

# TUC

## CHRISTMAS 2019

### What Can't Wait?

Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for the annual celebration of the birth of Jesus and the affirmation of our incarnational theology, our belief that, in Jesus, God chose to be immersed in the human experience. It's a time to reflect on what is important to us and God's ongoing action in creation being incarnated over and over again. It's a time to reflect on and respond to the presence of Holy Mystery in our lives that is as close as our breath and as vast as the universe. That's the awe and wonder of Advent and Christmas.

One of the temptations is that while we're waiting and preparing, we have to put everything on hold. There is an element of truth to it. It feels true and it is, to a certain extent. We can just add more to a plate that is already full. If there isn't available energy to invest in other things, we simply don't get to it, at least that's true in my life. If all my energy is taken up doing the things that apparently can't wait, I rarely get to the things that can wait. It's the reality that the perpetual to-do-list really becomes a triage list with the can't wait items being the sole focus because there just isn't enough energy to deal with all the others. There are things that just can't wait, yet are the things we label as 'must do' the things that need to be there?

We all have a list of 'can't wait' items: getting groceries, doing laundry, going to work, attending appointments, cooking meals, cleaning the house, going to school, meeting deadlines, looking after pets, picking up kids and grand-kids, the list goes on, and while all of these things are important, from a spiritual perspective, are they the things that really can't wait?

Our Advent services this year will all focus around that question: what can't wait? Each week we'll look at this question through a different lens. Our themes start with Gods Promised Day (Hope) Can't Wait and continue with: Repentance (Peace) Can't Wait; Delight (Joy) Can't Wait; and end with Courage (Love) Can't Wait. It all builds to Christmas Eve when we ponder what it means for us, for Trinity United, Prince George, and the world to realize that God couldn't wait and continues to not wait. To ponder what it means to proclaim that Christ was born in a barn and that if it had been at Harmony House or Phoenix House would we have believed it? To ponder how the Saviour of the world, the Word incarnate, takes on human flesh in the most ordinary way and then to see how we are called to respond to the immersion of Holy Mystery in every aspect of our lives. That what can't wait isn't the routine of our daily rounds, but how we embody and show to one another and our community: hope, peace, joy, and love. Advent is about preparing, yet not just for the 'gift' of Christmas. Advent is about preparing for our response. For how we will live out being an inclusive fellowship embolden by a living faith engaged in joyful service. Preparing is one part of the equation and if that's all we do we've missed the point. Our response is equally important.

As I look at what's happening in the world, I've become clearer about what can't wait. As I look at events in our community, things happening downtown, the challenges faced by homeless people, un and under-employed people, by members of the LGBTQ+ community, by business owners, and community builders our embodiment of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love can't wait.

I hope this Advent and Christmas Season you will join us on this journey. You'll use the Advent Calendar and Daily Reflection resource. You'll join us for a weekly reflection on Facebook at TrinityUCPG. You'll hear the message of our children and youth on December 8 and our Choir's Cantata on December 15. You'll join with us as we remember those who celebrate Christmas with us in only memory and story on December 22; gather as people with 'little' humans at 4pm; as Families at 7pm; and for Communion at 10pm on December 24; and retell the Christmas story on December 29<sup>th</sup> at Trinity Downtown. Through each experience "what can't wait?" will guide us and "what's our response?" will shape us.

And so, let Advent prepare us, Christmas inspire us, and God's Spirit embolden us as we move from one year to the next. Advent blessings and Merry Christmas to each of you.

Rev. Bob



## Message from the Official Board

As the holiday season approaches, I hope that you will be able to gather with family and friends to celebrate this special time of the year. Maybe you will be seeing Christmas through the eyes of your children or grandchildren. Maybe you will be travelling to see family or having them travel to Prince George. Maybe you will be jetting off to warmer climates to escape the PG winter, or maybe you will introduce visitors to outdoor activities in Prince George.

We realize, however, that the season is not always a happy one. Let's try to remember that some people will be experiencing a Blue Christmas. Try to remember to recognize the loss that some members of our Trinity family are experiencing. Ask about their loved one; call him by name. Help them to remember happier Christmases.

Some people will face critical illness over the holiday season. Perhaps you can help a friend or neighbour by delivering a hot meal or shovelling their driveway. Others will be alone on Christmas Day. Perhaps you can add a chair at your dinner table or invite someone to come over for a cup of tea.

Let's continue to reach out to others especially those who face poverty. Our Soup Kitchen clients are always pleased to receive their Shoebox Gifts. Some open them right away while others put them aside to open on Christmas Day.

As we remember family traditions of our childhood, it may be time to start new traditions. Perhaps a family can help with the St. Vincent de Paul hamper deliveries, or they can volunteer to ring the bells at the Salvation Army Christmas kettle campaign.

We hope that your Christmas will be whatever you want it to be: joyful and chaotic, quiet and peaceful, restful and contemplative.

On behalf of the Official Board of Trinity United, I wish you a peaceful Christmas and hope for a new year that brings you health and happiness.

Judy Addie  
Board Chair



## Greetings from your Fellowship Team

Winter is on its way! I am looking forward to crisp blue skies and white vistas. Hopefully not too cold!

We continue to be active. An October muffin sale. Scarves and hats. Silent Auction. The upcoming cookie sale. All of these activities raise funds for the church to continue its various ministry projects

Looking forward, we are again hosting the Golden Age Social in February 2020. We will be calling looking for baking and assistance, please consider doing what you can. A difference this year is we are looking for Trinity members to provide the entertainment program. Do you have a hidden talent? Please let us know!

We do have opportunities for short term commitments – helping out with coffee once in a while but not monthly, the Golden Age Social for a single afternoon, cutting out hats and scarves on a morning. Is there a special event you would like to help us to carry out? Please let us know! We are always happy to welcome you, whether as team members or just to help out at a single event. You will find us in the kitchen before and after church services each week, or you can contact us through the office.

Wishing you all Christmas blessings.



Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Wilson  
on behalf of Trinity  
Fellowship Team



## “NETFLIX WITH HEART ♥” BY JUDY THOMAS:

Un- Natural Selection: A disturbing documentary about gene manipulation. This topic has potentially huge ethical implications and from the show, clearly needs some regulation. While not in my preferred logically presented format of background, issues, pros and cons, it did give much insight. We were left with the somewhat chilling prospect of unstable rebels their garages making glow-in-the dark fertile dogs etc. (So depressing we had to follow it up with an inspiring episode of the goodness done by the guys in new *Queer Eye* to settle ourselves prior to sleep.)

The Blind Side: This inspiring movie based on a true story has one of my favourite actresses, Sandra Bullock. This story shows how a wealthy white family takes in a black teenager from a poor family/ rough neighbourhood and how they support each other. Eventually, with tutoring, the black fellow pulls his grades up and gets a football scholarship. Sounds cliched, but well done, heartfelt.

Storm Boy: The beautiful scenery and bird life of Western Australia in this story reminds us why we need wild places and to stay true to our values. In this poignant story, an elder businessman remembers how he raised pelican chicks in remote beach cottage as a boy and his current decision to choose his grand daughter and the wilderness over big profits.

Inside Bill's Brain: Decoding Bill Gates. Bill Gates is arguably one of the most influential men of our era. It covers his time founding Microsoft but more focuses on his efforts in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Their charity is working on making a sustainable toilet to reduce diseases in the 3<sup>rd</sup> world; eradicating polio; solutions to climate change. Quite inspiring and boosted my faith in goodness.

Hasab Minhaj: the Patriot Act: Each humourous episode of this political show summarizes an issue. Topics covered include gaming industry, policing, fentanyl. Bitingly funny, edgy and hard to take but good for us. Some swearing.

Brain HQ: Not Netflix show but an app for your ipad with various games to train and tune up your brain. I find it works on different mental skills than my usual logic, spreadsheet, writing skills. I liken it to a gym membership for your mental acuity. I could feel my brain making new connections as I did things like identify a set of identical butterflies in ever diminishing time allotments.



**DINNER AND A MOVIE**  
MOVIE: MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET  
DEC 13 | 5:30PM | \$2/PERSON OR \$10/FAMILY  
TRINITY UNITED | 3555 5TH AVE  
SPAGHETTI, VEG OR MEAT SAUCE, GARLIC BREAD, SALAD  
RESERVE YOUR PLATE @ TRINITYPG.CA  
OR PHONE 250-563-9167 | DEBIT/CREDIT PAYMENT ACCEPTED

## Ministry and Personnel

Advent brings a rush of activities that often make the pre-Christmas Season lose its spiritual meaning. Advent is a time to wait for the coming of Christ. At Trinity, Advent season includes special meaningful worship services and activities that lead to a Christmas Eve Celebration of the Birth of Christ, God's gift to the world. We will enjoy some wonderful music, experience the talents of the choir, special musicians, and the children as they present their gifts. We will share our gifts with others less fortunate through our donations to the shoe boxes, soup and sandwiches and ACE donations and the many donations we make throughout our community at this time of year.



Our M&P Committee takes this time to acknowledge the hard work of our leaders and paid staff, Rev. Bob, Erica Skowron, Angela Alba, Vic Steblin, Diane Kjorven, Rebecca Fillier as well as all the volunteer, and lay leadership that we are so blessed to have at Trinity United. There are many extra duties and time donated during this season as well. We encourage you to take time to look around, to see in our own lives the astonishing gifts from God that we receive and experience in the gift of God's never-ending grace and love. God is in every moment if we take time to see. We wish you all a peace-filled, and fulfilling Christmas Season.



# World Day of Prayer

Exciting news – Trinity United Church PG has been chosen to be the host of World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 6, 2020.

## Some history around the World Day of Prayer

The origins of World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century when Christian women of United States and Canada initiated a variety of cooperative activities in support of women's involvement in mission at home and in other parts of the world, and over the years evolved into an ecumenical group.

The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative. It is run under the motto "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action," and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. The movement aims to bring together women of various races, cultures and traditions in a yearly common Day of Prayer, as well as in closer fellowship, understanding and action throughout the year.

Every year, worship service focuses on a different country and a specific theme, and the women of the chosen country develop the context and suggested content of the service, with that information fed out to the groups all around the world. Then, on the first Friday of March, in services all over the world that country becomes the focus of prayer and understanding. Through preparation and participation in the worship service, women worldwide learn how their sisters of other countries, languages and cultures understand the biblical passages in their context. They learn of the concerns and needs of those women and to empathize and feel in solidarity with them.

## The Prince George story

In Prince George, there are 6 denominations with 9 churches that are the key to the presentation: Sacred Heart Catholic, Grace Anglican, St. Michael's Anglican, Our Saviours Lutheran, St. Giles Presbyterian, St. Mary's Catholic, Immaculate Conception Catholic, Trinity United (previously under Knox United Church congregation) and Salvation Army.

The World Wide Day of Prayer, Prince George committee is comprised of representatives from each of these churches. In Prince George, the 7 denominations have taken turns hosting the World Day of Prayer service since 2003 and as indicated in the heading, Trinity United has been chosen as host church for March 2020. And as hosts, Trinity United Church representatives are automatically chairs of the committee for that particular year.

## Here at Trinity United PG

Trinity representatives/committee chairs are Pam Boulding who has been involved with WDoP for several years, and Marion Bartlett, a somewhat beginner to the cause. They are both excited about the 2020 country of choice – Zimbabwe, and have already been reaching out into the community to begin learning more about the country as a whole so as to be prepared to do the best possible to represent them well in our service. We are still awaiting our package with all the details, and will keep everyone informed as we move forward.

As the host church, there are certain expectations, such as –use of the sanctuary, some participation from various persons/committees/groups to help ensure its success, ie: door greeters, participants in the service, projection and live streaming assistance, and possibly more. As we finalize details, we will keep everyone informed, and once we know what assistance is needed, will reach out for volunteers to assist.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact either Pam Boulding or Marion Bartlett with any questions or suggestions you may have.



# Finance Committee



Another year has passed quickly, and we are coming the end of Trinity United – Prince George’s second year. The financial statements to the end of October were reviewed by the Finance Committee in early November. Those statements provide some expected news, some good news, and the predictable challenge for the remainder of 2019.

The expected news is that we have spent \$6,100 more than our offerings and other revenue for the 10 months ending October 31, 2019. The good news is that this is a \$2,700 improvement over the same period last year. The predictable challenge is that in November and December our revenue needs to exceed our expenses by \$6,100 if we are to break even in operating as Trinity United in 2019. That goal is within reach with everyone’s support – through offerings, the Silent Auction, the cookie sale, and ongoing careful control of our expenses.

During Advent, we often individually reflect on one-time offerings and charitable donations considering the number of appeals for assistance at this time of year. Please include Trinity United – Prince George in that consideration this year. As noted above, your ongoing support is appreciated and necessary.

Also, as we come to the end of 2019, we begin looking ahead to 2020. Please take the time during Advent to consider your offerings to Trinity United – Prince George for the coming year. If you participate in the Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) program this is a good time to reflect on those offerings particularly if you have participated in PAR for some time.

Recently, we have begun to accept credit and debit card payments. If you have a used tablet or mobile device that you are not using please consider donating it to Trinity to be used in the office to accept credit and debit card payments. Acceptable devices are any iPad mini, iPad 3 or better, iPhone 5 or better, and recent versions of android devices.

Please remember that to be included in your 2019 official receipt for income tax purposes, all offerings must be received in the church office by December 31, 2019. This includes regular, special, and Mission and Services offerings. The use of offering envelopes greatly assists in record keeping. If you don’t already have an envelope number or do not participate in the monthly PAR (Pre Authorized Remittance) program please consider these options for next year. If you would like any information about either of these options, or a statement of current offerings, please contact the church office.

The Finance Committee will be busy over the next couple of months. Our tasks include counting the weekly and Christmas offering, finalizing the accounts for the year, and preparing the yearend financial statements.

If you have any questions, please contact any of the committee members – Trish Appleton, Nancy Buchanan, Katherine Cruwys, Jim Reid, Don Homan, Reverend Bob or me.

Merry Christmas.

Allan Reed, Treasurer



**Did you know** you can make a one time or ongoing donation to support our ministry on our [www.trinitypg.ca](http://www.trinitypg.ca) website? Using the organization [canadahelps.org](http://canadahelps.org) you can financially support our ministry from anywhere in the world. All you have to do is click on the ‘Donate Now’ tab at the top of the page, fill out the information, and voila! Done. You’ll even get emailed a receipt for your donation. It’s a great way to support our various ministries and make a real difference in the lives of people in Prince George and around the world. Know someone who has everything or wants to give gifts of meaning this year? Have a friend or family member that doesn’t know what to get you? An online donation supporting the ministry of Trinity United, just might be the gift with meaning people are looking for.



# Outreach Committee



This Christmas, as we celebrate the gift of God's love through the birth of Jesus, we are reminded that sharing our love with our neighbour is more important than ever. According to the "Homeless Hub" in Prince George, 2018, there were 218 homeless persons documented, 64% of whom were chronically homeless (i.e. 6 months or more in the past year) while 22% were episodically homeless (homeless 3 or more times in the past year). 79% of these individuals in the homeless count identified as being of Indigenous descent. Fortunately, in Prince George and throughout Canada, there are new initiatives looking at the causes and prevention of homelessness. But, as long as there is homelessness, Trinity will continue its joyful service of providing a warm bowl of soup, sandwich, fruit and often a sweet or treat once a month down at St. Vincent's. Everything from the shoppers to the sandwich makers, to Gladys Goode's homemade soup, to the friendly caring servers is very much appreciated by the approximately 100 folks who come in each month.

As well as Soup Kitchen, Trinity also reaches out to those in need in the community through food donations for A.C.E (Evelyn O'Sullivan and Dave), In Deo Boxes distributed to Phoenix Transition House and Hadith House by Gabrielle Slater and other donations distributed to the FirePit and Intersect. We are also currently looking at ways to expand our annual Community Barbecue in September to include more of the community.

So, this Christmas remember that Mary and Joseph found themselves homeless and in dire circumstances so long ago, and relied on the love and generosity of strangers to bring God's message to us. May you be blessed and be a blessing to others this Christmas!



Outreach.



## Choir

The choir has been preparing this year's Christmas cantata "Candles and Carols" since September. We are excited to have lots of extra choir members singing with us this year including several men. Our bass section is the largest it has ever been with 7 men. Angela will be playing piano and Gerry Cawsey and Louise Phillips will be playing percussion. They will be joined by guest musicians: Greg Prosser – trumpet; Don Bond – flute and Terry Yeh – keyboard. The choir looks forward to this event every year.

The choir will also be singing at the 10 pm Christmas service. Some of our regular members will be away so we will be smaller in numbers. If anyone would like to join us for the Christmas eve service, we will be rehearsing on Wednesday November 27 and December 3 from 7:30 pm. Robin Norman, Laura Parmar and I are preparing a special trio for the 10 pm service. At the 7 pm service we will have an ensemble of brass instruments and a vocal soloist.

We hope that you will join us on December 15 at 10 am for "Candles and Carols" and on Christmas eve and that our music will bring you joy this Christmas season.

Erica Skowron  
Choir Director

