

Key Scripture Isaiah 40:1, 2

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your  
God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her  
that she has served her term, that her penalty is  
paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.



Theme - Who Pays Double?

## **Sing in the Season**

### ***47 "Still, Still, Still"***

Still, still, still; the night is calm and still.

The Christ child in his crib lies sleeping,  
Angels round him watch are keeping.

Still, still, still; the night is calm and still.

Sleep, sleep, sleep; sweet Jesus softly sleep,  
While Mary sings and gently holds you,  
Safely in her arms enfolds you.

Sleep, Sleep, Sleep; sweet Jesus softly sleep.

## 46 *"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"*

Gentle Mary laid her child, lowly in a manger,  
There he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Saviour?  
Ask the saved of all the folk who have found his favour.

Angels sang about his birth, wise men sought and found him.  
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, glory all around him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;  
All the plains were lit that night, all the hills were ringing.

### **Welcome and Announcements**

Trinity is Welcoming, Open, Inclusive and Accessible.

- Trinity is an Affirming Congregation

### **Congregational Notes -**

**White Gifts / Angel Tree** - The salvation Army will be distributing toys as in the past and Trinity will still contribute. However, to reduce the possibility of contact with COVID-19, please deliver your White Gift directly to the Salvation Army. Also, instead of Christmas Hampers (food boxes) the Salvation Army will be giving Gift Cards for Walmart, Independent, and Metro.

If you wish to contribute, you may arrange to purchase Gift Cards though the Office and we will forward them to the Salvation Army. We will still have a White Gift Sunday service to recognize and celebrate this wonderful Ministry.

**Christmas Cards are available for sale as gift packs.** Jan Montgomery will be in the front foyer for those who wish to purchase. We ask that if you do wish to purchase cards, that you linger in the Sanctuary

until the folk who wish to go straight home have cleared the lower hallway.

The Spiritual Leadership Team is hosting an **Advent Study - *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent***. **Wednesdays at 2:00 pm**. Two copies of our book will be in the church front foyer. They are available for free or by donation. A few may meet in person if remote is not an option. Please reply via email to me if you would like to participate remotely and I will send an invitation to Google Meet.

The Spiritual Leadership Team has selected an Advent Calendar for distribution.

**The Longest Night - A Worship Service of Hope, Strength, & Community - Winter Solstice** will be held on **21 December, at 6:30 pm**. While the content and intent will remain, COVID-19 will cause us to modify the format. We will meet in the main Sanctuary and your candle(s) will be lit by proxy.

Gift Cards are for sale though the office and can be ready for pickup on Sundays or by arrangement.

## **Christmas Services**

24 December

- Children's Service 4:30 pm will be virtual
- Family Service 7:30 pm will be in the sanctuary
- Late Night Communion Service will be virtual

**Our Stewardship Team is praying for a Christmas Miracle**

Please consider Pre-Authorized Payments (PAR) as a consistent way to support the congregation



# **Trinity United Church's Holly Jolly Christmas Auction**



This online fundraising auction of new items, crafts, art and baking will be held on our Facebook page between **5 p.m. Friday Dec 4th and 5 p.m. Friday Dec 10th** winning items can be picked up on the 11th between 12 noon and 3pm

If a lunch delivered to your home would be helpful, we will serve as we are able. Our Lunch volunteers pray over each bag. Call Cynthia Sirett or Betty Lou for details

Masks are available at the church Tuesday and Saturday 11:30 am - 12:30 pm and Sunday morning prior to worship.



We are grateful for the Town of Smiths Falls and Lanark County. Take Away Meals are subsidized through the generosity of the Community Grant Program and COVID-19 emergency funds.

Two Guys for Lunch are active partners with us in this community service.

### **Acknowledging Traditional Territory**

Smiths Falls is located on the traditional territory of the Algonquin peoples dating back countless generations. We are grateful for our neighbours and recognize the opportunity to exercise the Ministry of Reconciliation

**Introit** 64 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" vs. 1 and 2

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

### **Call to Worship**

Now is the time to get ready -

**Let us prepare the way of the Lord!**

Now is the time to be changed -

**Let us repent and seek forgiveness.**

Now is the time to welcome God into our midst -

**Let us worship God in humble expectation.**

*Lighting of the*

*Christ Candle*

*Advent Candle - Peace*

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

**We are easily distracted by the darkness of force and power and we often choose strife and turmoil.**

**Source of light, shine in our lives and in your world with your everlasting peace.**

### **Prayer of Gathering**

God of all times and places, you are holy and loving.

You create pathways where there is no path.

You prepare us to receive wonders beyond imagining.

In every time and every place, you have raised up leaders  
who point to your glory and honour your greatness.

You have called us by name, baptized us with water and with the Holy Spirit.

You bless us for abundant living, and set us in the world to serve you.

We are your people, and so we worship you  
as our Creator, our Redeemer, and the Breath of our lives,  
one God, now and always.

### **Hymn 6 "A Candle Is Burning"**

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,

A candle of hope in December's dark night.

While angels sing blessing from heaven's starry sky,

Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

A candle is burning, a candle of peace,

A candle to signal that conflict must cease:

For Jesus is coming to show us the way;

A message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

A candle is burning, a candle of joy,  
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.  
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow  
As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

A candle is burning, a candle of love,  
A candle to point us to heaven above.  
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,  
For Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

### **Learning with Children**

White Gift Sunday began in 1903 in Painesville, Ohio when a minister's wife, upset over her children's arguing over gifts they had received in a Sunday School Gift exchange, came up with an idea. She remembered a story about a king who received gifts that were wrapped in white so that all the gifts looked the same. By doing this, the love and devotion of the giver became more important than the gift.

The following year, it was suggested that the Sunday School bring gifts, wrapped in white, that would be given to people in need in the community. The idea caught on and is still practiced in many churches today.

In our Bible reading today we will hear -

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.  
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Making roads straight and hills lower and valleys higher makes everything more equal and easier to access. This is a vision of justice and fairness. It is part of the reason we share our White Gifts at Christmas.

Making things fair and equal is one of the ways we see God at work in our community and in our world.

At Trinity, white gifts are usually collected and distributed by the Salvation Army. We took our gifts directly to the Salvation Army, to reduce the possibility of contact with COVID-19. Our Prayer for Peace rests with the gifts given.

### **Childrens' Prayer**

Dear God,

In our world where some people have a lot and some people have little; where some people seem to have straight paths and others crooked; where some people seem to have mountains to climb and others have smooth planes and pastures; bless our White Gifts and help us to work together to make burdens small and blessings great for everybody.

Amen.

### **Call to Confession**

John the Baptizer called people to repent

and so we join together in confession, seeking God's grace.

### **Prayer of Confession**

**God of mercy,**

**We resist changing our hearts and minds,**

**even when your Grace compels us to reconsider cherished opinions.**

**We are more comfortable remaining as we are.**

**Forgive us for being set in our ways,**

**and seeing others only in light of inherited ideas.**

**Forgive us our reluctance to forgive and to be forgiven.  
By the power of your Holy Spirit, transform us by your great  
love and mercy.  
Give us new eyes for seeing, new ears for hearing.  
In Jesus' name we pray,  
Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Jesus said, Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Trust that peace and forgiveness are God's gift to you this day.

Be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit that moves with you into each new day. May the peace of Christ be with you.

Amen

**Scripture**            Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Mark 1:1-8

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,

and the rough places a plain.  
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”  
And I said, “What shall I cry?”  
All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.  
The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.  
The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.  
Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”  
See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.  
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 (VU 802)

*Refrain -*

*God, show us your love,  
show us your love and mercy.*

Once you were gracious to your land, O God,  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob;  
**you forgave the offence of your people,  
and pardoned all their sin.**

You drew back all your displeasure,  
and turned from your fiery wrath.  
**Restore us again, God our Saviour,  
and put away your just anger toward us.**

Will you be angry with us forever?  
Will you prolong your wrath to all generations?  
**Will you not revive us again,  
that your people may rejoice in you?**

*Refrain -*

*God, show us your love,  
show us your love and mercy.*

Let me hear what you will say, O God,  
for you will speak peace to your people,  
to the faithful who turn their hearts to you.  
**Surely salvation is near those who fear you,  
and your glory will dwell in our land.**

Mercy and faithfulness will meet,  
justice and peace will embrace.  
Faithfulness will spring up from the earth,  
and righteousness look down from heaven.

You, O God, will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its harvest.

**Righteousness will go before you,  
and the paths of your feet will be peace.**

*Refrain -*

*God, show us your love,  
show us your love and mercy.*

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;  
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**Meditation**    "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" (Young)

## Reflection Who Pays Double?

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.  
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Making roads straight and hills lower and valleys higher makes everything more equal and easier to access. This is a vision of justice and fairness.

God does not promise to come and *make* Justice. Making a way for God means that *we make the way just*.

On this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, we remember an injustice that sees more than a half of the world’s population paying double.

Geneviève Bergeron, 21	Maryse Laganière, 25
Hélène Colgan, 23	Maryse Leclair, 23
Nathalie Croteau, 23	Anne-Marie Lemay, 22
Barbara Daigneault, 22	Sonia Pelletier, 23
Anne-Marie Edward, 21	Michèle Richard, 21
Maud Haviernick, 29	Anne St-Arneault, 23
Barbara Klueznick, 31	Annie Turcotte, 21

## **Hymn 69 "Away In The Manger"**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay  
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

### **We Respond to God's Word**

#### **Offering Ourselves For The Work And Witness Of The Church**

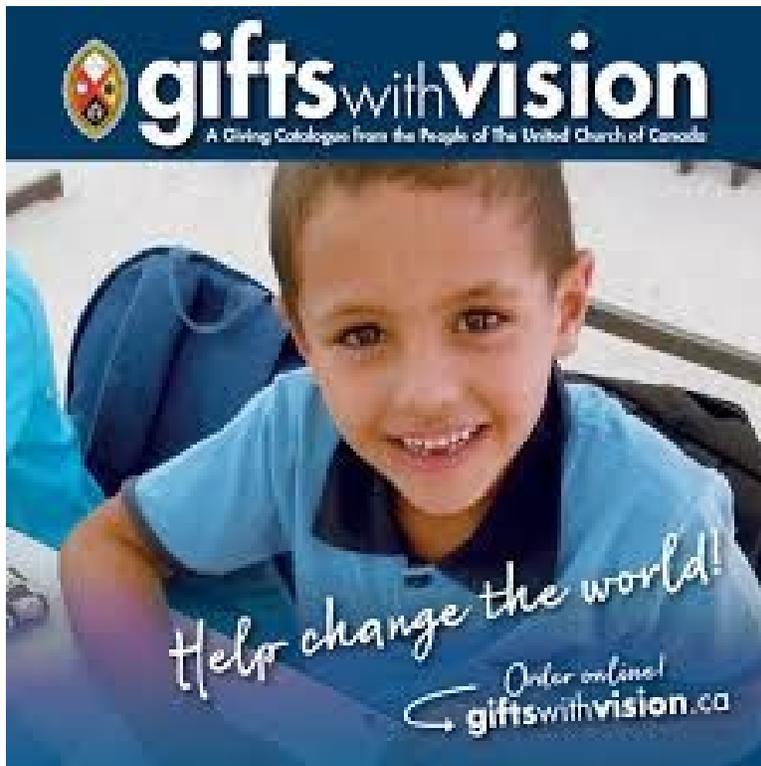
#### **Invitation to Offering**

This Sunday in Advent celebrates God's gift of peace. When we look around the world, we see so many places where peace is missing. There is conflict. There is anxiety. We live in hope that our gifts will help restore peace to souls and situations by the power of the Spirit.

#### **Offering Prayer**

God of promise,

Receive our offering and bless our gifts and our lives. Help us share the peace you offer us with our neighbours throughout the world you love. Amen.



**Hymn** 56 "Jesus, Our Brother"

Jesus, our brother, kind and good,  
was humbly born in a stable rude,  
and the friendly beasts around him stood,  
Jesus, our brother, kind and good.

"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown,  
"I carried the mother uphill and down,  
I carried his mother to Bethlehem town;  
I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

"I," said the cow, all white and red,  
"I gave him my manger for his bed,  
I gave him hay to pillow his head;  
I," said the cow, all white and red.

“I,” said the sheep with curly horn,  
“I gave him my wool for his blanket warm,  
he wore my coat on Christmas morn;  
I,” said the sheep, with curly horn

### **Prayers of the People**

God of Wisdom and Patience,

In this season of Advent, we wait for your gifts of hope and peace  
to claim the world once more.

We wait on you in prayer, knowing you hear us even before we  
speak.

Prepare our hearts and minds to welcome the coming of your Son  
once again,

and prepare our courage and conviction to follow the way of the  
Lord.

Thank you for leading us on the Way, especially in these difficult  
days

when the pandemic still threatens.

We are grateful that we can rely on your strength and comfort  
when so much around us has become uncertain.

Comfort those who are troubled in mind or spirit as the days grow  
shorter.

Strengthen the bodies and spirits of those who are tired or suffering.

Embrace those who are living with loss,

and protect children and young people

for whom the future seems confusing and unimaginable.

God who makes all things new,

Turn our lives upside down

and shake out the unnecessary distractions of this season.

Focus us on what is truly important and who truly matters to us.

Turn our lives upside right

so that our priorities and purposes match those we have learned from Jesus.

Shape and reshape us until we conform to his way of living and his likeness.

Turn us upside down, O God,  
so that we value what is hidden and small more than what is showy and grand.

Open our eyes to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and help us speak out with them and for them, even if we must challenge those who usually get their way.

Turn us right side up, O God,  
so that we can see we have more than enough resources to share with those who have much less than they need day by day.

Hear us now as we name places, people, and situations that need your care:

(A silence is kept for 20-30 seconds.)

God, you are Alpha and Omega, our beginning and our end.  
Strengthen us with your Spirit to build your kingdom,  
here and now, now and always.

We are thankful that we can experience God in a relationship from which we draw strength, courage and encouragement.

The ways of knowing God - Mother, Father, Friend -  
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer;  
may be expressed in the prayer Jesus taught us -

**The Lord's Prayer**

## **We Depart to Serve with Joy**

**Hymn** 43 "Go, Tell It On The Mountain"

**Refrain -**

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.*

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

**Refrain -**

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.*

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Saviour's birth.

**Refrain -**

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.*

Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born,  
and God sent our salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

**Refrain -**

*Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.  
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.*

**Benediction**

**Choral Amen**

**Postlude** "Variations on 'In Dulci Jubilo'" (Bedard) Variations 2 and 3