

# Trini Tidings 2020



## Advent/Christmas

**Trinity United Church  
Portage la Prairie, MB**

Phone: 204-857-4471

e-mail: [trinityu@mts.net](mailto:trinityu@mts.net)

Website:

[www.trinityunitedportage.ca](http://www.trinityunitedportage.ca)

### Office Hours:

Monday – Friday

9:00 a.m. – noon

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## Online Worship Continues Sundays

**Sunday Services 10:30 a.m.**

**November 29, 2020**

*Advent 1*

“I’ll Be Home for Christmas”  
Sharing Communion at Home

**December 6, 2020**

*Advent 2*

“Longing for Home”

**December 13, 2020**

*Advent 3*

“Prepare him Room”

**December 20, 2020**

*Advent 4*

“Where God Makes a Home”

**December 27, 2020**

Guest Worship Leader:

Wilma Shirriff

## One Christmas Eve Service - 2 times!

What Christmas will be like this year, we do not know yet. However, this we do know: It will be different. The leadership team at Trinity has developed two possible plans for Christmas Eve, depending on what happens through December with Covid cases and public health measures.

If the curve is flattened once again, and restrictions are lifted to **YELLOW or ORANGE**, we will offer hybrid Christmas Eve services, with some gathered in person, and others online (similar to September and October). In person, the service will be much less interactive than usual Christmas Eves, to ensure all the gathered people’s health and safety. People are asked to **REGISTER IN ADVANCE** if they plan to attend in person. Maximum seating capacity will be set to ensure that everyone who comes may be able to maintain physical distance of 6 feet between households. As such, the service will be offered more than once, at 7:00 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. Other times will be added if these are full, but at this time we are only planning for two, knowing that many will participate online only. Online registration for in-person attendance will be available at <https://reopen.church/r/Mzkk83Pw> and will open on December 14, if restrictions permit. You may also register by phone through the Trinity office.

If, however, we remain in **RED** (even if restrictions are somewhat lifted), the two Christmas Eve services will be online via Zoom only, which you can attend by computer, tablet or telephone. No pre-

registration is required, however, our attendance is capped at 100 households, so if we reach maximum attendance at the first one you are welcome to attend the second! If your choice of time is important, (7 pm or 8:15 pm) please log in a few minutes earlier than you might otherwise plan to do). Portions of the Christmas Eve service will also be uploaded to our YouTube channel for any time viewing.



In all cases, (red, orange, or yellow) we look forward to showing a Virtual Pageant Video (Trinity’s Best/Worst Christmas Pageant Ever!) that congregation members are working on – even now! We also look forward to using your submitted candle lighting photos/videos (see Advent article). For instructions for viewing church online see the article in this newsletter.



## Trinity’s Special Services in December

(see article for connecting to services online)

### Service of

### Remembrance & Hope

Wednesday, December 17  
8:00 p.m. by Zoom

### Candlelight, Carols, Communion and Contemplation

Monday, December 21  
7:00 – 8:30 p.m. (via Zoom, and  
walk through - only if permitted)

## “I’ll Be Home For Christmas” – A Different Kind of Advent



This year, as we begin the season leading up to Christmas, we know that things will not be as usual. Still, we know that even a pandemic does not stop the message from Christmas, and it is perhaps the kind of time when Christmas is most needed! So, while we will be in our homes, we invite you to join us on our Advent journey.

On Sunday, November 29, we will introduce the theme for our Advent season with communion in our various homes. We will also begin to light Advent candles. (*see separate article about this year’s Advent wreath*)

Sunday, December 6 our theme is “Longing for Home” as we consider the times and places when we don’t feel very much at home.

Sunday, December 14, we “Prepare him Room” and on Sunday December 20 we reflect on “Where God Makes a Home”.

Remember that if you do not have technology that allows you to join us for worship, you can receive copies of our worship materials in print through the Trinity office and you are always with us in spirit.



We are also hoping that for **Christmas Eve**, we might find ways to share the light – whether or not we can be in person. **Through the month of December, we would like as many people as possible to send us photos of themselves lighting a candle.** We want to see the light in our eyes and on our faces! We hope to put it together with a special piece of music that the choir and friends are creating in December. We will also take action shots – so a 5 second video of you lighting a candle would also work. Send in your photos to [trinityu@mts.net](mailto:trinityu@mts.net)!

You have until **December 20** to get them in. If you would like Julie to record you lighting a candle via Zoom, that opportunity will also be available. Look for email announcements in December about zoom options. For those without access to technology, if you would like us to take a curbside photo of you with a lit candle, give us a call and we can do that too.

## Advent and Christmas Music Plans

What is Christmas without music and carols? And yet, singing together is a thing we must do with great caution during a pandemic. At Trinity we have been giving a lot of thought to ways that we might

share the music of Christmas this year. Here’s some of what we have in mind.

On **Monday, December 21**, we will offer an online Evening of Music and Contemplation **via Zoom from 7 – 8:30 p.m.** to be concluded with candle light communion. Guest musicians like Shane Smith, Audrey MacFarlane, Ed & Rhea Goertzen, Allison McEwing *and others* will provide background Christmas music in the decorated Trinity sanctuary. (***IF restrictions are released to at least Orange level and allow us to have people in the building, we will offer communion and candle lighting in person on a walk through basis as well.***)

We are creating a choir anthem for Christmas Eve one singer at a time! Singers will get a practice recording to sing along to, and then come into the church in December (one at a time) to sing into the microphone (with their headphones on – they can pretend to be a real recording star for a few minutes!). We’ll put all the voices together and see what we get! It’s a giant experiment, but if you would like to be one of the singers, please be in touch with the office to get your rehearsal tape and book a recording appointment.

Finally, watch our Facebook group for the opportunity to sing carols on Facebook Live!



## Advent Wreath – Together and Apart



Traditionally at Trinity an Advent wreath uses 4 blue candles and 1 one Christ candle in the centre. Each week of Advent we will light one more candle, and light the white one on Christmas Eve. We would invite you to do that with us from home. Your Advent wreath can be simple or very elaborate. If putting together a full Advent wreath is difficult, this year, we invite you to find just one candle that you can light each week. Please find below the words that we will be using with our Advent candles at Trinity this year, so that even if you can't join us on a Sunday morning, you can join us in your home.

### November 29

Light one candle for hope.  
Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but hope just won't let go.  
Hope holds space for all our longings, lingers on the edge of harsh reality like the dawn gently awakening the sky.  
"Keep awake," she whispers, "for the world is being made new."  
So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

### December 6

Light one candle for peace.  
Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but we refuse to be frozen by fear.  
Peace comes in fits and starts – a deep breath, a courageous truth, a humble heart.  
"Prepare the way," she whispers, "for Christ comes to make the broken whole."  
So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

### December 13

Light one candle for joy.  
Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but our joy cannot be contained.  
Like a toddler, toppling the thrones of power with a gleeful swipe, Joy pierces our silence with a song, interrupts our sighing with laughter, unshackles our fumbling feet to dance.  
"My soul magnifies my God," she whispers, "and my Spirit rejoices in God my savior."  
So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

### December 20

Light one candle for love.  
Because the world is broken and the wait is long, but love never ends.  
Love faithfully goes about the work of casting out fear, speaking truth, healing the deepest wounds, crossing the divide from this world to the next and back again.  
"Here I am," she whispers, "a servant of God."  
So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

### Christmas Eve, December 24

Light one candle for Christ.  
Because the world is broken and the wait is long but Christ is with us through it all.  
In humble manger in a back water town – a baby. On a convict's cross – a new kind of king. In every heart and every home where hope, peace, joy and love endure – Christ with us.  
"Glory to God in the highest heaven," she whispers, "and peace to all on earth."  
So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.



*An Advent Liturgy for 2020  
by Rev. Karen Ware Jackson  
(permission is granted for home and congregational use)*

## Want to help children make music in a pandemic? Can you sew bells on to wool?



Lori Mackedenski is making personal music kits for the K-2 students at Yellowquill school and would love some help. Supplies are provided, but we need some people with hand sewing skills who are willing to sew the bells on strips of wool. If you are willing and have time before Christmas, please

be in touch with the Trinity office.

## HOW to ZOOM in FOR CHURCH



Throughout the month of December for Sunday mornings and other special offerings you are invited to participate by Zoom. This is an option whether you have a smartphone, a desktop computer, a tablet, or a landline telephone, although your experience will be different, depending on what equipment is available to you.

**For every Trinity Zoom church experience in December, you can use the same instructions** – same link, same phone numbers, same meeting I.D. same passcode. For your convenience, the link is listed on the front page of our website

<http://trinityunitedportage.ca>

It is also provided in our Trinity Portage Facebook Group each Sunday morning.

If you connect using the Zoom App on your device, “join a meeting” with Meeting ID: 646 070 0716 Passcode: trinity

If you are using a computer and you wish to click a link, this link should get you there every time!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6460700716?pwd=SW9RZDBYVTRpek0ZWfhWkZ3bXN4Zz09>

If asked for a passcode, it's trinity. If asked about connecting to audio by internet, say yes! If asked to have host mute or unmute you, say yes!

For those who wish to use a telephone landline and listen in – it's not the full experience, because you cannot see what is happening, but you will be able to hear everything. *(unless we have a glitch, in which case, be patient – we'll make more noise eventually!)* You can dial any of the following Canadian long distance numbers (depending on your long distance plan, you may incur long distance charges – if cost is a barrier for you, please be in touch with the church office for options). Once you dial in, you will be asked to enter the meeting I.D. number and state your name.

1 204 272 7920 (Manitoba);

1 438 809 7799 (Montreal).

1 587 328 1099 (Alberta);

1 647 374 4685 (Toronto);

1 647 558 0588 (Toronto);

1 778 907 2071 (British Columbia);

See you on Zoom!



Staff will work in our office until noon, Thursday, December 24

- The office will be closed on Friday, December 25 & Monday & Tuesday, December 28 & 29.
- There will be regular office hours (9 a.m. - noon, 1 – 4 p.m.) December 30 & 31
- The office will be closed on Friday, January 1.

For 2020 tax receipts, donations must be received by the office by noon, December 31.

## Connecting online



Who could have guessed how important online communication would turn out to be in a pandemic? While you can always find us by using the telephone, we have many online options as well. Find us through our webpage [www.trinityunitedportage.ca](http://www.trinityunitedportage.ca), at our Facebook page, or in our active Facebook Group – Trinity United Church, Portage la Prairie. Our YouTube channel is Trinity Portage, at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCifQQLFZrDcGyY-J3xjDoKA/videos>

You can also follow us on Instagram at trinityportage, and our Twitter handle is @ChurchPortage.

### Gifts with Vision

Do you want a way to make Christmas less about “the stuff”? Are you looking



for gift ideas that can make the world a better place? The United Church of Canada is pleased to offer you Gifts with Vision. You can help purchase school supplies for children in Zambia, or support and train farmers in Cuba. You can help build a well in Congo, or provide healing and support to the most vulnerable who live in Vancouver's downtown east side. With Gifts with Vision, you give a gift to friends or family to support the good work of your choice. A catalogue is available at the church, or go online to

<https://www.giftswithvision.ca/>

**Trinity Markers and Milestones**

since the  
October 2020 TriniTidings  
Deaths

Mary Ellen Domes  
October 16, 2020

Weddings  
Mary Lou McFarlane &  
John McHenry  
November 28, 2020

**Continuing legacy**

This Christmas we know that there will be people that we miss spending time with – as we limit our gatherings to small groups and our own households. We also will be missing some people whose presence lives on in our hearts. We know that their influence will continue to be felt in our memories and in our lives, and in the things they taught, built and shared with us. Trinity gratefully acknowledges that memorial donations have been received in memory of the following people since the last issue of Trini-tidings:

- Mary Domes
- Peggy Tidsbury
- Ken Yuill
- Philip Miller
- Bert Bazin
- Ethel Larkins

Gifts were also received to the Operating Fund in memory of Cheryl Green McKie & Mary Domes. A gift was received to UCW Unit C in memory of Mary Domes.

As you receive your Christmas cards and letters this year, please take a few moments to save the stamps. The UCW saves stamps to support the leprosy fund. The value of these stamps is increased if the postal cancellation is marked over the stamp. Stamps may be left at the church office.



**FOCUS Thanks You for Your Support**



Normally at this time of year FOCUS would be inviting you to our annual appreciation dinner. Unfortunately due to COVID19, this will not be taking place. We regret not being able to see you in person and share a meal together, but given the serious nature of the pandemic we feel it is a necessary sacrifice, as we all have each other's welfare in mind. Our wish is that you and all your loved ones would remain healthy and safe.

We would like to share the success of FOCUS 2020 with you, as it is really **your** success we celebrate as supporters of FOCUS. Without your support there would be no FOCUS.

In 2020 the FOCUS Grow Project raised \$200,000 for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. After the matching contribution from the Government of Canada at 4:1, the total money raised for the developing countries aid will be \$1,000,000.00.

This contribution is the result of the combined efforts of monetary donations, land to grow the crops, inputs like seed, fertilizer, crop sprays, equipment to get the work done, and of course you, which without none of it would be possible. So, again we would like to say thank you!

*If you would like to make a donation towards next year's Grow Project, mail your donation to:*

FOCUS  
c/o Tony Peters  
R.R. #2 Box 37  
Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 3A2

**Deadline for 2020 Contributions!**

If you wish to top up your 2020 donations, they must be received in the office no later than **noon, December 31**, to be eligible for the taxation year 2020. Charitable donations in Manitoba (after the first \$200) receive a 46% tax credit. This means that if you pay income



tax, your donation costs you roughly half of what you give.

**Connecting and Caring**

At this time, hospital and care home visiting by the church has been suspended, due to Covid-19.



Households are encouraged to remain separate. We are asked not to physically visit with one another. Many of our Christmas and church activities must therefore be altered. Still, let us continue to care. This year, our Caring Friends will not be able to deliver flowers to Trinity connections, but we still plan to reach out by mail. We invite all those who are able to make a caring phone call to someone in your Trinity family this season, to reach out and remember that we are in this together. If you would like a suggestion or reminder of someone you might wish to call this season, be in touch with the Trinity office!

## A Note from Your Stewardship Team



*Why do we ask for \$ when we have \$ in investments?*

As a result of extremely generous donations, Trinity has money in investments. Just like personal finances, we try to meet our annual expenses with our annual income and see our investments as a reserve for projects, unexpected expenses and unexpected shortfalls. Some of the investments are allocated to funds\* that have been set up for a specific purpose. As an example, the chimes fund is for repair and maintenance of the chimes. Our investment committee has invested money in longer-term investments with the expectation or hope to grow this investment for future use.

In 2017, we finished the year with a shortfall of \$4,649.29, in 2018, we ended the year with a shortfall of \$30,604.86, and in 2019 we had a shortfall of \$18,541.58. These shortfalls were covered by money held in our investments. Our 2020 budget is for a deficit of \$53,678.19, however, we would love to end the year without a shortfall!

Recently, the investment committee has allocated \$25,000.00 from the investments for Trinity's 2021 budget. We would love it if we did not have to use all of this allocation in 2021 or end up needing more.

\* A list of funds and an explanation of these individual funds can be found in the 2019 annual report.

## I love Christmas!

By Diane Stevenson

I love everything about Christmas, visiting family, friends, shopping, making gifts and giving and receiving thoughtful gifts. This year is not what we are used to. Right now, we cannot go shopping and gathering outside our family unit is not an option. The stresses upon our extended families must be amplified this year! What do they get for us, it has to be ordered online, wrapped and then shipped to us...

An option to consider is letting family know that a meaningful gift would be a financial gift to Trinity on your behalf...no shopping, no shipping and no worrying about what to get you for Christmas this year. If this is something that appeals to you, here is an email you can modify to your liking and send:

*This Christmas, please consider a financial gift to Trinity United Church on my behalf. Donations can be made via email: [trinityu@mymts.net](mailto:trinityu@mymts.net) or by mailing a cheque to Trinity United Church, 15 Tupper St. S., Portage la Prairie MB R1N 1W7. You can also call the church to use your credit card over the phone. Jacquie will send a gift acknowledgment directly to the recipient if you provide contact details. Should you have any questions regarding making a gift on behalf of someone, please call the church @ 204-857-4471 or email @ [trinityu@mts.net](mailto:trinityu@mts.net)*

Trinity United Church  
Operating Budget vs. Actual 2020  
to November 26, 2020

	Budget 2020	Actual to Date	% Budget to Date
<b>Income</b>			
Offerings	\$ 187,000.00	\$ 147,742.76	79%
UCW	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -	0%
Rentals	\$ 26,850.00	\$ 25,887.50	96%
Honouraria	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 2,750.00	46%
Special Events	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 492.27	10%
Interest	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,551.10	129%
GST Rebate	\$ 600.00	\$ 950.89	158%
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>\$ 230,650.00</b>	<b>\$ 179,374.52</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Personnel	\$ 219,097.00	\$ 159,790.85	73%
United Church of Canada	\$ 13,246.00	\$ 13,246.00	100%
Office	\$ 10,915.00	\$ 7,883.59	72%
Program Supplies	\$ 3,845.00	\$ 2,176.78	57%
Interest Groups	\$ 2,425.00	\$ 791.51	33%
Property	\$ 34,800.00	\$ 26,259.16	75%
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>\$ 284,328.00</b>	<b>\$ 210,147.89</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>\$ (53,678.00)</b>	<b>\$ (30,773.37)</b>	<b>57%</b>

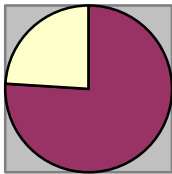


## Your Christmas Offering

Given that we can't get out and about as easily this year, consider making your donation via e-transfer to [trinityu@mts.net](mailto:trinityu@mts.net) or you can donate via credit or debit card by calling the church or following the link on our website [www.trinityunitedportage.ca](http://www.trinityunitedportage.ca) Thanks for all the ways that our supporters contribute to our life and work.



### Trinity's Financial Picture Projected Expenses for January-December 2020 **\$284,328**



### Income Received to Date January – November 26 **\$179,375**

*With 5 weeks remaining in the year, we have reached 63% of our goal. Please help! We need your donations to reach our goal and continue the ministry we offer together.*

## A short video!



What does Trinity and our church community mean to you? We are looking for individuals that would talk about what Trinity means to them. This would be a short video that we would post on social media.

We have people joining us for Sunday worship, following us on Facebook or Instagram, or watching YouTube who are non-members of our Church. We want to let people know what Trinity means to you, whether it's the work the church does in the community or how you find community, strength, faith, spirituality or positive reinforcement from our church community. At the end of your video, we would provide a link in case anyone wanted to give a financial gift to Trinity. This would give your stewardship team a way to ask for a financial contribution from non-members, in a positive way. We can't wait to see your video.

## Making a Gift of Stocks to Your Congregation



When you gift shares and mutual funds to your congregation:

- You don't pay capital gains tax on donated shares and units (you also receive a larger net tax savings by donating your shares directly rather than writing a cheque after selling your shares).
- The ministries you care about most benefit from your generous gift.
- The Foundation provides this service at very little cost (only 1.5% to a maximum of \$250).

Visit <http://bit.ly/giftofstock> for more information. Call: 1 866 340-8223 • Email: [fdn@united-church.ca](mailto:fdn@united-church.ca)

### Where does the custom of the Advent wreath originate?



The origins of this custom are lost in the mists of time, but probably are rooted in the ancient

practices surrounding the winter solstice. As the days grew shorter, the number of lights in the home was increased to symbolize the desire for the return of the sun. Evergreens were shaped into circles and adorned with lights to symbolize the return of light and life. Our practice of using a wreath of lights during Advent started in 17<sup>th</sup> century Germany, but did not become widespread until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Think of the Advent wreath as the church's clock counting down to Christmas!

When we worked together to develop a

### "why" goal for Trinity

the context was so different.

And yet, our purpose continues, maybe even more significantly during this pandemic.

Thank you for being part of this faith community, and being part of our efforts:

To build an inviting community so that we can connect and engage meaningfully with God, ourselves, and others.

## Service of Remembrance and Hope

Are you feeling sad this Christmas? Are you missing loved ones who have died? Do you just need a place to acknowledge the loss you feel right now? Each year, at this time of year, we offer an ecumenical service with the Presbyterian, Anglican, Catholic and United Churches of Portage. This year it felt important to find a way to offer it, even if in a different way. So, Zoom it is. If you are experiencing grief either through the loss of a loved one or for any other reason, please consider joining us for our online Service of Remembrance and Hope, **Thursday, December 17 at 8:00 p.m.** Find a candle in your home, and follow the Zoom

connection instructions found in this newsletter. This brief service will provide us an opportunity to remember that we are not alone; that the message of Christmas is not just for the joyful, but brings good news for the poor, the lonely, the afraid and the tired. You are most welcome to join us.

## White Gift



Due to the public health restrictions related to Covid-19, it is not possible for us to make donations toward Christmas hampers etc. this year. The Salvation Army "hampers" will happen in the form of gift cards only this year. (If you know of someone who needs one, make sure they know that they **MUST** register through the Salvation Army next week - December 3). So, we will not be able to accept donations for White Gift Sunday at Trinity this year. Non-perishable food donations are still being accepted at the local Salvation Army Food Bank for a future time when they can re-open, but they don't want to store things that may go

stale dated! Donation drop offs are accepted Tuesday-Thursday from 9 am - 4 pm at the Salvation Army location. You can also leave non-perishable items for the food bank at their grocery store pick up locations. Don't forget that the Free Little Pantry location by Red River College is an option for non-perishable food and toiletries for people to leave and take as they wish any time.

Do you have a cell phone that's come off contract and is sitting in a drawer collecting dust?



We could help bring purpose back into what seems like a now-useless phone. To help us deliver our Sunday online worship options, we are looking for 1 or 2 smart phones (or iPhones), capable of downloading the Zoom app, with a good camera and a stable battery life. If you have a phone you could donate, please call the church office (204-857-4471).

## Though our doors may be shut,



## our hearts are open to Christmas!

We invite you to do a drive-by to visit our exterior Nativity scene, which will be on display on the south side of the church for the month of December. Many thanks to Bob & Donna Matthews for creating it.

I received a call from a friend, who was commenting on the fact that our bubbles are getting smaller, and that that they were hearing more often that people are "cancelling Christmas." They asked me what I'd say, if I were told that I had to cancel Christmas this year. What I said was, "It is impossible to cancel Christmas. Christmas is celebrated each time a disciple of Jesus lives love. Christmas isn't an event. Christmas \*is\*." Christmas is. - Moderator Richard Bott, United Church of Canada

