



# THE COMMUNICATOR



## MINISTERS MESSAGE

### The Innkeeper - A Story of Christmas Hospitality

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:1-7

A cursory Google Search on “Mangers in the days of Jesus” yielded a surprise as to what some folk thought about mangers. In addition to objective statements regarding the ways mangers were constructed or materials used, stone or wood, there were opinions regarding the cleanliness and habitability of the Manger. A reference was made to animals and “slobber.” “City-Slicker” is an old expression, but it may apply to the source of the “slobber” assumption. Perhaps it makes sense for some folk to speculate about smells and slobber, as it makes the scene more desperate and helps emphasize the humility implied in the incarnation - “Leaving his throne in glory, the Son of God lowered himself to descend among us.” ... a dirty stable drives this point home ... I suppose. But is it fair?

There is no hint that Joseph and Mary were disappointed or felt hard done by. There is no sense of despair. There is no reference to a young mother’s tears or anguish, expressing, “How did we come to this?” There are no complaints at all. Shepherds did not seem surprised. They lived in the fields with their sheep, after all. Even the Angels made no commentary about the lowly estate. That came after in songs and legends. The Bible only speaks of the Manger as part of the wonderful package of signs and wonders.

People who know how to value and care for livestock are careful to maintain, clean and monitor the animals' living environment ... very careful. Also, the business of the Innkeeper was Hospitality. True, there was no place for them in the Inn. However, can that very fact contain a lesson in Hospitality? Can the fact that there was no room in the Inn but that the Innkeeper found and prepared an alternative be evidence of a willingness to apply extra effort to extend Hospitality?

A manger, a stable, a stall, or a barn, are not just any place. The animals with which this First Family of Faith cohabitated on Christmas represented the essential resources for livelihood, sustenance, transportation, work and wellbeing of the Innkeeper and their Guests. The animal’s living environment would be treated with great care. Making space for this young family implied sacrifice, work and risk on the part of the Innkeeper. Perhaps even more so than simply opening a previously prepared room for that purpose. A humble setting, yes; also a sign of significant Hospitality and Care.

Trinity has identified Hospitality as one of our core Spiritual Practices. When you consider that Diversity and Justice were also selected as practices that most resonate with us, we may expect to exercise Hospitality in new and creative ways. We may also expect that extending Hospitality will call us to make available spaces and places and time that require special preparation and include resources that are as important and precious to us as the Innkeeper’s Manger.

Merry Christmas  
Rev. Christopher Ryan



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## Church Council Report

As most of you already know, the Minister is retiring this Summer. This means that we will be entering the process implied in a Change in Pastoral Relations. Much of the work and preparation was done through our Visioning Sessions with the Rev Dr Peter Bartlett. From those Sessions, we have draft narratives describing our work, intentions and Vision. We also continue to call for expressions of the Congregation's Hopes and Aspirations for our future.

The first significant and formal requirement for the administrative process to follow was the appointment of Mr Wayne Harris by EOORC Executive to act as our Regional Liaison. Wayne will be our guide and advisor as we navigate next steps, the most significant in the short term will be the completion of a Community of Faith Profile. The profile expresses - This is who we are, and these are the resources we have. Much of this is done, as it is statistical in nature and is always and routinely up to date. The piece that remains is referred to as - The Living Faith Story.

What follows is a heavily quoted and minimally paraphrased version of Denominational Guidance - "Pastoral Relations: Guidelines for a Community of Faith Profile" *"The living faith story articulates the community of faith's ministry focus. This story is your opportunity to share why you exist as a community of faith. The living faith story is an opportunity to tell where God is leading your community of faith. Creating this story is an invitation to articulate, assess, and perhaps even reframe how you are being church. The living faith story is used in a few different ways: 1. It is a required element of a community of faith profile as part of the pastoral relations process. 2. It is part of the covenantal relationship with the regional council and part of the self assessment process with the regional council. 3. It is posted on ChurchHub as a description of the community of faith. For communities in search of a new ministry personnel, this is part of your invitation to ministry personnel to consider whether they are being called to serve your ministry context. 4. It can guide your community of faith in shaping ministry priorities and sharing a vision of your community and its mission. Hopefully, preparing this piece of the community of faith profile will not be onerous. The community of faith can use ... the following as their living faith story: If your community of faith has recently participated in a visioning exercise, you could use your ministry goals, vision statement, and current realities articulated in that work. A narrative budget and other applicable material (that names your ministry both within and beyond the community of faith) 3. An existing vision or long-range planning document."*

Almost everything we need is in place. What we now require is a group of people inspired to pull it all together. The approach Council has selected is to create a small Ad Hoc team of five to seven folk who are able to work collaboratively to draft the Living Faith Story. Ideally, these folk will represent a variety of interests, gifts and ambitions. Prayerful consideration will be given to folk who represent and advocate for - Hospitality, Diversity, Justice, The Curious, The Comfortable, The Committed

Jan Montgomery would be delighted to hear from those interested in serving on the the Ad Hoc Team at [jmontgomery827@gmail.com](mailto:jmontgomery827@gmail.com) . Council will select the Ad Hoc group from the pool of names collected. It is hoped that we will be able to draft a Living Faith Story early in the New Year. Please know that participation in this group does not carry the expectation that you must or will participate in or be responsible for the other or following steps in the process.

May Trinity be richly Blessed as she journeys into an exciting and faith-filled future. Rev. Christopher, Council Chair

## Christmas Services

December 21st Longest Night 6:30 p.m.

December 24th 4th Sunday of Advent 10:30 a.m.

December 24th Children's Services 4:30 p.m.

December 24th Family Service 7:30 p.m.

December 24th Communion 10:30 p.m.





## Opportunities to Connect - Inspire - Serve

TRINITY HAS OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION AS FOLLOWS:

Church Council Chairperson  
Church Council Vice-Chairperson  
Church Council Recording Secretary  
Christian Community Visitation Care Team  
Outreach & Social Justice Team Chairperson  
Property Team Secretary  
Regional Council Representatives (EOORC)  
Stewardship & Finance Team: Chairperson, Secretary & members  
Trainee for Worship Service Screen Operator

If any of these above interest you or you wish to talk further about the positions, please see Rev. Christopher or Jan Montgomery who will direct your queries to the appropriate person.

Rev. Christopher: [minister@trinityunitedsf.ca](mailto:minister@trinityunitedsf.ca) 613-283-4444 Jan Montgomery: [jmontgomery827@gmail.com](mailto:jmontgomery827@gmail.com) 613-812-1881

### STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE REPORT

We have been challenged financially this year as our expenses continue to exceed our funds coming in. This Team is without a Chairperson and Secretary so the meetings have been on a “needs must” basis.

Jan Montgomery, our Church Treasurer, will be retiring at the next Annual Congregational Meeting in 2024. Janine Hanna has been elected by the Church Council to assume the position.

This past month the Treasurer has been busy formulating the upcoming Budget for 2024 as the Council Teams submit their needs and their dreams for ministry in 2024. Special projects will be identified as a result of the Visioning process, and the approval will be sought by the whole Community of Faith. The goal of the Team is; with solid planning and close oversight we can achieve a stable financial position to meet the needs of the expenses necessary to sustain the church.

Please consider an extra gift this Christmas as your testimony to the importance of Trinity United Church in the community and in your life. Special Christmas envelopes have been provided for this purpose or you can simply indicate on your December giving envelope or cheque as an additional Christmas gift this year.

The Team plans together with the Board of Trustees to launch a Winter Capital Campaign. Funds collected will be used to replenish those needed to pay for the extensive Sanctuary Restoration. As Funds in Trust are depleted, the interest income is likewise diminished, thereby depriving the General Account of needed income to meet expenses. This Campaign will be a One-Time Ask to all who are Trinity members and adherents. Give this your prayerful consideration.

The Church Council has authorized \$10,000 from the Gifts & Memorial Fund to be used towards the Sanctuary Restoration with a plaque of dedication to honour those donations in memory of loved ones.

With the upcoming retirement of Reverend Christopher in Summer 2024, Trinity will be challenged as to its direction and vision. You are invited to participate by getting involved as we embark on a new journey.

Christmas Blessings, Your Stewardship & Finance Team,

Jan Montgomery, Treasurer, Bob Swan (Trustees Rep), Joanne Hunter (UCW Rep), Mike Murphy, Member-at-large.



### Ministry and Personnel

Annual reviews have been completed with the staff of Trinity. We are grateful for all the work they do to keep the church running. Carolyn Lunn is wrapping up her many years of service to the Ministry and Personnel Committee and we are grateful for her steadiness in keeping the lines of good communication open between staff and the congregation. Thank you Carolyn and Christmas blessings to all!

Carol Williams [journey@ripnet.com](mailto:journey@ripnet.com)



## PROPERTY & BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

**Sanctuary Restoration:** The sanctuary has been in restoration mode since early July (2023) when a section of plaster fell from the ceiling. An assessment of the stability of the plaster within the sanctuary (both ceiling and walls) found many weak spots and cracks were discovered. It was imperative that we moved quickly with this project. Service Master Smiths Falls was hired to undertake the clean-up and restoration of the sanctuary. The estimated cost of the work was \$170,059, with an additional \$30,000 to cover unforeseen issues. The funds for the project are being drawn from Trinity's "Funds-in-Trust". The estimated completion date for the project was the end of October 2023. Regrettably, that date has long passed. The anticipated completion date is now mid-January.

With the sanctuary in its current state, this is the opportune time to consider any change in its configuration. Ideas offered during our "visioning workshops" for the Sanctuary include; a Reading Corner and Library located to the right of the "choir door", enhanced Audio/Visual needs for in-person worship and recording for on-line viewers, providing more accessible placement of the pews and an accessibility ramp to the chancel. We anticipate being back in the sanctuary by late January. While we all want to be back in the sanctuary as quickly as possible, we have the right company doing the work, so we'll take the time needed to do it carefully and correctly.

**United Church of Canada – Faithful Footprints Energy Reduction Grant Program:** The property team has been working on this project for the past year and a half. The program works like this – we invest \$10,000 towards energy reduction projects and the United Church will provide an additional \$20,000. The property team selected three projects:

- installing LED lighting where needed throughout the church
- improving insulation and air circulation measures in the two towers and behind the choir loft
- the replacement of the main entrance doors.

The LED project has been completed. The insulation upgrades in the towers will be completed in January and the main entrance door have been completed.

**Bell Avenue Property:** As last reported there remained several important details to complete before we can close the "books" on the sale of the Bell Avenue Property and we were waiting on advice from EOORC on these issues... that advice has been received: Regarding the 10% of the proceeds of the sale to support United Church of Canada Indigenous Ministries – Following a full and lengthy discussion at its meeting on November 23, 2023, the Board of Trustees recommended to Council that Trinity proceed to transfer to the United Church of Canada General Council Office (Toronto) the required 10% of the proceeds from the sale of the Bell Avenue property. The amount is \$105,000. Council approved the recommendation at its most recent meeting (November 29, 2023). The funds have been "held-in-trust" by the Trustees and steps are being taken to make the necessary transfer.

Regarding the Submission of the updated Financial Plan for the use, by Trinity, of the remaining 90% of the proceeds of the sale. The plan will be finalized and approved when the "Visioning" outcomes are formalized, and next steps are completed.

**General Fund Cash Flow Shortfall 2023** – Please note that to date in 2023, Council has had to approve the transfer of "Funds-in-Trust" to the tune of \$65,000 to cover expenses. A reminder, the purpose of "Funds in Trust" is not to cover ongoing operating expenses.

Submitted by Bob Swan, Property, Council, and Board of Trustees



**Sanctuary  
renovation  
photos taken  
in November  
2023**





## Where are they now?

Trinity's Prayer Shawl Group was pleased to present our 2019 Confirmands with prayer shawls as they head-off to "Uni."

Maryn Hunter is at the University of Guelph (her parents Alma Mater). She is taking a four-year program studying a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture.



Ronan Peskett is at the University of Calgary. They are taking a four-year program studying Astro Physics and hopes to continue their studies to become a researcher.

We will continue to pray for these young people as they begin their away from home university courses. Blessings to them for the next stage in their life's journey.



## United Church Women

Trinity's UCW has been busy connecting with our Sisters-In-Christ at local women's ministries such as: Westminster Presbyterian High Tea, Bethel United in Rideau Ferry Craft Time, Izzy Dolls

We have been busy fund raising through our own UCW with events including Harvest Supper (\$1810 raised), Holly Fair (\$3000+ raised), Wreath Sales, and Cookie Sales. Cookie sales of \$400 went to support the Grassroots Grannies

We have also been involved with Trinity's events such as: Wreath Laying at Remembrance Day Services at the Cenotaph, Women's Sunday, the Barrel Boys Concert and the Dec. 6 Vigil in Acknowledgement of the National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women.

We are always looking for energetic and willing participants. Come out and join in the fun. We meet every first Monday of the month at 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall.

**Trinity's Sunday School continues to gather together on the 2nd and last Sunday of each month. In these photos the children are showing off their poppies on Remembrance Day and an advent craft.**



**Many thanks to our friends at Westminster Presbyterian Church for hosting this years Barrel Boys "Carols from the Barrel" Christmas Concert. Special Guest Campbell Woods joined the Boys for a few songs**



## OUTREACH & SOCIAL JUSTICE

### Making a Space for Peace

The season of Advent is upon us once more and many are busy preparing for celebrations, the arrival of family and putting bows on our perfectly wrapped gifts. It would not occur to us that the holiday of Christmas does not require planning and effort. We all know that anything worth having is worth working for. Similarly, this idea is repeated on the 2nd Sunday of Advent when reflecting on the theme of peace as found in the words of Isaiah. Here we are told that, yes, even peace requires work. Or perhaps, especially peace. This may help to explain why there are more than 400 references to peace in the Bible. Sadly, this fall we can see why peace is an incessant theme when confronted with the images of destruction, death and violence in the Middle East, the Ukraine, and Myanmar. Yet, Isaiah doesn't instruct his listeners to wait for the Messiah instead he exhorts them to get busy and make it easy for the Prince of Peace to come. The prophet makes it clear that peace is not something that appears, or that we find waiting for us in quiet reflective spaces but it is a condition which we must actively work for. Listen, we are told there is,



*A voice of one calling:  
“In the wilderness prepare  
the way for the Lord  
make straight in the desert  
a highway for our God.*

*Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level,  
the rugged places a plain.*

*And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,  
and all people will see it together.  
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”  
(Isaiah 40:1-11)*



It's inspiring to be part of a church community working for justice every month and who find ways to help make the path straight and the ground level so that all might enjoy peace. Join us at 6:00 p.m. on the 2nd Friday of the month for *Rainbow 101*; a safe, respectful place to meet, discuss, and learn about the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.

Or raise your voice with *Lanark Drum Circle*; a traditional Indigenous drum circle that meets to share songs and teachings on the last Sunday of the month from 1:00p.m -4:00p.m. in the church gymnasium.

We are also grateful for the leaders and prophets of today, like Erin Lee, from Lanark Interval House who help us to stay focused on achieving justice for those voices who are silenced and are too fearful to sing out with us. We reaffirm our commitment here at Trinity to, “See It, Name It, Change It.”

If you are unsure of where you can monetarily share your peace, It's not too late to make a difference with thoughtful gifts from Gifts with Vision.



Looking forward to raising our voices together for peace in 2024.

Lorraine Ryan, Chair of Outreach and Social Justice

