TriniTidings



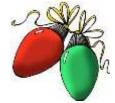
Advent 2024 Trinity United Church Portage la Prairie, MB

Phone: 204-857-4471 e-mail: trinityu@mts.net Website: www.trinityunitedportage.ca

<u>Office Hours</u> Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – noon 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Christmas Office Hours Staff will work in our office until noon, Tuesday, December 24

- The office will be closed on Wednesday, December 25 and Thursday, December 26
- There will be regular office hours December 27 (9 a.m. - noon, 1 – 4 p.m.)
- The office will be closed on Wednesday, January 1.



Julie will be off from December 25 – January 6. Elijah will be on call during this time to cover

pastoral emergencies 204-872-1752.

For 2024 tax receipts, donations must be received by noon on Tuesday, December 31.

COMING UP On SUNDAYS at TRINITY

Worship and Sunday School at Trinity happen each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. This Advent, join us for "**Nativity Stories**"



<u>November 24</u> *"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!"* Worship Leaders: Norman Collier & Julie Baker BBBS Winter Wonderland

<u>December 1</u> Advent 1 Worship Leaders Julie Baker & Elijah Mwandila "Nativity Stories – The Messengers" Communion Service

December 8 Advent 2 Worship Leader Julie Baker "Nativity Stories – Joseph & Mary" Sock It To You Toss! Bring Gifts of Grace! UCW Xmas Baking Sale

> December 15 Advent 3 Worship Leader Elijah Mwandila "Nativity Stories – The Shepherds"

December 22 Advent 4 Worship Leaders Norman Collier & Julie Baker "Nativity Stories – The Unnoticed and Imagined"

<u>December 29</u> Season of Christmas Worship Leader Elijah Mwandila "Nativity Stories – The Magi"

Donating from home? You can etransfer to <u>trinityu@mts.net</u> or Scan the QR code for credit card donations.

Christmas Eve Tuesday, December 24

The United Churches of Portage la Prairie will offer two Christmas Eve services

5:30 p.m.

"Candlelight, Contemplation and

Communion" McKenzie United Church 11th St. NW Worship leaders:

Leith Saunders & Wilma Shirriff



7:00 p.m. A Weary World Rejoices!

Worship for **all ages** at **Trinity United Church** 15 Tupper St South Worship leader: Julie Baker (If you would like to be involved with this service, please reach out to Julie Baker)

The 7 pm service at Trinity will also be available online via Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6460 700716?pwd=SW9RZDBYVTR pekc0ZWFhWkZ3bXN4Zz09

As you receive your Christmas cards and letters this year, (hopefully the



postal strike will be resolved soon!) 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.



Christmas Music **Brings Memories**

How many of vour favourite memories have а soundtrack attached to them? Do particular songs take vou right back to a particular

place and time or remind you of a particular person? Do songs sometimes make vou crv because they remind you of someone you miss?

Christmas music can be like that. It can remind us of our grandmother playing the piano or of children dressed up in bathrobes parading to the front of the church as shepherds or of the peacefulness of candlelight or the fun of a sleigh ride or of carollers coming to the door. Music can remind us of the moments and people we cherish.

Sometimes we are looking for a way to celebrate our memories of loved ones whose presence we miss in this festive season and throughout the year. At Trinity, one of the ways you can honour a loved one is by making a donation in their memory.

A gift to Trinity can be designated in a variety of ways: Trinity's Memorial Fund contributes to the worship and Christian education life of the church in memory of the one who is honoured. Memorial gifts are also gladly received to any other ministry of the church. designated, or undesignated.

Thinking about our memories and those we love can also invite ourselves to as the question "how



make

remembered?" You can often make a sizable financial contribution to an organization whose work you believe in by placing an invitation in your funeral plans to donations to that

do I hope to be

organization. Tell your family, discuss with your preferred funeral home, or make a note with your important papers that "memorial donations can be made to " Then put the paper away, and make more music and memories with those vou love.

Since the last issue of Trini-Memorial donations tidinas. have been gratefully received in memory of:

Sheldon Hiltz Steve Bergson

Trinity's Financial Picture **Projected Expenses for** January-December 2024 \$317,922



Income Received to Date January – November 22 \$152,582

With 5 weeks remaining in the year, we have reached 48% of our goal. Please help! We need vour donations to reach our goal and continue the ministry we offer together

Deadline for 2024 Contributions!

If you wish to top up your 2024 donations, they must be received in the office no later than **noon. December 31**. to be eligible for the taxation year 2024. Charitable donations in Manitoba (after the first \$200) receive a 46% tax credit. This means that if

vou pav income tax, your donation costs you



roughly half of what you give.

"Snowflakes" for M&S

When you give to Mission & Service, people living in poverty receive food, shelter and clothing. Refugees are safer and more secure until times are better. Children



receive tuition, uniforms or simply a good breakfast so that they can stay in school. Immediate support during crisis and natural disaster is provided and long term support is there after it has passed. Through Mission & Service, you help transform lives and inspire meaning and purpose. Each vear during Advent, Trinity puts an extra focus on M & S gifts. This year, a hand made snowflake decoration will be added to our tree for every M & S gift made through Trinity during this season - showing us how we are building a better world together. To learn more about M & S, you can check out https://unitedchurch.ca/community-and-

faith/get-involved/generositythrough-mission-andservice/what-mission-andservice

Connecting and Caring



Friends are Gifts

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** 2.

Increasing Accessibility

In our journey to provide a barrier free, safe environment at Trinity, we continue to be aware of accessibility needs. One of those needs for many people relates to hearing on Sunday mornings. Increasing the volume doesn't always help understanding. with but sometimes if you can read what is being said (close captioning), it can making hearing so much easier. In the church, we have to go 'low tech' for this, but each Sunday, copies of the full

text of what is spoken up front is available at the entry tables. Feel free to pick one up and follow along!



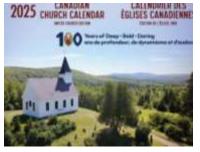
Milestones & Markers...

Since our last issue <u>Funerals</u> Garry Stephen Lyle (Steve) Bergson November 07, 2024

Baptism Ollie Annie Talbot Daughter of Deanna & Colin Talbot October 13, 2024

<u>Confirmation</u> *Kyle Hector Rushton* November 17, 2024

Coming soon... 2025 Canadian Church Calendars



Celebrate our church yearround! The theme of this year's calendar is the United Church's Call and Vison: Deep Spirituality. Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice. always, the calendar As features photos of United Churches from across the country and notes special days and church seasons. Read monthly Bible verses about what it means to be a disciple and keep track of liturgical seasons and colours, significant United Church days, and lectionary dates. Available in the church office throughout the week. Cost is \$10/ea.

Come and do your Christmas baking the easy way! The UCW Dainties Sale has returned and will be held **December 08** following the morning service.

Connecting and Community

Do you sometimes wonder how other churches are navigating all of the challenges and changes of the world these days? Would you like to talk with other United Church people about how to have our churches feel more connected to one another. Prairie to Pine Region is offering a town hall meeting on "connecting and community". It is a follow up to

an initial conversation in June about creating connection between the people and churches that are part of



our Prairie to Pine Region (most of Manitoba and some of northwestern Ontario). It will be held virtually over Zoom and anyone interested is welcome.

Wednesday, November 27 -7:00 p.m. Come with your ideas! If you are interested in seeing a summary of the conversation held in June, be in touch with the church office. You can sign in to the Zoom town hall using the information below:

Zoom details: https://unitedchurch.zoom.us/j/89249071098 ?pwd=TQqldCY79Y3LxF6eioV 32fQltb0sq6.1

Meeting ID: 892 4907 1098 Password: 370648 855 703 8985 Canada Toll-free number (telephone – audio only)



Service of Remembrance and Hope



The holidays can be hard for those going through a tough Those who time. have experienced hardship - like the loss of a loved one or a painful divorce - are twice as likely to associate the holidays with negative feelings like sadness, loneliness and worry. At this time of year, it has long been our practice to offer a special 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. We have been creative about how we have offered this service over the past few years. This year, we will offer a brief 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 are welcome to 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 the second week or so of December. If you would like the link sent directly to you, please be in touch with the church office. For some resources to help you or to support someone close to you

who might be struggling, check out Option B, whose purpose is to help you take care of yourself and support your loved ones through life's most challenging moments. https://optionb.org/

Here's an option for people who need a medical appointment, but don't need to be seen in person. Free virtual healthcare service available 24/7, evenings & weekends. Online Doctor for Manitoba and Canadian Residents, Your walk in clinic services from home. Source: QDoc - Virtual Healthcare 24/7 https://search.app/bLWcD5rJU FEsRyVr7

Ever heard of MAD LIBS?

They are silly stories that you make by filling in the blanks with pre-determined words. On page 8 of the newsletter you'll find a Christmas story with some

blanks to fill in. But first you need to randomly choose your



words. (They can be Christmasthemed words, or not ... your choice!) Here's what you need! A) an adjective (a describing word)

- B) a verb (action word)
- C) another verb
- D) a holiday tradition
- E) adverb (a word that describes
- an action)
- F) a colour
- G) an adjective
- H) an adjective
- I) a plural noun (person, place or
- thing then add an "s"!)
- J) a type of weather
- K) a verb
- L) an adjective
- M) an adjective
- N) a noun (person, place, thing)
- O) noun
- P) a date (month and day)

Sock it To Ya!

On **December 8**, consider donating some new socks that we can provide to the "Reaching Home" program that works to service the unhoused population of Portage la Prairie. Bring your clean, new socks, and we will find a way to joyfully toss them in a donation basket!

How to Survive a Winter Service When the Boiler Has Broken Down

Canada can be cold, and church heating systems are temperamental. It is circumstances like these that

separate the average United Church attender from the hardcore worship enthusiast.



- Keep your parka on. The expression "Sunday best" should be expanded to include clothing that is wellinsulated from the cold. Mittens, toques, down-filled coats, and boots say "I love my faith, but I'm not willing to risk hypothermia for it."
- 2. Re-evaluate your need for personal space. Especially if only a small but faithful remnant have braved the cold, huddle together in one pew to share body heat.
- Candles add warmth. Okay, not a lot of warmth – light bulbs actually give off more heat – but candles also give off a cheery glow that creates the impression of warmth.
- 4. Keep moving. Tap your feet. Clap. Dance. Let the Spirit move you, and in the process keep the blood moving to your extremities. Excerpt from The Unofficial United

Church Handbook (edited by Scott Douglas and Nanette McKay)



When I arrived at Trinity in 1999, 25 years was most of my lifetime. I couldn't have imagined spending 25 years sharing ministry with you. Where does the time go? While the



time has moved quickly, we have experienced so much together over that time, and I could not be more grateful for this place and all of you who are the church. I am also deeply thankful to those of you who planned the party to celebrate and recognize this anniversary. There were decorations and cake; music and special guests. They were all fantastic. I was so glad that arrangements had been made so that some residents from Douglas Campbell and Lions Manor were able to attend. While certainly not all, I was so glad to connect with some folks that it has been difficult to visit with, (what with the various ward shut downs, the covid restrictions and now my own health restrictions). I know that a great deal goes on behind the scenes to plan an event of that size, so I am particularly thankful for all of the hidden work that we will never know happened. I think those who came had a really good time - I know I did. I enjoyed seeing those of you who were able to join us, and I appreciated the thoughts of those of you who sent notes that you were with us in spirit. I am surprised and humbled but the number of people who made donations to the Mission and Service Fund in honour of this occasion. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to send a sizeable gift of \$3,714! That's simply amazing. In this world of tension, division and bad news. we are called to celebrate however we can. May we carry this jov with us as we continue on. -Julie Baker

Happy Holy Days

For 64 years, I have been a Christian, for 30 years a minister, and 3 of those years the spiritual leader and

senior elected official of The United the United of Church of Canada. I am not "dabbling" in Christianity. I'm not messing around. I'm a bonafide Jesusloving capital C Christian. I celebrate Christmas – merry and otherwise – *every year*. I'm all in.

Between November 1 and January 15, however, there are 29 religious holidays observed by seven major religions. Please, don't ask me to name them all, but Christians let's

Besides, we pillaged our best

Christmas traditions—dragging

trees inside, mistletoe-kissing,

hanging lights, yule logs, elves

Pagans out there, for up-sizing

our celebrations of Jesus' birth.

the like-from European

Pagans. Thank you, all you

I am whispering here: Jesus

birthday. We made it all up.

consumerism and has

into poverty.

wasn't a Christian. He did not

celebrate Christmas by hanging

a sock up on the donkey for his

Christmas, in North America for

of capitalism, consumption and

the most part, is a celebration

absolutely nothing to do with

brown Jesus the refugee born

agree, we aren't the only religious rodeo in town over the next twoand-ahalf months.



But, here's the pop in your Christmas cracker: Jesus loves us, anyway. He practiced radical, expansive, unconditional love unconcerned about the multiplicity of ways people celebrate joy, compassion, generosity, light, hope, justice and love. I want to play for that team.

So, at Christmas, and all year long, I want to blow the doors open on Jesus' love for the world, not lock it down. I'll greet you with a cheerful, openhearted Happy HolyDays, however, and whatever you are celebrating **because** I am a Christian.

If you insist on wishing your Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or

agnostic strangers and friends Merry Christmas, I'm pretty sure most of them will simply smile and say "Thanks". No one is saying you can't.

- David

Guiliano is an ordained minister, who was the 39th Moderator of the United Church of Canada from 2006-2009.

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.

Thank you for your continued financial support!



"Grounded in Gratitude"



Please know that every donation received by Trinity is appreciated and for each donation we are truly grateful. Thank you so much for your support! We are 10 months through the year so it's a good time to analyze our financial resources. Just a reminder, we budgeted for total income of \$229,500 and total expenses of \$317,922 resulting in an anticipated end of year deficit of \$88,419. In reviewing the Summary to the end of October, below, you will note that the actual offerings in this 10 month period is only 55% of the budgeted amount. Yes, we expect 30% of our annual offerings will be received in the last 2 months of the year....but the math doesn't total 100% of our budgeted amount! When you review our October expenses, please note that we pay 100% of Elijah's salary and receive reimbursement from MacGregor for their share. We also paid the last quarterly instalment to UCC in October. Is it time to analyze your donation budget to Trinity? In the article titled "Not as Young as I Used to Be!" by The Rev. Dave Jagger he says: "It continues to surprise me. As I approach 60, I have the most financial

resources of my life. At this point in our careers, my wife and I are at our highest earning levels yet, and at the same time our expenses are relatively low. Our kids are out on their own and the mortgage is paid off. I understand that this is not everyone's experience. However, for a lot of people, this is in fact the case." We are asking, are you in a situation where you can adjust your donation budget to Trinity? Are you in a place in life where your living expenses are reduced and your income and/or assets have increased? In his article, The Rev. Dave Jagger asks: "As a person of faith, as your age and your financial resources change, how generous can you be?" Please take time to consider this as we move forward through the last 2 months of 2024.

For your respectful consideration, *The Stewardship Team*

	Tri	nity Unite	d C	Church			
Oper	atin	g Budget	vs	. Actual 20	24		
Su	mm	ary to Oct	ob	er 31, 2024			
		Oct 31		Actual to Date		Budget 2024	% Budget to Date
Income							
Offerings	\$	11,492.05	\$	104,131.32	\$	190,000.00	55%
UCW	\$	-	\$	2,500.00	\$	5,000.00	50%
Rentals	\$	2,675.20	\$	28,212.00	\$	30,802.40	92%
Honouraria	\$	-	\$	2,025.00	\$	1,000.00	203%
Special Events	\$	-	\$	-			
Interest	\$	118.91	\$	1,461.26	\$	1,200.00	122%
GST Rebate	\$	-	\$	669.11	\$	1,500.00	45%
Miscellaneous Income	\$	-	\$	-			
Total Operating Income	\$	14,286.16	\$	138,998.69	\$	229,502.40	61%
Expenses							
Personnel	\$	31,147.21	\$	200,081.48	\$	243,397.93	82%
Cost Sharing with MacGregor United	\$	(3,671.64)		(38,449.89)	Ŧ	,	
United Church of Canada	\$	2,997.25	\$	11,989.00	\$	11,989.00	100%
Office	\$	533.06	\$	11,770.39	\$	12,290.00	96%
Program Supplies	\$	38.00	\$	1,226.37	\$	2,275.00	54%
Interest Groups	\$	3.00	\$	452.33	\$	1,275.00	35%
Property	\$	2,102.70	\$	29,115.20	\$	46,694.87	62%
Total Operating Expense	\$	33,149.58	\$	216,184.88	\$	317,921.80	68%
Surplus/Deficit	\$	(18,863.42)	\$	(77,186.19)	\$	(88,419.40)	87%

Reflection on Advent



It is interesting how our advent hymns have given us a deep sense of what it means to celebrate advent as Christians. Our spirituality is grounded in such hymns that point to the incarnation of Jesus Christ (birth of Jesus) and the anticipated return of Jesus to the world. We sing with hope and join with the rest of the witnesses on the blessings that come with the baby born in the manger. The glory of God is revealed in the weakness of the baby Jesus born in the manger. In the person of Jesus Christ, the very God who is above us, is God with us, among us, within us and beside us. We celebrate with the angels and sing together Nowell, Nowell born is the king who has come and will come again in glory.

This year, our advent theme is centered on the truth of God communicated in the nativity stories. In these nativity stories and perhaps our own stories, we identify God's love, care and way of dealing with all creation. We hear the messages of hope, love, joy, or care brought by the messengers to the recipients of the message. The messages of God brought hope to the broken oppressed heart. or at marginalized peoples. God assured the recipients of the message not to be afraid through the messengers. God continues to bring messages of hope in our distress and despair in this advent. Advent helps us to look back into the history and get the

determination from there to remain hopeful for the future.

It is our hope that this year's advent will connect us with God, and with each other. Together we shall hear the stories of hope and seek God. Together we shall praise God and sing with hope. Together we shall embark on a journey to

share the abundant blessings of God and promote peace and justice. Together we shall come on the table and sing "Joy to the world! the Lord is come -VU58"

May the light of God shine upon us in this advent season! Merry Christmas! -Elijah Mwandila

GIFTS OF GRACE (aka White Gift Sunday)

Have vou noticed how language changes over time? At one time "Awesome" only referred to God, or something that truly caused "awe". In the 1980s or so, "awesome" came to describe lots of things that you thought were pretty great. Today the word "text" is a verb! Lately we have realized that "White Gift" no longer has any relation to the charitable gifts that we share in this season, and it might even be confusing (at best) to those who do not have history with it. So let's shift our language. On December 8, let's share gifts of grace with our community. Bring your non-perishable food items, unwrapped new toys or gifts or gift cards and we shall help fill the Salvation Army Christmas Hampers. Donated toiletries will be shared with CMHA or the Family Violence Prevention Centre. And don't forget the socks that will be tossed and sent to the reaching home program. Gifts of grace indeed!



Christianity in a **Crisis-Shaped World**

CCS Fridays is a series of monthly online conversations



hosted by the Centre for Christian Studies topics of on interest for people of faith. They are an hour long (noon to 1pm Central) with a guest presenter

and some time for small group and large group discussion. December Friday. 6 Christianity in a Crisis-shaped World with special guest Jesse Zink.

Click here to reaister https://us02web.zoom.us/meeti ng/register/tZYodOCsrjlpHtY6N w-EIA_E-CdLtjEclG0v

Jesse Zink's new book Faithful, Creative, Hopeful: Fifteen Theses for Christians in a Crisis-Shaped World, draws on Scripture, the Christian tradition, and on-the-ground ministry experience to offer new paths for Christian ministry in a world being reshaped by climate change, economic inequality, and human migration. He'll be joining the CCS community to discuss the ideas in his book and lead discussion on the changing nature of Christian witness.

Rev. Dr. Jesse Zink is the principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College. You can learn more about the new book on the publisher's website and read the introduction and first few chapters for free on Google Books.

I used to think that achieving inner peace would make my heart look like a calm lake

I thought being in harmony meant: no ripples no waves no lapping shores

~ just still water

it turns out that serenity isn't the absence of movement

in fact

~ it's quite the opposite

because the more peace I feel

the more my heart churns and bubbles

like a lake boiling as a ribbon of lava breaks through underneath the water

away the ancient seaweed of division that builds upon our shores

peace is anything but still



it's a tsunami that can terraform rock fortresses into open-air chapels

my love,

I'm starting to realize that the less

my heart moves

- ~ the heavier it gets
- ~ the more dust it collects
- ~ the less kindness I feel

but when I let my heart constantly stir like a cotton candy machine

~the lighter and sweeter it becomes

empathy is an act of chaos

it takes the narcissistic scripts we have been given and rewrites them into

a handwritten gospel of understanding

peacefulness is anything but still

~ it is pure motion

peace is the ripple that starts in the center of my heart

and rushes out through the faucets of my eyes, hands and tongue out into the world my love, ripples are remarkable

because we aren't here to be stagnant

we are here to make a splash

~ john roedel

YOUR MAD LIB STORY!

Back on page 4 of this newsletter you chose some

words. Now's the time to put them to use. Fill in the blanks of this story with



the words you picked and have a laugh! Get someone else to choose some words and see how the story changes. Christmas Eve at Trinity church is a A time. I like to B every year and C with my family and join in my favourite Christmas activity of __D__. The Christmas tree is E decorated with ___F__ lights and G____decorations. There's always lots of H storytelling and festive __I__. Sometimes it's really _____ and sometimes we __K__ candles. Some people wear __L__ clothes and others wear __M__ _N__. My favourite part is when the __O__ sings carols! I hope you can join us at church __P__. Joy to the world!

Sunday mornings you can access our online



feed through our zoom platform from wherever you are! The zoom link is emailed each week, is available on our website, and is posted in our Facebook group. If you need accessing our online help worship, please be in touch with the church office. You are always welcome to come through the front doors and join us in person! Doors open before 10 a.m. and we start at 10:30 a.m.

I don't think we were created out of nothingness to come here just to let our hearts become an unmoving body of cold water covered in standing algae

I think the Great Love placed a fire in us so that our lives will be a natural spring of swirling hot healing water that never looks the same way twice

the war machine thinks it is the only thing that can move and lumber

~ and that's simply not true peace is the most disturbing force in the universe

peace is the tide that washes