

TriniTidings

Lent 2025

Trinity United Church
Portage la Prairie, MB

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Website:

www.trinityunitedportage.ca

Office Hours

Monday – Friday

9:00 a.m. – noon

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

UCW's Irish Stew Lunch

Join us for good food and
fellowship

March 16 (this Sunday)

following worship

for stew, salad, biscuits & buns,
hot dogs,

dessert, coffee, tea & juice

Adults: \$10, 6-12: \$5,

Under 6: free

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

COMING UP On SUNDAYS at TRINITY

Worship and Sunday School at
Trinity happen each Sunday at
10:30 a.m. This Lent, join us
for “**What are We Growing?**”

March 16

Lent 2

Worship Leader:

Elijah Mwandila

“What are We Growing?

Generosity & Joy”

March 23

Lent 3

Worship Leader Julie Baker

“What are We Growing?

Self-Control”

March 30

Lent 4

Worship Leader Julie Baker

“What are We Growing?

Gentleness & Peace”

April 06

Lent 5

Worship Leader

Elijah Mwandila

“What are We Growing?

Kindness”

April 13

Lent 6

Worship Leader Julie Baker

“What are We Growing?

Faithfulness”

April 20

Easter Sunday

Butterflies & Bees,

Flowers & Fruit!

Communion

Worship Leader Julie Baker

Ecumenical Good Friday Worship

Please join us at McKenzie

United Church

(11th St NW)

Friday, April 18

10:30 a.m.

This is a shared worship
service with the Anglican and
United Churches in
Portage la Prairie.
All are welcome.

Celebrate Easter Sunday with us!

April 20, 2025

April's House Group invites you
to come to church a bit early to
enjoy a “Fruitful Easter
Celebration” - a light continental
breakfast - around 9:45 - 10:00
a.m. If you can help with food
items, there will be a sign-up
sheet on the back bulletin
board. Looking forward to
seeing you!

Congregational Meeting

March 24, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Do you have something on
March 24th, 2025? Trinity has
something for consideration.
We will have a Congregational
Meeting on **March 24th at 6:30
p.m.** Yes, at 6:30 p.m. Did we
not just have another one this
month? Yes we did. But this
one is about Elijah's call. Elijah
Mwandila is transitioning from
an Appointment to a Call after
his final admission interview
with the United Church of
Canada Admission Board. The
Prairie to Pine Regional Council
has set June 15th as a date for
admission service to celebrate
Elijah' admission as a minister
in the United Church. This
request comes amidst your
busy schedules. But we ask for
your generosity to be present at
the meeting to vote on the
motion. Mark the date and time,
and be there for the meeting in
person or virtually.

2025 marks 100 years of The United Church of Canada

The United Church congregations of Knox, Oakville, Gladstone, MacGregor, Trinity Portage and McKenzie Portage are coming together to host an anniversary worship service and barbeque lunch on **Sunday June 8 at 10:30 a.m. in Island Park at the Ukrainian Connection Bandstand**. Julie Baker and Kelly Haapamaki have been representing Trinity on the planning team, and as we get closer to planning the details, please be in touch with either Julie or Kelly if you would like to lend a hand with this event. In the meantime, please mark your calendars for June 8 2025. It won't be complete without you!

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 with understanding, but sometimes if you can read what is being said (close captioning), it can make 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

Funerals

Jeannie Cooper Crandell

January 03, 2025

Margaret "Jean" Harkness

February 28, 2025

Annette Lois Lytle

March 17, 2025

"Fruit of the Week": Coffee and Conversation

(Actually probably tea, herbal tea and if we are lucky, some actual fruit!)

Each week during Lent, as we explore our theme "What are We Growing?" we have been holding drop in conversations about the "fruit of the spirit"; the values we wish to cultivate and ground ourselves in during these uncertain times.

Tuesday afternoons at Trinity
(lower hall meeting room)
2:15 - 3:30 p.m.

Sessions on patience and generosity and joy have already been held. There are no pre-requisite sessions – you can come any time you wish or are available. Coming up:

March 18

Self-Control

March 25

Gentleness & Peace

April 1

Kindness

April 8

Faithfulness

April 15

Love

Celebrating Our Gifts

We are people gifted differently. Do we all realize this? Sometimes we think our gifts do not matter. All gifts matter in God's presence and ministry. In fact, our gifts are a big resource to the ministry of Trinity United Church. As such, we take time to celebrate the varied gifts that we have all brought to the church and offered. In the busyness of the world, and the trends that come with its busyness, we don't take it for granted that you have volunteered your time, and other resources to see the continuation of the mission and vision of the church. It is based on that very spirit of volunteerism and availability to share our gifts that the vision of the church thrives. By being present in the ministry of the church in whatever way, we recognize that we join the body of Christ, and live by the body ethics. And by doing so, each one of us participate in fulfilling the prayer of Jesus that all might be one. We can remind ourselves again that our gifts matter in the ministry of God, and each one of us is valuable in God's ministry. May God bless us all!

Blessed Lent and Easter,
Elijah Mwandila

We expect to offer baptism this spring, but have not set a date. If there's interest, please be in touch with Julie or Elijah as soon as possible.

Cuban Agricultural Tour

For two and a half weeks last month Linda and I, along with Josh Wright, participated in a tour of small to intermediate size organic farms in Cuba.



As part of preparations, we were asked to bring along as much humanitarian aid as possible to support local farm families. We made a call for help, first to Trinity United and then to the larger community. As a result we were able to fill all our suitcases for a total of 250 lbs of humanitarian aid. As a thank you for Trinity's part we have prepared this brief report.

All the economies of the world suffer periods of downturn and uncertainty as Canadians are all too aware currently. But imagine a tsunami of hurricanes, earthquakes, sustained electrical outages, supply chain disruptions, systemic trade embargos, and climate change induced floods and droughts, and you can begin to picture the scenario of food insecurity that a tiny nation of 7 million could face. And if that nation is somehow coping with all that is thrown at them, is there something we can learn in facing our own insecurities? Such was the mindset as we, a small group of Canadians and one American, toured small independent farms through western Cuba.

Our visit was bookended by stays at two progressive religious institutions – the Centro Cristiano de Reflexión y Diálogo (CCRD) in the town of Cardenas and the Convent

Sanata Brigida in old Havana. The first is an ecumenical organization promoting critical

thinking, community engagement and development, and food security. This is where all of the humanitarian aid brought by the participants was sorted and divided into thank you kits / care packages for farm families we were about to tour. The contributions by Trinity and community represented a significant portion of items totally collected. Most of the clothing and all of the health aids (due to late arrival) were to be distributed by CCRD in the community/city of Cardenas.

Cuba's socialist revolution dates from 1959, but food security was not really a issue until the 1990's. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, guaranteed markets for sugar and supplies for oil and cheap food costs came to an end. By necessity, enacted economic and agricultural reforms supplemented the monocrop state sector with cooperative and small scale private farms. These farms now provide a majority of food production on a much smaller share of cultivated land due to diversity and permaculture methods.

In total some 18 farms were on the tour ranging in size from 1200 m² to 100 hectares. All along the way we witnessed families determined to make farming a viable occupation whatever the obstacles. Agriculture is the only economic activity in Cuba, organized as cooperatives and private enterprises, where the state does not predominate. As compared to the state controlled farms, these private

sectors punch above their weight.

In general, four words characterize the farmers we encountered on our tour: resilience, determination, resourcefulness, ingenuity. Facing material scarcity and parts, broken machinery is jerry – rigged. With essential farm supplies unreliable, seeds are saved and shared to promote diversity and reduce risks of crop failures. For a shortage of equipment to dig a well, solve it with a pick and shovel. To meet unreliable electrical supply to run irrigation pumps, arise in the middle of the night to make the best of the electricity hours available.

The Cuban government is heavily centralized, bureaucratic, authoritarian and wearing thin in the opinion of many Cubans. However it has a much freer feeling compared to my first visit 45 year ago, where we had a “minder” at every step and where we never encountered candid opinions of government and state of affairs in Cuban society.

Disillusionment has its sources with the ongoing US embargo isolating Cuba from international credit and trade, the lingering impact of the pandemic on tourism, mass emigration mostly to the US, crippling electricity outages, shortages and high prices for oil and fuel. But if there ever was a combination of catastrophes that devastated simultaneously worldwide trade, commerce, weather, energy, and food security, I put my money on the Cubans to come out of it first.

A more fulsome report of this tour is available from the church office on request.

- Mitchell Omichinski

Just a quick update from Stewardship

In 2024, as a result of everyone's generous financial donations, Trinity was able to substantially reduce its budgeted deficit! Thank you to those who made this a reality!!!

Below is the current operating budget vs actual for 2025 to the end of February. At the annual meeting, a motion was passed to transfer quarterly payments from the Investing in Our Future Fund to offset our anticipated shortfall. Let's work together to ensure our budgeted deficit for 2025 is also reduced!

The Stewardship Team

Trinity United Church Operating Budget vs. Actual 2025 Summary to February 28, 2025

	Feb 28-25	Actual to Date	Budget 2025	% Budget to Date
Income				
Offerings	\$ 9,246.79	\$ 20,192.86	\$ 175,000.00	12%
UCW			\$ 5,000.00	0%
Rentals	\$ 3,070.00	\$ 5,800.00	\$ 32,260.00	18%
Honouraria	\$ 350.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 2,000.00	30%
Special Events				
Interest	\$ 108.79	\$ 234.02	\$ 1,200.00	20%
GST Rebate	\$ 805.08	\$ 805.08	\$ 1,500.00	54%
Investing in Our Future			\$ 50,000.00	0%
Total Operating Income	\$ 13,580.66	\$ 27,631.96	\$ 266,960.00	10%
Expenses				
Personnel	\$ 21,487.50	\$ 43,111.29	\$ 256,541.49	17%
Cost Sharing with MacGregor United	\$ (3,670.94)	\$ (7,341.88)	\$ (49,361.00)	15%
United Church of Canada	\$ -	\$ 3,164.75	\$ 12,659.00	25%
Office	\$ 1,238.10	\$ 2,868.06	\$ 12,325.00	23%
Program Supplies	\$ 57.42	\$ 94.92	\$ 1,475.00	6%
Interest Groups	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 1,275.00	3%
Property	\$ 5,999.10	\$ 11,540.72	\$ 45,400.00	25%
Total Operating Expense	\$ 25,146.18	\$ 53,472.86	\$ 280,314.49	19%
Surplus/Deficit	\$ (11,565.52)	\$ (25,840.90)	\$ (13,354.49)	

Trinity's Financial Update 2025

January & February

Goal - \$21,681

Given - \$20,193

Thank you!

Spring Giving Goals

March 01 – May 31

Goal - \$34,443

Please help!

Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

Charlotte Jones, Cartoonist, as interviewed by son, Tom Jones

Charlotte Jones was “born on a small farm in Idaho”. She “attended the local university, and decided that she “wanted to be a magazine illustrator, so” she “majored in Commercial Art.” “However, sometimes “wanted to be”, and reality don’t always come together.”

“We came to Canada in the early 1970s.” “By the mid ‘70s” she “found than an Art Centre was in the process of being formed on Saskatchewan Avenue. The Art Centre was sharing half of the building, the library in the other half.” She “taught drawing there, helped whenever needed, and also worked as a commissioned artist.”

“By the mid 1980s” Charlotte was “teaching cartooning in the Art Centre, and submitting work to Western Canadian Farm newspapers, various organization, advisements, and miscellaneous commissions under the pen name *Gruber*.”

Partnering with the editor of Pulse Beat Magazine, Charlotte was asked if she “would do a cartoon each month.” “The two cleaning ladies, Bertha and Mabel, began their lives in the Pulse Beat magazine, and have been recently featured on back covers of annual reports.”

Then in 1998, she partnered with Peter Denton, an interim minister in Portage until 2004. They “worked as *Gruber and Denton* until 2004,” concentrating almost completely on Church cartooning.

Charlotte’s artist statement is “cartooning, as with any type of art, comes from within, and is who I am. Bertha and Mabel are both who I am, which is true of every character I have ever done. My hope is that a reader will be able to connect, or relate to, the message intended in the cartoon. With painting, the connection may be more subtle, and requires additional thought. With cartooning, it may be a different “plateau” of understanding, or it may be a way of communicating on ground level, and getting away with it.”

“Being a Trinity Church member resulted in many church related cartoons and I didn’t always “get away with it”. My idea of what, and how, to portray church subjects has evolved, over the years. Ideas are seen, and conceived differently as one ages, and as the church community has renewed itself. Does God have a sense of humour? I’d like to think so”.

Respectfully submitted by
Tom Jones

A Short Autobiography of Thomas Jones

Hello: I was born as Thomas R Jones, and usually known as Tom, youngest son of Charlotte and Bob Jones. I was born in Washington State, and “grew up” in rural Manitoba, on a hobby farm near Portage la Prairie. I have learned to love Manitoba, Canada, and as a dual citizen I am mostly Canadian.

I graduated from Junior High School, and High School in Portage Prairie. Later, while attending post-secondary schools, I majored in Music Education, and minored in

English. I also studied some Theology.

I worked during summers while studying. A highlight of my summer employment years was a summer as a “photographer/journalist” for a local, small town, newspaper team. After an “interval”, I volunteered for the papers.

Respectfully submitted by
Tom Jones

This United Church of Ours:

On June 10, 1925, in the Mutual St. Arena in Toronto, The United Church of Canada is formed by a union of Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and the General Council of the Local Union Churches.

A Gift in Memory

As we journey towards Easter, we think about the great mysteries of life and death. We remember that with God death is not the end but rather a new beginning.

With every loss in our faith community, we grieve the faces and voices that are no longer with us in the same way.

Yet, we also celebrate the ways in which their witness lives on in the lives of others and the memories they leave behind. We are grateful for the gifts we have received to the Memorial Fund to honour these recent deaths and the lives of others who have died less recently but whose example continues to be an inspiration. The work they contributed to so faithfully will be strengthened as we use these gifts to see us into the future.

When you are making funeral arrangements for yourself or a loved one, consider naming their church community as a desired recipient of memorial donations. You might be surprised by how big an impact you can have by placing such an invitation in your obituary or funeral plans.

Here at Trinity, memorial gifts can be designated in a variety of ways. Trinity's Memorial Fund is set aside for the work of Worship and Christian Education in this congregation. Memorial gifts are also gladly received to any other ministry of the church, designated or undesignated. If you wish, acknowledgements of your gift will be sent to the family of the one you remember, as well as a public acknowledgement when we dedicate memorial gifts each year.

Our memorial donations are one of the many ways in which we live out an Easter faith which cherishes the truth that death is a new beginning.

Since the last issue of Trinitidings, Memorial donations have been gratefully received in memory of:

Billy Ferguson
Lloyd & Cheryl Green
Ken Yuill
Jeff Archibald
Caillen & Lauren
John Walsh
Isy Stasiuk
Bill, Marj & Reg Malanchuk
Jake & Janny Kok
Dawn Crabtree
Sheldon Hiltz
Linda Wright
Waind MacDonald
Jean Harkness

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/bLWcd5rJUFEsRyVr7>

We are pleased once again to host the **Prairie Sounds Music Festival** here from Tuesday, April 22 through Friday, April 25. Feel free to stop in and enjoy fine entertainment from some of Portage's talented young musicians. Their highlight concert will be here at Trinity on **Sunday, April 27** at 7 p.m. and everyone is welcome.

If you are leaving or arriving for a function during this time, please enter the building quietly if possible (noise in the stairwells tends to carry to upstairs).

This United Church of Ours:
1980-82 - 28th General Council, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Moderator: The Right Rev. Lois M. Wilson. After reviewing the latest study on ministry, Project: Ministry, a General Council Sessional Committee concludes: "As a church we are still on our journey toward a more complete understanding of ministry."

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 help accessing our online 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.

Ecumenical Good Friday

Are you having any plans for this year's Good Friday? Are you seeking to hear the Good Friday story with someone else? Are you seeking ways of engaging and contemplating on the meaningful ways of celebrating Good Friday today?

Perhaps, this might be the season! We are glad to share with you that this year, Trinity United, McKenzie United, and the St. Mary's Anglican Church are offering a joint Good Friday Service **Friday, April 18 at 10:30 a.m.**, hosted by McKenzie United Church (11th St NW). It is a service that will explore Good Friday in meaningful ways amidst our anxieties and panic moods.

All are most welcome!
Blessings,
Elijah Mwandila

"What are We Growing?" Lent and the Fruit of the Spirit

March 5 we entered the season of Lent – a time in the church year for reflecting on our lives and following the path of Jesus. This year, it seemed somehow important to remind ourselves of the values that matter to us, even as the world is inviting us to abandon those values; even as the world will encourage us to act like there is nothing at all to believe in. This year, we hope that Lent will give us an opportunity to remind ourselves of the values that matter to us, and how we can continue to live out those values. Our Sunday themes will pick up on the advice sent to the Galatians by the apostle Paul, when he invites them to accept not the gifts that the world wants to put on them, but the gifts that God offers to all who are seeking truly abundant life. He called them the "fruit of the Spirit". Please join us for some fruitful dialogue and exploration!

This United Church of Ours:
1994-97 - The Healing Fund was established to help First Nations communities respond to the painful legacy of residential schools.

The Hope of Spring

God, thank you for Spring and the hope of warmer, longer, brighter days.

Thank you for the coming of growth and life and birth.

Thank you that things are coming awake in the world. This is what our calendar says, and we do see some signs that it is real.

But we also still struggle with the residual layover of winter. Now we ask that you bring into reality all that belongs in this season.

Your word says that we will have provision, and hope, and joy, and health and loving relationships here and now in this life.

We ask that what belongs in this season would become actual in our practical lives.

We hope in you and in your promises.

We hope in your gift of Spring.

- Author Unknown

This United Church of Ours:
In March 1995, the General Council Office moved from 85 St. Clair Ave. East, Toronto, to rented facilities at 3250 Bloor St. West.

In 1995, "to live with respect in Creation" was added to the New Creed.

A new hymn book, Voices United, was published in 1996.

Happy Birthday United Church!

Did you know that church isn't just a building, or even a time on Sunday mornings?

The church is God's people.

Sometimes the church gathers to share stories and sing songs, or to learn together about the Bible and Jesus' teachings. Sometimes it gathers to talk about God and talk to God, or to work together to make the world a better place!

100 years ago, in June of 1925, many Christians from across Canada came together to become a church. They called this new group of people The United Church of Canada. Over the past 100 years many more people and communities have

joined us as we work, learn, grow, and play together. What brings us together is our desire for a deep spirituality, to be bold disciples of Jesus, and to dare to do justice for everyone.

There is so much to celebrate in our 100-year history: did you know that the first woman to be a minister in Canada was a United Church member named Lydia Gruchy? And that the United Church works to help those in need all around the world, in places like Syria and Guatemala?

As we celebrate 100 years of The United Church of Canada, we remember all the people who have helped make it special. From sharing stories and helping others to standing up for what is right, our church has done so much! But our story isn't over—it's still being

written by people like you! No matter where we are, we can keep growing, learning, and working together to make the world a kinder and more loving place. What part will you play in the next 100 years?

Spring Lenten Concerts

St. Mary's Anglican Church
Wednesday Noon Hours
12:10 – 12:30 p.m.

March 19

Johnny Dietrich

March 26

Alfred & Coralie MacLaren

April 02

The Turner Sisters

April 09

Gareth Rice

Concerts are
absolutely free

Lunch
following
concerts - \$10

First Presbyterian Church
"Meal-in-a-Bowl". Thick homemade soup (turkey or cream of potato) served with breads & biscuits, and marble cake or applesauce walnut cake for dessert. **Wednesday, March 26.** Take out or delivery only (Pick up from 5 – 6 p.m.) To place your order (**by March 24**); call Lisa at 204-385-2847. Cost is \$12 at the door.

Church Connections



While you can always find us by using the telephone, and stopping into the office, we have many electronic and online options to keep us connected as well.

Regular emails are sent with updates – if you would like to be added to our email list, 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.

As we gather for worship, we remember that we gather on the area covered by Treaty 1, traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Dene, Dakota, and Oji-Cree nations and is the homeland of the Red River Metis. We commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.