

Church Building Project Development Appeal *for CS Lewis's church*

Holy Trinity Church Headington Quarry Oxford

Image by [Comfreak](#) from Pixabay

THE AIM OF OUR PROJECT

To restore and renew CS Lewis's church, equipping it to become a spiritual hub where fires of faith are lit in young and old alike

We seek to restore and renew our much-loved church, preserving its rich heritage for future generations, and creating new spaces to meet, worship, learn and reach out in Christian friendship to the local community.

As well as installing essential up-to-date amenities, we seek to create a heritage and educational area for visitors and pilgrims, a community café space for people to meet, and new lighting and furnishings to enhance our worship, and equip the church to be used for concerts, lectures and a range of local cultural and artistic activities.

Renewing Lewis's church continues his vision of 'Mere Christianity', creating a space for people of all ages and walks of life to discover the riches of the Christian faith, engaging their intellect and imagination, and living out their faith in the world.

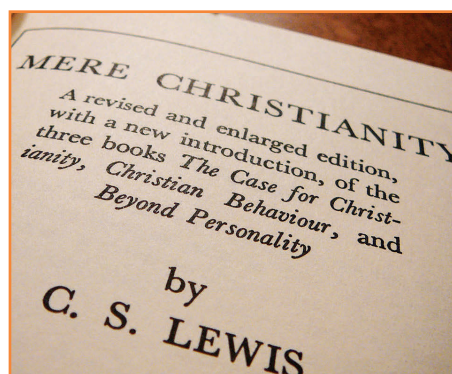


Image by [drewplaysdrums](#) from Pixabay

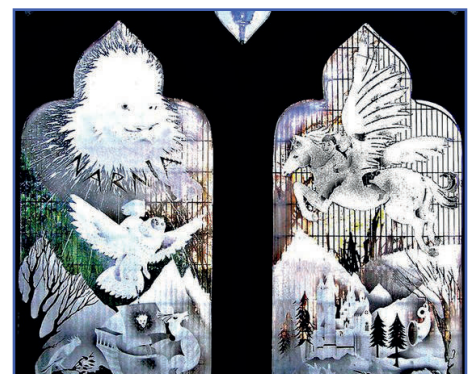




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BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Holy Trinity church was built in 1849, with the young George Gilbert Scott as architect. It is a small, beautiful and much loved building, often described as *“The Village Church in the City”*. Like most churches it has been altered over the years, to keep pace with the congregation’s changing requirements. Every generation has played its part in ensuring, not only that the building is well cared for, but also that it is sensitively adapted for changing times.

Holy Trinity has not only a local but also an international ministry. This is the church where CS Lewis, writer of the *Narnia tales* and many works of popular theology and notable academic books, first took communion after coming to faith, worshipped for 30 years, preached, and is buried in the churchyard. It is a centre for pilgrimage, every year receiving thousands of visitors from all over the world.

PROJECT VISION

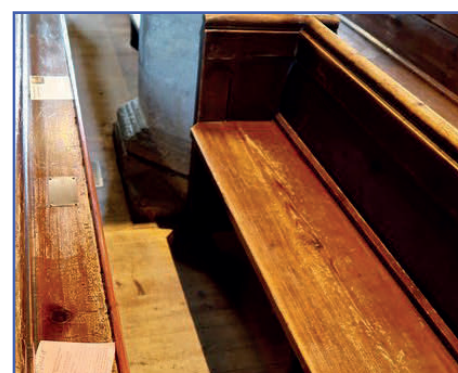
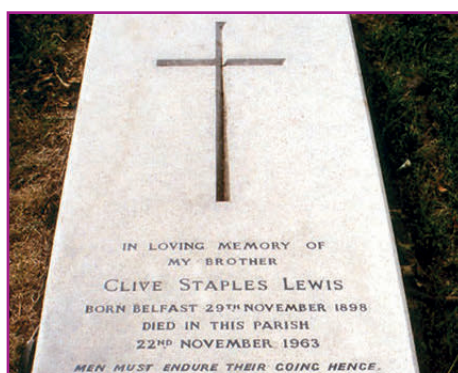
Today, Holy Trinity has a thriving congregation, but the building lacks the facilities it needs for the church to grow, develop, and further its mission. We seek to add new amenities and create flexible, well equipped spaces in the church. These will be used by the church and our partners for the development of new worship and prayer opportunities, and to deliver spiritual, pastoral and practical support.

HOW WILL WE USE THE REFRESHED SPACE?

We will provide spaces for study, personal growth, faith development, individual counselling and support groups. We also plan to provide social drop-in activities which will encourage people to mix and support each other. Some drop-in activities will provide an opportunity for Bible study and discussion of the Christian faith.

A particular concern for us is the effect of urban isolation and debilitating loneliness, and the associated mental health issues. Pastoral ministry in this community often brings to mind the word of CS Lewis in *The Problem of Pain*:

“Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say ‘My tooth is aching’ than to say ‘My heart is broken’.”





THE PROJECT PLAN

Every aspect of our plan aims to respect the Victorian ethos of Scott's building and also to enhance the quality of the experience people receive when entering and moving around the church. At the same time there will be new features which will enable us to serve and minister to the congregation, local community, visitors and pilgrims more effectively.

a) **Improved accessibility:** Our new design will give equal access, easier movement around the church, an accessible toilet, and more open space at the back and front of the church where people of all ages and abilities can gather.

b) **A new meeting room** with capacity to hold 30 people will be used for children's work and as a crèche on Sundays. It will also be used for discussion, study and support groups, and will be available to community and pilgrim groups.

c) **A community café** in the refurbished west end of the church will offer a warm welcome to all, including the parents of children at our local school at drop-off and pick-up times, encouraging peer support systems to develop.

d) **Refurbishing the chancel** will create a more flexible space allowing a wider variety of worship experiences and also public performance (concerts, school events, lectures, etc.)

e) **A heritage area** in the church and also in the grounds will offer further opportunities for education and reflection, and to encounter the writings and ideas of CS Lewis.

THE HERITAGE AREA

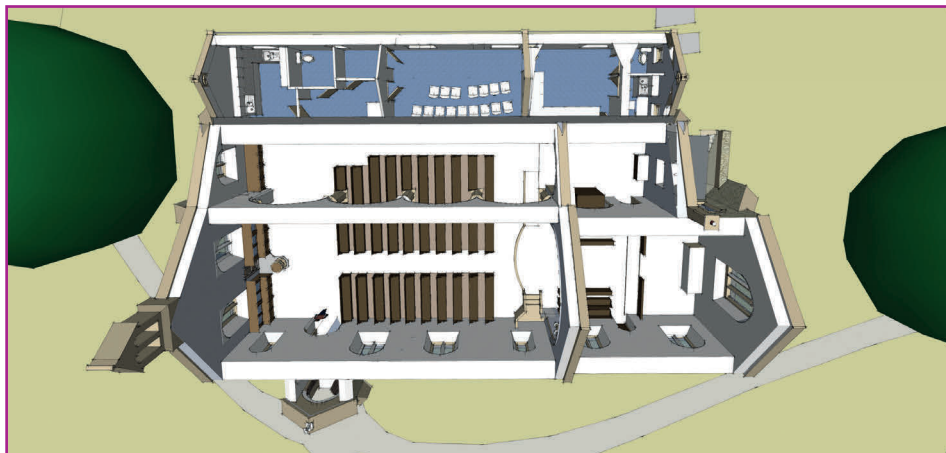
Our Heritage area will celebrate the history of Quarry and, of course, detail the life and theology of CS Lewis, his conversion to Christianity, and his work in this parish as committed member of the congregation and occasional preacher.

This area will offer fresh educational opportunities and bring theology to life through the example and teachings of Lewis. Resources will help people of all ages to explore how this adds to faith in life today.

In time, this will come to include:

- **AV presentations** (newly commissioned short films) for adults and children
- **Audio-guides** for visitors and pilgrims in different languages
- **Literature stands:** books, leaflets, postcards
- **New literature** appropriate for different ages
- A **donor book** recording project supporters
- An **annual lecture** organised in conjunction with external Lewis organisations
- **Educational materials** and **learning trails** for children

Complementing the work which will be carried out in the church, the grounds and associated outdoor spaces will also be refreshed and made more accessible to visitors and pilgrims, including a peace garden which can be used for reflection, prayer and meditation.



ministry - societal concerns - help



MINISTRY POST-COVID-19 AND CURRENT CONCERNS IN OUR SOCIETY

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a greater sense of connectedness within our parish community, and partnerships have been formed with local councillors and other community leaders. As we plan for the future, and seek to recover from the pandemic, the congregation of Holy Trinity look forward to adding our voice to the wider conversations taking place about community cohesion and care for the most vulnerable in our society. Lewis couldn't have put it better when he said: *'pain shatters our illusion of self-sufficiency'* (*The Problem of Pain*).

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of Oxford City Council, said recently: *"Oxford is an exciting, dynamic and booming city, but Oxford has always been a city of two halves –*

of haves and have-nots. Oxford's local authorities, businesses, charities and community groups, are working together to create the circumstances within which a large number of people can raise themselves out of poverty, and improve their and their children's life chances, but there is still a long way to go. We need to ensure that this improvement continues and that it is inclusive."

The congregation of Holy Trinity and our partners are committed to playing our part in this city plan to the benefit of our very particular community, building on the partnerships we have formed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.



CAN YOU HELP TO MAKE THE VISION A REALITY?

The total budget which will allow us to achieve the vision is **£590,400** and we are delighted that local people, trusts and the Diocese of Oxford have helped us to secure **£325,000**, so we are already more than half way to success.

To find out more about the building scheme, please visit our [project page](#).

If you are able to make a donation to help this vision to become a reality, please visit our [payment page](#) where you will find a number of support options.

We should be delighted to discuss our plans with you further. Please contact:

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