



## Christmas 2018

### Minister's Message

It's the most wonderful time of the year...for some.

Advent is almost upon us as I write. Christmas music has been in the air for weeks and the common hectic frenzy of Christmas preparations has already set-in for some. In the midst of it all, we're called as Christians to pause and prepare. "But that's what we're doing!" you might say. True, purchasing gifts and booking dates and times for dinners and gatherings are a form of preparing, yet how do we as Christians spiritually prepare for Christmas as we move through the Advent season?

There's no simple answer to that question, as I think for many of us, it varies from individual to individual. Then there's the idea that as a community we need to prepare and not just with tree shows and nativity scenes. How, in the midst of it all, do we not lose focus on the core of Christmas: the incarnation and indwelling of God?

It really isn't an easy undertaking, especially when our society seems all too content to embrace the capitalist coopting of Christmas while at the same time being disgruntled about the Christianism of Christmas. Take for example the recent incident at the Pine Centre Mall. I'm sure there is more to the story than what was reported and yet underlying the whole thing is the complaint that the Christmas music was too Christian. Wait...what? Christmas music was too Christian? Isn't that like saying the Christmas tree is too Christian or the star or angel tree topper, of the manger scene, or Christmas gifts? How can you have an un-Christian Christmas? It's like saying Ramadan is too Muslim or Yom Kippur too Jewish, or Diwali too Sikh. My point isn't how outrageous the complaints were, although I do think that, it's more that preparing for Christmas as Christians, both individually and as a community, is challenging and that maybe, as much as we want to lament it, the challenge is a good thing.

I'm reminded of the opening of the Jewish Sadder where the youngest child asks the question, "why do we do this?" The question creates the space for the family or community to tell their faith story, to remember the presence of holy mystery in their history and their present, to encourage one another in their faith. I think for Christians it's not so much the asking of a question as much as it is the challenge of preparing to celebrate the birth of Christ in the midst of a religious season that has been commercially coopted. It doesn't feel harder to do...it is harder, which means it's more effort and I'm sure that's the last thing you wanted to read!

All of the above, is part of the reason why this year we're focusing on the 200 year old hymn Silent Night. Our theme Calm and Bright is in direct juxtaposition to a world that often feels chaotic and dark. Starting Advent 1 and for the whole Christmas season our gathering song and response will echo our theme and say, "we need a little silent night in here." I know for myself, there are always moments in Advent when this statement becomes my plea. When I think of what's happening around the world, of migrant caravans and closed borders, of parents-in-waiting just trying to find a safe place, of all the commercial and familial pressures and expectations, of those who are alone, forgotten, ignored, and abused...my plea becomes, O God, we need a little silent night in here...in me.

One of the ways we're trying to focus on the core of Christmas this year is the opportunities we're offering Christmas Eve. At 4pm the experience is designed with kids under 5 in mind. We will share the Christmas story, sing carols, join in prayer and head out into the wonder of a silent night – in a shorter time of about 30 minutes. At 7pm the experience is designed with families in mind. We will look for and unwrap presents, sing carols, join in prayer, ground ourselves in the Christian story of incarnation, and marvel at the wonder of the star. At 10pm the experience is more contemplative, a little slower. We'll re-member ourselves to the incarnation, share in communion, join in carols, listen to special music, and celebrate this holy night.

Yes, there is challenge, and yet in the midst of all the activities, noises, and flavours of Advent and Christmas my prayer for each of us is that we will find a little silent night and when we do, right at the center of it, we will rediscover how the ongoing indwelling of God as holy mystery continues to shape who we are and the world we can build.

Advent and Christmas blessings to all.

Rev. Bob

# Official Board



“Go make a difference, we can make a difference.”  
(Voices United #209)

We have now been together as Trinity United Church for almost one year. Last year at this time we were holding merger conversations, deciding on a name and meeting new friends as the two founding churches came together as one united church in Prince George. At the retreat in November 2017, we came up with the three core values of our church community: Living Faith, Inclusive Fellowship and Joyful Service.

Two official boards have come together to work as one on behalf of Trinity United looking at the ‘big picture’. Committees and teams look after the details of the church holding meetings, balancing the books and running events. The staff looks after the day to day operations in the office, in the buildings, during the services and with the music ministry. Of course, we couldn’t do all this without the leadership of Rev. Bob. You are all making a difference in the life of our church.

We are very fortunate to have our music ministry which is an important part of our services. The choir and others are reaching out into the community and participating in special events. Our Fellowship Team is like the energizer bunny; it keeps going and going with the various fundraising activities. The Christian Education Committee provides learning opportunities and activities for children, youth and adults.  
All these people are making a difference.

Some churches do not have a building to call their own, but Trinity United is lucky enough to have two. Trinity Downtown continues to add user groups as it develops into a community centre. Some of the groups are the Montessori Daycare, The Way Ministries, Northern Twisters, Al- Anon and the R.C.M.P. Restorative Justice. There have been concerts, weddings and funerals held in the sanctuary. More concerts are being planned for the new year. The Official Board meets in the Lounge and the downstairs area is being used for Messy Church and has been rented for birthday parties and other events. These activities and user groups are making a difference.

We have tried to continue the traditions of both churches and therefore we have Jack Frost gifts for Phoenix Transition House and Hadih House and Shoebox gifts for guests at the Soup Kitchen at St. Vincent de Paul. Thank you to the Outreach Committee for its monthly Soup Kitchen and for coordinating the Christmas gifts to those in need. Trinity United will be making a difference in the lives of many people in Prince George over the holiday season.

We have come together for meals including the Easter Brunch, the Community Barbeque, the Fall and Spring Dinners, Messy Church, and the monthly Soup and Sandwich Lunches. Thank you to all the people who took a leadership role, to the Friends of Trinity and to those who just jumped in to help. Your help has made a difference.

Yes, there have been some changes, but change is a part of life. More use of technology and changes in worship and communion have taken place because we are constantly learning and growing. It’s wonderful to have the new screens and to be able to offer our services on Live Stream to those who are at home or who are far away. Churches that do not have a minister are airing our services live or using one from the archives. We are fortunate to have Rebecca at the control board to keep us on the right slide. This is making a difference.

We are also reaching out to the community with Facebook and on the website. Some people have contacted us to find out how to make a shoebox gift that stays in Prince George. Others are donating toiletries and gifts for the Jack Frost box. We are making a difference in the Prince George community.

Your gifts to Mission and Service is making a difference and will help with the United Church’s work in Canada and throughout the world.

As we move into our second year as Trinity United, we can continue to make a difference in our church family, in our community and in the world.

Judy Addie  
Board Chair

## Choir



On December 9, your Trinity United choir will be performing “Birth of a King” and “Messiah Suite”. This Cantata contains many of our favourite carols. Performing with us will be special guest musicians Don Bond – flute, Greg Prosser – trumpet, Laszlo Klein – French Horn, Sam Nelles – trombone, Simon Cole and Grace Waddell - clarinets, our own Gerry Cawsey on percussion, Angela Alba – piano, an augmented choir and four narrators: Em Cawsey, Dorothy Seiter, Marian Bartlett and Shannon Carson. The choir has been rehearsing since September and are excited about presenting this work for you. Please join us for this very special event and support the choir's dedication and commitment.



Join Diane Kjørven and the choir on December 19 at 5 pm at the Railway Museum for an hour of caroling.

On Christmas Eve, we will have special music, at both the 7 p.m. and the 10 p.m. service. We look forward to seeing you there!

Erica Skowron, choir director

## Finance Committee



We are quickly coming to the end of Trinity United – Prince George's first fiscal year. The financial statements to the end of October have been reviewed by the Finance Committee and the Official Board. Those statements provide some good news and the predictable challenge for the remainder of 2018.



Offerings for the first 10 months of this fiscal year total \$124,000. That represents 79% of the budget for Offerings for the year. As November and December are generally positive months for offerings the \$157,300 budget set by the congregation in February 2018 is within reach.

However, to October 31, the church's expenses have exceeded its revenue by \$8,800. This is a significant improvement over the excess expenses at the end of September. Thank you. The Finance Committee believes that it is important, during our first year as Trinity United – Prince George, to finish the year with revenue equalling expenses or perhaps even a small surplus. We also believe that the challenge can be met.

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 2018, we begin looking ahead to 2019. 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.

The Mission and Service target of \$20,000 for 2018 is within sight. Mission and Service offerings to the end of October total \$18,300.

Please remember that to be included in your 2018 official receipt for income tax purposes, all offerings must be received in the church office by December 31, 2018. 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.

We are grateful for the support provided to the Finance Committee by our Bookkeeper Trish Appleton. If you have any questions, please contact any of the committee members – Nancy Buchanan, Katherine Cruwys, Johanna Jenkins, Elizabeth MacRitchie, Jim Reid, Revered Bob or me.

Merry Christmas.

Allan Reed, Treasurer

# Worship Committee

When I reflect back on the past few months (and the year), it has been an exciting time for the Worship Committee with some new things implemented, and some other things that have been tweaked to add a little bit of different flavor to a usual part of service, some tidy up, improved cupboard utilization, some positive changes in the sanctuary, and an exciting December to look forward to.



*First, the helpful part* – the 3<sup>rd</sup> communion station, manned by Rev. Bob, boasts gluten free crackers, and individual juice cups, providing a solid gluten free solution. This gives people with gluten intolerance a chance to participate in communion without the fear of cross contamination. No more concern about dipping their rice cracker in a cup juice that may be contaminated with bread residue. For some, that could ruin the rest of their day.

Aside from the gluten aspect, for people that have are feeling unwell, the individual cup at the 3<sup>rd</sup> station means they can reduce the risk of passing it on to someone else. And for people who may have immune system concerns; the individual cup helps to lower the risk of germ contact.

*And now for the tweaking* – Those of you who were at church on October 7, 2018 would have noticed a minor change in communion, namely the cubed bread consisted of a variety of types. Reason – World Wide Communion Day, a day when worldwide Christians mark the almost universal Christian practice of breaking bread with one another and remembering both the night when Jesus instituted what we now call the Lord’s Supper. The variety of breads in our service was to reflect the diversity of cultures breaking bread in unity that day. We expect that we will retain that practice for World Wide Communion going forward.

While on the subject of communion, I want to pass on a huge thank-you to an often unsung volunteer, Sandra Dingwall. For years, she has quietly and efficiently prepped and organized all elements in readiness of communion. Sandra, thank-you so much for your dedication. Job well done.

*Tidy-Up* – This year the Worship Committee has begun a semi-annual “Eyes Wide Open” walk. What is that?? As a group, we walk through the building as if this is our first time in this church, first time in any church, or someone looking for a new church. Often, when people are used to their surroundings they become accustomed to where things are put, (or just left), how entryways look, etc. We had our first walk through in late spring, and identified some areas that might need some work, ie: the pew that was under the bulletin board was moved to the hall by the kitchen giving seating for the music school vs hap-hazard chairs in the hall, and the pew from Trinity Downtown was been moved to Trinity Church, and is used for seating down from the office – no more chairs. Bulletin boards were tidied with clearly designated areas (thanks Marilyn), smaller garbage cans at back entrance, etc. The front entry got a smaller table helping to reduce congestion on Sunday mornings, and some other general cleanup. Our next walk is scheduled for January, but you can all help. If you note any areas that you think need some TLC, please bring it to the attention of me or any other Worship Committee member.

*Cupboard utilization* – We have managed to tidy the Worship Cupboard to the point the two lower door areas are empty. The cupboards are very deep, making it difficult to get at anything in the back, limiting use potential. Gary Dean has just completed rolling trolleys for those two cupboards, which should dramatically increase the capacity of each cupboard.

*Positive changes in the sanctuary* - Wow, what a great change, three televisions, changing us from wall projection to much clearer details on the TVs. Thanks to Bill Hydyma and his crew for moving them from Trinity Downtown. Yes it took a while for them to get here, but there was a lot of planning and other pieces that needed to be done before the move. It took a bit longer than anticipated to tie up the loose ends. But good job everybody. This change to TVs has meant a change to building the projection details, so please be patient though the trial and adjustment era while best font sizes, brightness, backgrounds and such get sorted out.

*December* – Welcome to the world of “Silent Night”. 2018 is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the song Silent Night. What an amazing Christmas Carol. No wonder it has stood the test of time for centuries. As a celebration of the song and the anniversary, a portion of each service in December will focus on a piece of that song. As well, there are a number of additional services, and an ecumenical service on Christmas Day, so make sure you get a copy of the December calendar to see the times and places throughout.

And a huge thank-you to everyone who has come forward to chat about items of concern or to let me know of things you would like to see, and what you really liked. I fully appreciate that there are things that may not sit just right with someone, and sincerely ask that in those cases please catch me up for a chat. I will do my very best to answer your concern, find a way to fix it, or find a solution.

In closing – if anyone has a particular worship theme that you would like to suggest, please contact myself or Rev. Bob. The committee is always on the lookout for the interests of the congregation, but the best way to know for sure is to hear directly from you.

Again thank-you to everyone for your tremendous support in 2018, and looking forward to seeing what 2019 brings.

Marion Bartlett – for the Worship Committee

# Advent Greetings to You All From Fellowship



The Fellowship Committee is very busy as Advent approaches. The Silent Auction on November 25 is fast approaching. In the week leading up to this, we are busy preparing bid sheets for the various donations and setting up the hall the day before. Please stop in to browse through the items before services on the day of the auction, and join us for cinnamon rolls and hot chocolate and Christmas shopping at 11:00.

Also fast approaching is our annual cookie sale by donation on December 9, the same day as the Christmas Cantata. This is an easy event to get involved with either by baking cookies for us to package up on December 8<sup>th</sup>, or by doing your Christmas baking the easy way, by purchasing cookies after the Cantata is concluded. A word of warning to anyone that has not been a part of this before, the cookies tend to go very quickly!

Upcoming in the new year, a return to muffin sales and hosting the Golden Age Social at the Civic Centre on February 13<sup>th</sup>. We will have a Valentine theme. You can expect a call touching base with you, and asking if you are able to help with refreshments or on the day of the event with set up, hosting, serving or clean up. You can donate as much or as little time as you are able. It is wonderful to visit with the seniors and catch up on their news. We are especially hoping for some gentlemen who can assist with arriving and departing guests, especially those arriving on buses from various facilities.

We are always looking for new members, and are glad of any assistance you can provide. You can sign up to be a Fellowship Baker on the bulletin board in the Narthex, you can attend any of our meetings, we are glad to let you know where they are and maybe even include you in one of our car pools. If there is a specific event that calls you, please speak to any one of us, we would be happy to get you involved.



Wishing you a peaceful and happy Christmas season,

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Wilson  
On behalf of the Fellowship Committee

## Pastoral Care

Do you know anyone who needs pastoral care? Please let Rev. Bob know.

## Youth Group

This year our Youth Group has enjoyed the 4-H Haunted Halloween Barn. We will be helping assemble the Shoe Boxes for our Soup Kitchen on December 8 at 1pm in the CE Wing. Look out for some more exciting fun in the New Year.

If you have a child/children/grandchild/grandchildren between grade 6 and grade 12 who would be interested in joining us, please let me know [ehudyma@gmail.com](mailto:ehudyma@gmail.com) or 250-564-7848. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Elaina Hudyma

Many blessings,

Elaina



## Music at Trinity United Downtown

There will be music at Trinity United Downtown (the old Knox United Sanctuary) on the second Tuesday of every month. First a half hour organ recital by Vic Steblin at 12:30 noon especially for those in the downtown Prince George area. Then there will be an hour long concert involving others at 7:00 pm on that day. Trinity Downtown is at 1448 Fifth Avenue, Prince George BC. Admission is free.

The next events are on Tuesday December 11<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 pm and 7 pm.

# WONDERHOSTS

TEMPORARY ADVENT WONDERHOSTS - That would be all of you!

I have been thinking about the Season of Advent and the special services and events at Trinity. We all know that this is a time when folks who have not been around much, often return. Some people decide to try and connect with the 'real' meaning of Christmas by coming to a church. One Wonderhost at each door is not enough.

So please, each of you take time to notice and reach out to anyone who appears to be a newcomer. At the Passing of the Peace invite them to join you for coffee. Maybe you have an old friend who used to come to St. Andrew's or Knox. Offer them a special invitation to join us.

Maybe you are reading this Newsletter and have not been to church for ages...Come On Down! We would love to see you.

Beth Quesnel, Wonderhost Co-ordinator

## Merry Christmas from Outreach!

Christmas is the season of giving. Each year we celebrate God's greatest gift to the world, His Son, Jesus. The birth of Jesus brought, and still brings, hope and love to a world filled with hatred and despair. In a similar smaller way, we can bring hope and love to those in constant need of support in our world. Expanding our circle of family and friends to include the poor and marginalized, those suffering from abusive relationships, mental issues, and loneliness brings some brightness into their lives. At this time of year, there are a couple of practical meaningful ways to demonstrate one of Trinity's core values, Joyful Service.



Jack Frost Boxes provide gifts to women and children at the Phoenix Transition House and Hadih House, who have experienced or are at risk of, abuse and violence. Items for the boxes may include, but are not limited to, hats, gloves, scarves, slippers/socks, toiletries, brush/comb, notebook, pen/pencil, hygiene products, razors, colouring books, lotions, sweets.

Another option are the Christmas Shoeboxes which are given to our friends at the Soup Kitchen on December 9<sup>th</sup>. It is amazing to watch the anticipation and excitement of opening a special gift. For many, this is the only bit of joy they will receive this Christmas. Items can also include gloves, hats, scarves, socks, puzzles or cards, notebook, pen/pencil toiletries ( no mouthwash or aftershave please), sweets, gift cards.



Please encourage friends and family, businesses, teams or groups to get into the spirit with either or both causes. The more the merrier! Just remember they need to be into the Church office by December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. Please specify if it is to go towards Jack Frost or Shoeboxes. Other ways you can give back are through financial or gift donations to the boxes or Soup Kitchen, and/or coming to Trinity, CE Wing, on Saturday December 8<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm to help wrap extra shoe boxes. Thank you to everyone who has helped us out throughout the year.

May you all be blessed with love, joy, gratitude, and the gift of giving this Christmas!

God Bless,  
Outreach

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**December 2 - Soup and Sandwich Lunch**

**December 8- Youth Group preparing shoe box gifts at 1 p.m.**

**December 9 – Choir Cantata - “Candles and Carols”**

**December 9 – Cookie Sale after church**

**December 9 - Soup Kitchen**

**December 16 – Sunday School Christmas Presentation**

**December 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE**

**4:00 p.m. – Children's Service**

**7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve family service.**

**10:00 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Eve Communion service.**

**December 25 – Christmas Day Service at St. Giles 10:30 a. m.**

**December 30 – Services of Carols and Readings 10 a.m.**