following his stationing visit last weekend, Rev George Quarm has been offered and has accepted an invitation extended by the South Essex Methodist Church Circuit, (Basildon and Wickford areas) in Essex. George and Ama will be moving to their new Circuit in August 2026, and we pray God's blessing on them."*

It will be a special joy and privilege for the Trinity family to welcome Paul, Claire and family back to the Circuit.





# NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTY



**SATURDAY**  
**18TH APRIL 2026**  
**4:00 - 6:00pm**  
**Trinity Methodist Church**  
Brewery Road, Woking



There will be high tea, entertainment and a fun quiz.



If you know someone  
who'd appreciate an **invitation**

**CONTACT** Marian (07749 094064)  
Pauline (07729 301713)



**Volunteers** would be welcome to...  
Help on the day or bake a cake

**CONTACT** Pauline (07729 301713)



To give someone a **lift** or sponsor a **taxi**

**CONTACT** Hugh Bowerman

*Thank you for your continued support.*

The Neighbourhood Party Team



The Methodist Church



## World Day of Prayer



World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement led by Christian women of many traditions who call the faithful together to observe a common day of prayer each year. More than 120 countries participate in an annual day of celebration which brings together people of various races, cultures and traditions sharing God's word and worship.

On the first Friday in March the Day of Prayer begins on the international dateline in Samoa. Early in the morning, Christian women and men begin praying for our world. As the earth rotates, a great wave of prayer begins to build. It sweeps across the Pacific, touching Fiji and New Zealand, rolling through Asia: Japan, The Philippines, Korea and Bangladesh. The countries of Africa, and the Middle East are next. The wave reaches the shore of Europe as the day dawns there. Across the Atlantic it moves onwards, the Caribbean, the Americas, and on to the Pacific again until the sun finally sets over American Samoa where the final service takes place. A worldwide circle of prayer is complete.

**The 2026 service is being held at Trinity Methodist on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30am.** It has been prepared by the Christian women of Nigeria. The theme is "I will give you rest, come." Please do come and be part of this great wave of prayer. All are welcome!

**Wendy Rockhill**

## Bible Study at Trinity

A few years ago there were two regular Bible Study groups at Trinity averaging 9 persons in each group. Kathleen Bristow was the leader of one group meeting in her house. The second group was led by Margo Craig in her house or sometimes in the garden she enjoyed so much.

One morning an irritating niggle started to unsettle us. The niggle brought thoughts that challenged us with hints that said, "What is the use or value of all our Biblical knowledge? Are we enjoying the comfort of our familiar friends? Do we huddle together under the protective Christian domed bell, a bell with no echoes?"

I don't know where the irritation came from. The trigger may have been due to newspapers at that time showing photos on the right hand vertical strip of young children dying of hunger in Biafra.

We felt prompted to support a charity and suggestions were made. Kathleen told us that she and her husband supported a charity in Spain that helped homeless children. The charity was S.O.S - SOCIETAS SOCIALIS, Latin for 'towards equal in society'.



**SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES**

Our group voted to support the S.O.S Charity and applied to help where the need was greatest. We received a welcome and were allocated a village in Awasa Ethiopia which at that time was a temporary village of tents.

My records show that we started contributing in 1985.

The charity had been started post-war by an Austrian doctor who knew from experience that a substitute Mother could provide a child with the protection and stability for life as needed. Dr. Hermann Gmeiner went from door to door asking for regular money to start the first S.O.S. Village.

As Kathleen Bristow grew older Dementia distorted her normal life, her greatest dismay was that she could no longer remember the Lord's Prayer. For Kathleen, reality slipped from her fingers and beyond reach. Memory was shredded into splintered glimpses of history. Kathleen did not settle well in a local care home in Woking so her sister relocated her to a BUPA Home in Winchester where I could visit her.

On one occasion I watched a carer, a young man of African roots, lift Kathleen from the chair in the lounge and cradle her in his arms. I watched, with sad joy, as he carried her so reverently and laid her on her bed. Kathleen smiled at him. There was a halo in that room – I felt it – I saw it.

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Our Bible Study Group now meets monthly in the church, usually on the last Friday morning, with splendid guidance from Carol Hymers.

We still contribute to S.O.S. Villages. It is always a pleasure to receive letters and photographs of our village showing the progress of the children. The senior children are learning computer skills. Single women are trained to deal with problems as mothers and grand-mothers. The village is also able to help when needed to start new

trades. We are pleased to help with their future and pray for their well-being.

We visited the SOS Village in the Gambia during our visit to that country in 1993. I don't think Dr Hermann Gmeiner was able to look so far ahead to see many countries in the world with an S.O.S. Village.

**Peggy Boorman**

### **Liz Swift**



In November we were sad to hear the news that Liz Swift has died. Following a family cremation, we joined a service of celebration for her life at Trinity on 2nd December. After a career in science and education Liz retired to Byfleet where she was a member of that Methodist church and, prior to the formation of the Wey Valley Circuit, Senior Circuit Steward. A few years ago she transferred to Trinity and was a regular at Foundry Worship until she became too ill to attend. We continue to remember her friends and family in our prayers.

## Working People of Faith

In the wake of the terrible events on Bondi Beach In December, Philip Goldenberg – a member of the Jewish Faith and a Working resident well-known to us at Trinity – posted this message at the start of Hanukkah (or Chanukah), the Jewish Festival of Light in December.

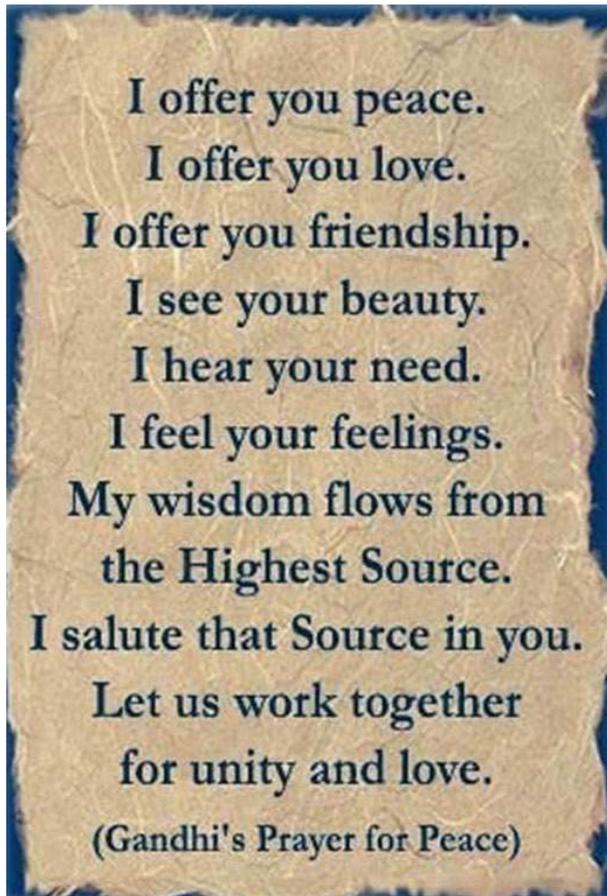
*".....Chanukah – the Jewish Festival of Light - has been desecrated by the forces of darkness, with the murderous "Islamist" attack on Australian Jews celebrating it.*

*The word "Islamist" is in quotation marks because Islam, by its nature and very name, is a religion of peace. So the last thing that should happen now is Islamophobia. Indeed, it was a Muslim who heroically, and at considerable personal risk, disarmed one of the gunmen. And for the current dreadful Israeli Government to link this dreadful event to Australian recognition of a Palestine State is an outrageous politicisation of a tragedy.*

*The debate in much of the Western world is dispiriting and simplistic. If you speak out against the actions of the current Israeli government, you get called a 'self-hating Jew' or worse (as I have been) or tarnished as an anti-Semite. And if you try to defend Israel's right to exist and to defend itself, you get called a baby-killer or other insults which are resonant of centuries of antisemitic abuse.*

*All people of faith need now to join hands to assert our shared ethical values. It is another welcome light in the darkness that so many people, of all faiths and none, have reached out to the Jewish community to express their horror and distress. We are truly grateful to all of them."*

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## Coffee Charity of the Month



Each month we have a different Charity that receives any donations given for refreshments served after the morning service. Over the past year these have been wide ranging from more local charities such as Engage which provides Christian outreach to our local schools and Woking Citizens Advice, national organisations such as Combat Stress, supporting those who experience mental health difficulties in the line of duty, to charities which work throughout the world seeking to improve the lives of the poorest and those affected by natural disaster such as Christian Aid. Over the past year we have raised hundreds of pounds for all of these very worthwhile causes.

This is something we will continue to do and would welcome suggestions for our 'Charity of the Month'. Often there is a connection between the charity and some of our members – perhaps they know of someone who has benefitted from the charity, or they may be directly involved with the charity themselves in some way. Please do let us know if there is a charity that you think we could support in this way.

With the worst of the winter weather due in the next few months, our first Charity for 2026 will be



**York Road Project**  
*Defeating Homelessness together*

the York Road project which helps to support those in our local community who don't have a home. They have a 10-bed shelter on York Road made available for those in

urgent need. It also provides a base for people during the day and backing to rebuild their lives through personalised support and guidance.

In addition they manage three 'move-on' properties with a total of 14 beds, for those transitioning to longer-term accommodation. With their Tenancy Sustainment Team this enables them to facilitate transforming a temporary refuge into a journey towards lasting independence.

The York Road Project has helped 816 people transition to stable housing in the past five years and help their clients address any medical, addiction, mental health and other needs.

**Helen Bowerman**

## **The Work of Christmas**

**(by Howard Thurman)**

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers,  
To make music in the heart.

## From our Chinese congregation



Although we have held many fundraising events in the past, the one on **16/11/2025** gave me a very different feeling. In previous events, the number of participants was not small, but this time there was a great difference. When promotion first began, only those members who regularly support such activities signed up, which was quite a test for me. However, as the date drew nearer, more and more members came forward to register; some even asked on the day before the event whether they could still be allowed to participate. In addition to various homemade foods, some members also offered items from their homes for charity sale so that more donations could be raised.

On the day of the event, the number of participants accounted for more than 80% of the whole congregation. Many stalls were sold out within the first half hour, and

quite a number of members, disappointed at missing out, placed orders hoping to buy more.

Although this event raised only **£1,450**, the enthusiastic participation of the members made me deeply feel the unity in the Lord, the single-minded effort to serve God's household without distinction among us. The joy brought by this feeling is truly beyond words, and it also demonstrated the teaching of mutual care and support among brothers and sisters in Christ.



May the experience gained from this event help foster more and closer relationships between our English and Chinese congregations, and may God receive the glory that is rightfully His. Amen.

**Edmond Tsui**

The Cantonese-speaking members of our Trinity family are in particular need of our prayers at this time. Some fifteen families are returning to Hong Kong to visit ahead of their applications for permanent residency in the UK when such visits will not be possible. Because of the strictures of the governing regime in Hong Kong these trips are fraught with anxiety, compounded for some who have family members affected by the recent horrific fire at Wang Fuk Court. These are unsettling times for our Chinese friends and we offer them our love and support.

## **“One Solitary Life”**

“He was born in an obscure village,  
a child of a peasant woman.  
He grew up in another obscure village  
where he worked in a carpenter shop  
until he was thirty.

Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.  
He never had a family. Or owned a home.  
He never set foot inside a big city.  
He never travelled two hundred miles  
from the place he was born.  
He never wrote a book or held an office.  
He did none of the things  
that usually accompany greatness.

While he was still a young man,  
the tide of popular opinion turned against him.  
His friends deserted him.  
He was turned over to his enemies.  
He went through the mockery of a trial.  
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.  
While he was dying his executioners gambled  
for the only piece of property he had, his coat.  
When he was dead, he was taken down  
and laid in a borrowed grave.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone  
and today he is still the central figure  
for much of the human race.  
All the armies that ever marched,

All the navies that ever sailed  
And all the parliaments that ever sat  
And all the kings that ever reigned -  
Put together have not affected the life of man  
Upon this earth as powerfully as this  
One Solitary Life."

[This poem was written by the Rev James Allan Francis and published in Philadelphia in 1926.]

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**Musicians from our Chinese and Foundry congregations  
between services, December 2025**

## Property Update

*As our Property Steward Hugh Bowerman has provided the following update on three matters that will be of interest to everyone at Trinity. Firstly, two on-going projects – the proposals for our Prayer Room and the replacement of our chairs. Secondly, the vexed issue of car parking.*

### **PRAYER ROOM & CHAIRS**

In worldly terms, our premises are our biggest asset. Being so busy, the premises are subject to a lot of wear and tear. We now publish a semi-regular update on the work being carried out in the weekly newsletter. I shall not therefore detail the numerous repairs, routine maintenance tasks, replacements and small improvements that have been carried out in 2025, just to say a huge thank you to Emlyn, Sarah, the Wombles and a small army of volunteers who step up to the mark when needed - we couldn't do it without you all.

This year we celebrated 60 years in the premises. To mark that occasion we have been fund-raising to improve the creche, crying room, family room or prayer room - the room behind the glass panel at the rear of the sanctuary that goes under a multitude of names! Once the work is done the space will be known as The Prayer Room. The good news is that we have raised sufficient funds to undertake the work, the bad news is that we are struggling to get 3 good quotes (at time of writing only one builder has responded . . .). I had hoped the work would be able to start early in the new year, I am now

thinking it may be closer to March. Watch out for further updates in the weekly Newsletter.

Fundraising has considerably exceeded what we need for the prayer room. Our second 'project' can therefore be actioned - to replace the chairs. A legitimate question is to ask 'why?' - aren't the current chairs still serviceable? From a technical perspective the answer is 'yes'. Weed out the half dozen red metal chairs in the halls that have bent legs and the rest all still stack OK. The Sanctuary chairs are also still serviceable, though a high proportion are starting to 'creak' in use and we've even had a few that have had more catastrophic breaks. The problem is that the serviceability of the chairs is not the issue, it's the serviceability of those of us who have to move them that is the challenge. Both the red metal framed chairs and the sanctuary chairs are heavy. I count myself as still relatively fit, but it is quite a workout to move all the chairs in the sanctuary so that we can vacuum the floor.

The other issue is the stackability of the chairs. The red metal framed chairs only stack 8 chairs high. If we have 120 chairs, that's 15 stacks. We have a trolley to move each stack, but the trolley requires strength to use and appropriate access to get it under the chairs. It's challenging to store stacks of chairs in a small space. Also look around the premises and you'll see lots of dints in walls and doors - very many caused by a collision between object and moving chair stack. For a fit person moving the chairs is quite do-able, but it's still a bit of a clumsy process.

If the red chairs are stackable, the sanctuary chairs are not. Well that's not quite true. There are versions of the unarmed chairs that can stack two high, but we don't

have those. We can stack the unarmed chairs two high by turning one upside down. It doesn't look particularly smart with all the legs sticking up in the air, and it's heavy work. It is also virtually impossible to move the two chair stack without unstacking, moving the chairs individually, then re-stacking elsewhere. Also don't underestimate the amount of floor space we lose to storing chairs.

Suffice to say that we need a better chair solution, and wholesale replacement seems to be the only sensible option. Informal comments received so far are that people like the multi-coloured effect and we must have a proportion of the chairs with arms. 'Technical' requirements are that chairs must be of welded metal frame construction (creak free), robust so as not to bend when abused (or to require considerable abuse to bend), comfortable, easy to clean, have bumpers and feet likely to still be present in 20 years and be able to stack at least 20 chairs high on easily moved trolleys. Sounds demanding, but such chairs do exist, so if anyone reading this has come across examples of what may be suitable chairs please let me know.

Something like this!



## CAR PARKING

First can I thank everyone who uses the car park responsibly and considerately. Our premises are busy, and there are people (often children or the infirm) walking around whilst cars move in and out. We have recently had a minor incident (person involved OK), but this was a reminder that car parks are dangerous places. Please continue to be sensible with your speed and alertness as you drive on the premises.

The second thing I want to note is that we have an increasing number of people parking in the car park who are not using the premises. With the charges in the public car parks, I am not surprised, however with our car park demand from premises users exceeding the number of spaces available on perhaps 6 sessions each week, we are trying to enforce a policy that the car park is for premises users only, and even then on a first come first served basis unless you have specifically reserved a space. With the Brewery Road car park often full as well, it seems unfair that someone coming to a meeting or funeral at our premises has to pay to park in one of the town centre car parks, often arriving late to our premises as a result, whilst someone else has used our 'free' car park so they can go to the town centre.



**Hugh Bowerman**

## VJ Day Remembrance

At our Remembrance service on November 9<sup>th</sup> Lee Slatter spoke to tell the very moving story of his Uncle Tom who had been a Japanese Prisoner of War, liberated on VJ Day 1945. Lee has kindly agreed to allow the story to be re-told here.

*You will recall that last August was the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day. I take you back to 1942, when my Auntie Vera and my cousin Trevor were staying at our home in Newmarket. This photograph [below] was taken by my Mother in a nearby wood to our home. It is difficult to see this picture as it has travelled thousands of miles. The photograph is of myself, my twin sister Sheila and our cousin Trevor sitting on a log. My cousin was four months younger than the twins. My Auntie sent this picture to my Uncle Tom in Singapore. He was with the 37<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Artillery of Wales.*



Singapore was captured by the Japanese later in 1942. From that date my Auntie heard nothing from Uncle. Was he captured or had he died? As it happened he was a prisoner on the Burma Railway. Appalling conditions, no conforming to Geneva Convention. Any prisoner who became very sick or wounded and could not work was shot! There were periodic morning parades; my Uncle had been wounded badly in the foot and was told to have his foot removed, he refused and struggled on. However one parade Uncle was called out to be shot. He always carried the log photograph of the three children with him. "Are these yours?" "Yes, my three". He was pushed away from the firing line.

My Auntie never gave up hope. Her church, Rayners Lane Baptist, prayed throughout the War that her husband may still be alive. In September 1945 a telegram arrived at Auntie's home. You can see it read "Safe in British hands Hope to be home soon. T Ball."

This struck me very strongly four weeks ago [October 2025] when Rev Sam was talking about prayer. Sometimes answered straightaway, others a little later, and above all



*God's perfect timing. Why I do not know, I thought of that battered log photograph in the Commandant's hands.*

### **The Top Ten....**

The BBC Songs of Praise programme did a survey on favourite hymns sung at school, then did a programme "The School Assembly Singalong". The results of the survey were:

- 10<sup>th</sup> Make me a channel of your peace
- 9<sup>th</sup> He's got the whole world in his hand
- 8<sup>th</sup> Colours of day (Light up the fire)
- 7<sup>th</sup> O Jesus I have promised
- 6<sup>th</sup> One more step along the world I go
- 5<sup>th</sup> Here I am Lord
- 4<sup>th</sup> All things bright and beautiful
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord of the dance
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Give me oil in my lamp

*And the favourite hymn was*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Shine Jesus shine

I don't know what age group did the survey, but when I was at grammar school our most popular hymn by far was 'Dear Lord and father of mankind'.

**Barbara Phillips**

### **A note to contributors**

It is our practice to publish each edition of TNV on the Trinity website. It is an important source of information about church life at Trinity and something we want to share with others. At the same time we recognise that some contributors may be uncomfortable for their personal details to appear on the internet in this way. We will be happy to omit names and any other personal details in any future issue if requested to do so.

### **From the Editor**

Thanks to all who have helped with the preparation and distribution of this issue of TNV. We are planning that the next issue will be published in the Spring. The deadline for copy will be announced in due course.

**David Lander**



**TRINITY NEWS & VIEWS is the magazine of  
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**“Trinity is a welcoming Church seeking to live  
in the love of God and share the message of  
Jesus Christ”**

**Church Address**

**Brewery Road Woking Surrey GU21 4LH**

**Telephone (01483) 730754**

**Email: [admin@trinitywoking.org](mailto:admin@trinitywoking.org)**

**Web Address: [www.trinitywoking.org.uk](http://www.trinitywoking.org.uk)**

**Editor: David Lander**

**Contributions to Trinity News & Views can  
be written or typed, and left in the church  
office or emailed to [tnv@trinitywoking.org](mailto:tnv@trinitywoking.org)**

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