

Trini Tidings 2021



Advent/Christmas

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

Phone: 204-857-4471

e-mail: trinityu@mts.net

Website:

www.trinityunitedportage.ca

Office Hours

Monday – Friday

9:00 a.m. – noon

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Holiday Hours

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

- The office will be closed on Monday & Tuesday, December 27 & 28
- There will be regular office hours December 29, 30, 31 (9 a.m. - noon, 1 – 4 p.m.)
- The office will be closed on Monday, January 3.

Julie will be off from December 25 – January 5. John Zondag will be on call during this time to cover pastoral emergencies 204-239-6719.

COMING UP IN WORSHIP at TRINITY

**Sunday Service
In-person and Online
10:30 a.m.**

**Proof of vaccination required
for in-person worship**

November 28

Advent 1

“When Hope is Lost”

December 5

Advent 2

“When Peace is Lost”

December 12

Advent 3

“When Joy is Lost”

December 19

Advent 4

“When Love is Lost”

December 26

No in-person worship.

Online options will be available

Trinity's Special Services in December



Service of

Remembrance & Hope

*The service will be available
through the Trinity website and
YouTube page beginning
December 15.*

Evening of Christmas Music & Communion

Monday, December 20 at 7p.m.

Online only

Christmas Eve

Friday, December 24 at 7p.m.

In-person and online.

*Registration required for those
attending in person.*

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.



Church Connections



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 electronic and online options as well.

Regular emails are sent with updates – if you have not been receiving these and you would like to, please email us at trinityu@mts.net with your preferred email address. If you have not been receiving email and you are already on our distribution list, please be in touch so we can discover the glitch!

Find us through our webpage 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](https://www.instagram.com/trinityportage), and our Twitter handle is [@ChurchPortage](https://twitter.com/ChurchPortage).

Christmas Eve Participation

As plans are being made for Christmas Eve, we're looking for people who would like to participate in the Christmas Eve service – either remotely, over Zoom, or in person. (or even in a form recorded in advance!) If this is something you'd be interested in, please let Julie know.



Service of Remembrance and Hope



At this time of year, it is our practice to join with the Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic and United Churches of Portage to offer an ecumenical Christmas service for those who are experiencing loss. Because it is an emotional time, sometimes loss is felt more keenly, and we can feel isolated if we don't share the feelings of celebration that appear around us. This year, the fourth wave of the pandemic in our region makes this coming together complicated – while some in person events are allowed, it also does not seem wise to join cohorts beyond the gatherings that are already happening.

After some discussion, it was decided that this year we would offer a prepared and pre-recorded service that those who are grieving can access at the time that works best for them, whether it is in the middle of a sleepless night, or just before a Christmas event. You can even watch it together with those in your circle who might be feeling the same way.

It will be available through the Trinity website and YouTube page beginning **December 15**.

Trinity's Memorial Fund

The Trinity Memorial Fund seeks to honour the life and faith of loved ones in ways that keep faith alive. We thank God for the lives of these faithful people, in whose memory we have received donations since our last issue of TriniTidings:

Fredda Fraser
Bob Boyachek
Loreena Pogue
Roy Tibbett
Doug Brown
Jean Finnie
Gordon Fraser
Philip Miller

Milestones & Markers...

Since our last issue

Funerals

Margaret Anne (Peggy)

Tidsbury

October 23, 2021

Fredda Catherine Fraser

October 27, 2021

Robert (Bob) Calvin Boyachek

October 28, 2021

Alice (Joyce) Kirschman

November 2, 2021

Douglas (Doug) Errol Brown

November 13, 2021

Baptisms

Charlotte Jade Upward,
daughter of Mark & Jen Upward

November 21, 2021

Hailey Marie McDougall

daughter of Cameron &

Roxanne McDougall

November 21, 2021

Advent Undercover

"Bless all those hidden people who make our lives easier; the night-time shifters and early starters, stocking shelves, cleaning streets, emptying bins, making and delivering things; all those so-important, almost invisible people we rely on. May they know their true value and may their day be blessed." - *John Birch*

Advent Undercover Photo Challenge



We need your help. In this time when it is still difficult to feel like we are connected, and especially on Christmas Eve when it won't be possible to get that noisy bustling feeling of a crowded church, we need your help to build the picture of our community. We want you to take a picture of your household this Advent and send it to us (or bring it into the church). Now here's the challenge part: In your photo with you, can you find a way to incorporate one of the following words: hope, peace, joy or love? Perhaps you have an ornament with one of the words that might make its way into your picture. Maybe you can make a sign to hold in your photo. If you see one of those words out in the world some where, can you stand in front of it, and take your picture? Be as creative as you want to be. And if creativity is not your thing, stop by the church office, and Jacquie will get you to hold a sign and take your picture for you. **Deadline for photo submissions: Tuesday, December 21.** Thanks for putting yourself in the picture!

Thank you for your Financial Support...

from the Stewardship Team

We would like to **thank you** for your continued financial support to the church! Throughout this year, your offerings have continued to be extremely generous.



The offerings received to the end of October are \$128,874, which is 71% of our budgeted amount of \$182,000. Just a reminder, we passed a deficit budget. We budgeted to take \$25,000 from our Investing in our Future Fund. As mentioned before, in 2021, we have received money from the provincial government in the amount of \$15,000. We continue to be in much better financial position than we expected resulting from the Bridge Grant from the provincial government and our personnel costs are lower than budgeted because we continue to operate with only one minister. As a point of reference, \$158,727 was budgeted as personnel expense to the end of October. Our actual personnel expense is \$119,701 to the end of October.

We would also like to highlight the fact that Trinity has received financial gifts from some estates throughout the year. In particular, we would like to thank the Estate of Mary-Liz Miazga for her legacy of generosity. Trinity has also been and continues to be the recipient of gifts of shares. When a gift of shares are made

to Trinity, the donor or giver of these shares doesn't pay tax on the capital gains for these shares and the church receives the shares tax free, meanwhile the donor gets a charitable donation receipt for the value of the shares.

These generous gifts are gratefully acknowledged and

accepted. When we receive such gifts, they enable the church to undertake extra projects from time to time, or the gifts are added to the Investing in our Future Fund. As mentioned above, in 2021 we budgeted to withdraw money from this fund to offset our deficit budget.

If you have any questions about how to set up a gift to Trinity from your estate or to make a gift of shares, please feel free to call the church office.

Deadline for 2021 Contributions!

If you wish to top up your 2021 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



There are a number of people in our congregation who are home bound, particularly in icy and snowy weather. Each year, we try and be in touch with those folk in some small way, with a token to help them continue to feel connected, even when they can't be physically with us. If you are stuck at home this winter, and would like to be on our contact list, please let the office know (204-857-4471) by **December 6**. We are also looking for rose bowls for our Caring Friends project. If you have any that aren't being used and would be willing to share them, we'd gladly receive them.

**Trinity's
Financial Picture**

**Projected Expenses for
January-December 2021
\$255,074**

**Income Received
to Date**

**January – November 25
\$216,026**

With 5 weeks remaining in the year, we have reached 85% of our goal. Please help! We need your donations to reach our goal and continue the ministry we offer together.

Christmas Eve – In person and Online!



“Christmas Lost and Found”

What Christmas will be like this year, we do not know for certain, yet. However, the leadership team has made the following plan, hoping that it will meet whatever public health orders come into effect for the holidays.

On Christmas Eve, we will offer a hybrid Christmas Eve service at **7:00 p.m.**, with some gathered in person, and others online (as we have been currently doing on Sundays). Those who attend in person will be required to show proof of vaccination, except for children under the age of 12. Maximum seating capacity will be set to ensure that those who come may still maintain distance, and we assume that mask usage will still be mandatory. People are asked to **REGISTER IN ADVANCE** if they plan to attend in person. This will allow us to add a second service if the first one fills up. However, we will not add the later service unless in person registration indicates the need, as we know that many will still choose to participate online. Online registration for in-person attendance will be available at www.rsvp.church and will open on **December 15**. You may also register by phone through the Trinity office – an answering machine is available for your convenience when the office is not open.

An Advent Prayer

Loving God, the time is almost here. While the signs of the season are all around us, we look for signs of your Advent in the world. Those signs, we confess, are sometimes hard to see. We seek them in carols and bright lights, in decorations and store windows; in buying, buying, buying – forgetting that your real signs are a manger, a star, a quiet meadow watched by shepherds. Open our eyes and hearts to your presence. Amen.



Advent Calendar Undercover



Often families prepare for Christmas by following an Advent calendar. You might try having an Advent calendar of giving! Create a calendar for yourself and mark off each day as you do a small act of kindness or generosity. You could make it an anonymous act and do it “under cover!” Or you could uncover your generosity, and let people know what you are up to. Some people get a box and add a non-perishable food item to their box each day and then donate it for someone who does not have enough food to eat.



We're still ZOOMing!



As the fourth wave of the pandemic continues to be felt in our region, we want to provide opportunities for people to connect to church remotely. Due to the interactive options available through Zoom and the “live” feel, it remains our platform of choice for most church activities, although some recordings are also uploaded to our YouTube channel for any time viewing.

For your convenience, the Zoom link will be the same throughout December, and 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=SW9RZDBYVTRpek0ZWFlhWkZ3bXN4Zz09>

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!

We're Hiring!



Are you interested in contributing to the life and work of Trinity United Church in a new way? We have an exciting opportunity as a Congregational Designated Minister that we are looking to fill.

Under the supervision of the Coordinating Minister, this position will contribute to our Affirming Ministry in the areas of community building and faith formation. The successful candidate's skills will be matched with some of the functions below.

Community building functions include organizing and participating in regular visits to hospital, personal care homes and shut-ins; preparing and leading funeral services as required. Faith formation functions include plan, resource and offer leadership for Christian education programs as required, in consultation with volunteer leaders; and working with lay leaders to promote education and action around the work of justice and peace at the local levels. Full position description is available by contacting the Trinity United Church – Portage la Prairie office at the email below.

Please submit a resume and cover letter explaining how you meet the qualifications to: trinityu@mymts.net

We thank all who apply and advise that only those selected for further consideration will be contacted.

Note: successful candidate will be subject to satisfactory security checks (child abuse registry, vulnerable persons, criminal record).

Cards of Thanks!



Thanks to Bob and Donna Matthews for putting up our outdoor nativity scene. It will appear in early December, as a reminder to those who walk or drive by of the "reason for the season". Thank you also to Amy Chappellaz for working on the Christmas music event, Heather Brown for her Christmas village display, Pam Lotun for continuing to help us offer online everything - Zoom host extraordinaire! Donna Matthews & Carol Zacharias for decorating the sanctuary for Advent & Christmas, Elaine Verwey for playing the piano for church services, but even more for playing for recording sessions in between services, and Terry Thompson for getting our advent candles ready for the season. Many thanks to each of you!

White (Un)Gift



The Salvation Army will soon be heading into its busiest time of the year. Due to COVID, donations of gifts aren't able to be safely accepted. However, they are still in need of and accepting donations of gift cards (\$25 value) and non-perishable food items to put in the hampers. Trinity will be collecting items the first three Sundays of Advent (**November 28, December 5 & 12**).

Donations can be left at the back of the sanctuary or in the office throughout the week. A standard list of items included in a Salvation Army Food Hamper is included below.

- Canned fruit, pasta, meat, beans
- Kraft Dinner
- Spaghetti/Pasta/Sauce
- Hot cereal
- Beverages
- Dessert item (cake mix, Jell-o, pudding, etc.)
- Extras (pickles, chips, chocolate, etc.)
- Stuffing
- Cold cereal
- Rice



Thanks for Your Support



Recently, Trinity received a letter from the Moderator of The United Church of Canada, The Right Rev. Dr. Richard

Bott. It said, in part, “thank you for your generous gifts of \$53,577 to Mission & Service in 2020. In this time of pandemic, you continue to support the work of the church through Mission and Service, and we are grateful.”

In Advent we will be highlighting some of the stories of the ways that your gifts have made a difference in the work of our wider church. One of the stories we will hear more about is Arwa.

Three years ago, Arwa was a Palestinian refugee and single mother who had just arrived in Montreal with her three children. Our Mission & Service partner Montreal City Mission helped her start a catering cooperative with other women, specializing in Middle Eastern cuisine. The catering business was going strong when Covid-19 struck. In response, Arwa started a sewing circle at Montreal City Mission to make masks for frontline workers and people in homeless shelters. In the first week, the group made and gave out 500 masks. “I was so happy to help people,” says Arwa, whose extraordinary leadership skills have landed her a full time job. “I hope to see more and more women getting the same chance to have this better life for their families.” Because of your gifts,

Arwa will be one of the people who helps other women get that chance.

You can give to the Mission & Service fund through donations to Trinity at any time. You can also give online at <https://united-church.ca/donate> You might choose to make a donation to Mission & Service a Christmas gift for someone who would like to help make a difference. To help with that, there is a “Gifts With Vision” catalogue, where you can choose how to direct your gift. There are gifts for education, gifts for healing and reconciliation, gifts for wellness and safe spaces, gifts to address poverty and hunger, gifts to counter racism, and gifts to support leadership around the world. \$85 will purchase a pig in Guatemala. \$10 will purchase groceries for a family in the far north. \$100 will help build a well. You can see a hard copy of this catalogue at the Trinity office, or visit their website at <https://giftswithvision.ca/>

Thank you for your generosity. Through Mission & Service, you help save and transform lives, inspire meaning and purpose, and build a better world.

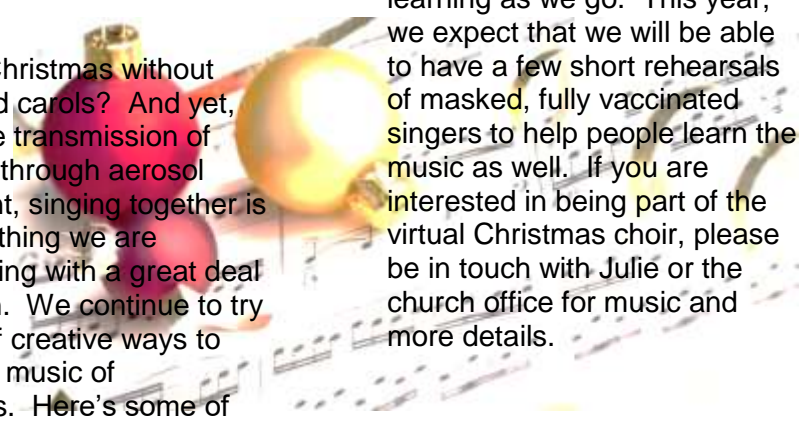
Advent and Christmas Music Plans

What is Christmas without music and carols? And yet, due to the transmission of Covid-19 through aerosol movement, singing together is still something we are approaching with a great deal of caution. We continue to try to think of creative ways to share the music of Christmas. Here's some of

what you might expect this year:

On **Monday, December 20**, we will offer an Online - only Evening of Christmas Music and communion. The guest musician roster is still being finalized, but we look forward to welcoming performers to provide Christmas music from the historic, decorated Trinity sanctuary over Zoom. The event will begin at **7 pm**, and **will conclude at 8:30 pm** with communion that you can participate in from home. You can access this event in the same way you access Sunday morning zoom church. The link will be sent through regular emails, as well as being posted on our website. If you don't have zoom technology, check and see if someone in your bubble does, who would like to spend a Christmas-y evening with you!

We are creating some special anthems 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! We have done this a few times so we are learning as we go. This year, we expect that we will be able to have a few short rehearsals of masked, fully vaccinated singers to help people learn the music as well. If you are interested in being part of the virtual Christmas choir, please be in touch with Julie or the church office for music and more details.



Making the Connection in the midst of Conflict



Over the course of the pandemic, we have seen how families and neighbours have been divided in their response to government health orders and public health guidelines. The regional health authority has made available FREE online training opportunities for ways to be in healthy relationship with those you disagree with. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, more information (including how to register) is available through the church office, or you can be in touch directly with Irene Ascough, Healthy Living Facilitator at 204-392-4145 or iascough@southernhealth.ca or Randi Bourke at 204-380-3544 or rbourke@southernhealth.ca. If there is enough interest, further seminars may be offered. If you would like more information, call the church office.

Managing Really Difficult Conversations

Training organization: ACHIEVE Centre for Leadership. Website: <https://ca.achievecentre.com/>
Training format: 3 hours total (3-hour live virtual workshop, for a group of up to 30 participants)
Platform: Zoom
Dates: Tuesday, December 7th, 2021 9am to 12pm

Practical Skills for Reducing Polarization: Dialogue Across Divides

Training Organization: Facilitated Solutions
Website: <https://workplaceconflict.ca/>
Training Format: 6 hours total (3-hour live sessions (part 1 and part 2), in groups of 20)
Participants are asked to commit to taking both sessions in the 2-part series.
Platform: Zoom
Dates: December 2 and 9, 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm both days

COVID CONVERSATIONS: A Roadmap to Existing Together with Opposing Views

Training Organization: Mediation Services
Website: <https://www.mediationserviceswpg.ca/>
Facilitator: Janet Schmidt
Training format: 6 hours total (1, 6-hour session that can be taken at participants' convenience – participants will be able to progress through the training at their own speed and will be able to return to it as often as they like for up to one year)
Platform: Available through Mediation Services Website –
You will get a code to access the training for free.
Dates: course will open on Dec 6, 2021 at 1 pm



“Advent Undercover”



Last year at this time, we were “home” for Christmas with a severe “circuit breaker” lockdown. This year, there are more options, and yet circumstances still require caution, and some public health orders continue to define what is possible and what is not. It’s not the same. It can’t be the same. In our region, with the highest case, illness and death counts that have impacted our local area to date in the pandemic, we may even find it hard to see where the spirit of Christmas is alive at all. Some traditions will re-appear, while others must remain on the shelf. Even with a return to some of the usual, there is a sense that it is not what we expected; it is not as usual.

This season, we are going to take a look underneath the resignation, separation, cynicism and fear that dominates our newsfeeds and see what we can uncover. In this issue, you will see ways that you can participate in our Advent and Christmas explorations, whether you are inclined to be out and about or staying at home. In person worship attendance is limited to those who can show proof of vaccination (unless you are under the age of 12), and our zoom worship feed goes live every Sunday morning by 10 am.

Advent Wreath Undercover



The lighting of an Advent wreath is a custom that began in 16th-century Germany to mark the season leading up to Christmas. Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, and lasts through Christmas Eve, or December 24. One candle is lit each Sunday of Advent, with a center candle lit at Christmas to symbolize Jesus as a light for the world.

The wreath is traditionally made of an evergreen circle, a reminder of the ongoing and eternal love of God. Four coloured candles are placed on the wreath, and a white candle is placed in the center. Depending on the tradition, the coloured candles might be different combinations of purple, pink and blue. The first Advent wreaths used the colour purple, used also in Lent, another season of preparation. Purple is also the colour of penitence. In some versions, a pink candle replaces one of the purple candles. Blue is the colour of hope. In recent years, many churches have moved to using blue

candles to recognize the hope that is found in Advent.

Sometimes you will even see three blue and one pink! The symbolism of the coloured candles is often related to seasonal themes and celebrations. A common pattern is to light a Prophecy candle, a Bethlehem candle, a candle for the Shepherds and a candle for Angels. The most common depiction of the candles in The United Church are Hope, Peace,

Joy and Love, although if you have attended Trinity during Advent in the past, you will know that we have used many other meanings as well!

As you will see on Sunday mornings, Trinity's advent wreath this year looks a little different. Until our candles are lit each week, they will be "under cover". In the book of Matthew, Jesus says, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a

lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house" (Matthew 5:14-15). This Advent we will talk about the ways that the light is hidden, and how we can find the gifts of Advent Undercover!

If you are creating an Advent wreath for home use, and you would like to follow along with our theme, you can choose to cover your candles as well. Depending on the size of your candles, you can use a terracotta plant pot, or a tin can, or some other homemade cover. Just make sure that it won't catch fire as you start to light candles around it!

What are the rules now?

Over the past 20 months, it has been difficult to keep track of the changes and details of the public health orders. By now, many are tired of keeping track. As of the date of printing (November 26 2021), here are how the current health orders are being interpreted for activity at Trinity church:

1. Sunday mornings, all who attend in person must show proof of vaccination (unless under the age of 12). All who attend must also wear masks unless they have an authorized exemption. The protocols of hand sanitizing, contact tracing and maintaining distance are also being followed. It is permissible to speak and sing softly in church with masks on. Masks may be removed for the purposes of eating and drinking (both for communion, or for coffee after church).
2. Those who work in the kitchen and prepare food follow the public health guidelines for safe food preparation. In addition, they must wear masks and show proof of vaccination.
3. For any meetings or events in the church where proof of vaccination is not provided, maximum capacity limits are 25% of room capacity up to a maximum of 25 people. Mask use is required.
4. As per The United Church of Canada guidelines, all Trinity staff are fully vaccinated.

Thank you for your patience and grace as we navigate the changes and challenges of following the public health guidelines together.

