



GUEST MINISTER'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE...

By the time you read this, I will have brought out my collection of Advent and Christmas music and begun listening. My musical choices are 'eclectic' – which is another word for what someone else, even other family members, would call 'strange' at best. My music would not work in a shopping mall. It doesn't get played on the radio or in Hallmark Christmas movies. There aren't that many mentions of lightly falling snow or Christmas trees or Santa Claus in what is played on my music system. But of that more commercial repertoire I would say: 'Oh, the music may be merry, but it's only temporary'.



That's part of a line from a Paul Simon song called 'Getting Ready for Christmas Day'. The song samples a sermon that was preached about 80 years ago by the Rev. J. M. Gates. At first it sounds like a weird mixture. Mr. Gates' concern is that those listening to him prepare themselves for the judgement of God and for death. Simon's verses acknowledge what it is like to get by with a tight budget in a world that assumes everyone can afford a Christmas with lots of food and lots of presents. But it focusses on life. The song is a clash musically and theologically but it works. So does a previous Paul Simon Christmas piece where he put the hymn 'Silent Night' and the evening news together, with each being the background for the other. Again, it's a clash but it works.

Which brings me to the weird juxtaposition of the Bible stories that we read together this time of year, and the hymns that we sing together and how they clash in purpose and perspective from what comes at us from the Black Friday world that we live in.

You know the list of things that we are encouraged and pushed to check off. It includes finding the right gifts for family and friends; getting the food ready, decorating the house inside and out, listening to the kind of Christmas music that sings of sleighrides and stars on top of the tree and being pleasant and generous to all.

Mr. Gates, the preacher on that old, scratchy LP, had a different list, as do Isaiah and Malachi and Hannah and Mary and Joseph and Zechariah and John the Baptist. To sum them up: it's time to get ready for God to do something extraordinary, something that will turn the world upside down, something that will catch us all by surprise again this year. So, instead of wishing you a merry Christmas, I ask you to look into the places where our message about Jesus clashes with the realities of the world. There is where you will discover God working.

'Getting ready, oh we're getting ready for the power and the glory and the story of the Christmas Day'. – Paul Simon

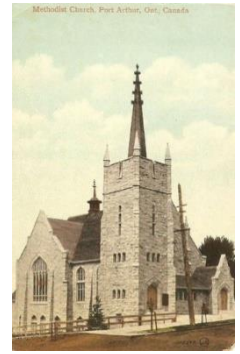
Rev. Bert Vancook



PROPERTY (Jean Murray)

Just a few things to bring you up to date on property issues.

- **The Lift Project:** The architectural and engineers' drawings are in. The original contractor backed out because he thought the job was too big for him. We are looking for a new contractor and will talk to the congregation when we have more information and the total cost.
- The **large trees on the property** were pruned by members of the Property Committee.
- When we found water on the basement floor, we discovered that the oldest of our two **sump pumps** was not working. The pump was replaced and a sensor installed that will give us warning if it stops running again.
- **Jim Jackson** and **Peter Cosbey** worked on the falling-down church sign along Algoma Street. It is now upright and being held in place for the winter by pieces of wood and the grace of God! It will be repaired in the spring.



REFUGEE FUNDRAISING SMORGASBORD (Shane Judge)

On Saturday, November 30th, Trinity United hosted a fundraising dinner for the Inter-Church Refugee Committee. 81 people from 10 churches across the city attended a smorgasbord of food delights prepared by members of the Refugee Committee. The evening's program included video and written testimonials from refugees and their families that the I-CRC has sponsored over the past decade. Attendees were also invited to bid on more than 50 items in a Silent Auction.

Dinner ticket sales raised just over \$2,000 while the Silent Auction raised almost \$1200. Another \$572 was raised from donations. As Chair of the I-CRC, I wish to thank Trinity United for hosting this event. I'd especially like to thank members of the Trinity set-up and clean-up crews led by **Pat and Jim Jackson** who helped make the evening such an enjoyable event for everyone.

All of the monies raised will be used to help the Refugee Committee's efforts to sponsor refugees, including a new refugee due to arrive December 17th. Our latest refugee is Moustapha Niang originally from Senegal. He's a member the LGBTQ+ community. He is currently living in exile in Morocco. Moustapha has a Master's Degree in Finance and is working on his Phd. The Committee has already found an apartment for Moustapha courtesy of Susan Marrier, a member of St. Paul's United. We are hoping that Moustapha will use his first year in Canada to improve his English language skills. His native language is French.

*Editor's Note: As attenders, one had to truly appreciate the mammoth coordinating undertaking of this event considering 10 churches took part in the planning and preparation. It was a fun and delightful evening and the lively mingling amongst the crowd was truly an ecumenical experience. A well-deserved pat on the back to the members who make up the membership of the Inter-Church Refugee Committee and to all the Trinity folk who assisted with its undertaking. The I-CRC comprises the following people: **Broadway United:** Rickey Hogan; **First-Wesley:** Sandra Hansen; **Hilldale Lutheran:** Nancy Ringham; **Our Saviour's Lutheran:** Matt Diegel; **St. George's Anglican:** Deb Everest; **St. Paul's Anglican:** Cynthia Judge, Carol Knox; **St. Paul's United:** Lynda Jarrett-Stewart, Sandy Mertz, Brenda Reimer; **Trinity United:** Carolyn Enns, Shane Judge (Chair); **Westminster United:** Sandra Snider, Bob Thompson.*

LADIES' & MEN'S LUNCH IN JANUARY

We are combining forces in January and holding a joint men's and ladies' lunch at Trinity. **Constable David Boer** from the **Thunder Bay Police Department** will be providing some information on how to avoid being caught in senior scams. Date is **Thursday, January 16th** at noon. Watch for further details.



FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE Re: CHURCH GIVINGS

Unfortunately, we are all affected by the current postal strike. Not knowing when it might end, here are some suggestions to help you continue your financial support of the church.

All church contributions must be received by December 31 to be included in 2024 records.

- drop off contributions to church office (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday mornings) or put it in the mail slot at the Algoma entrance or in the mail slot by the Park Avenue double doors
- etransfer funds to the church donations@trinityunited.church
- call the church office for pick-up



WORSHIP COMMITTEE (Pat Jackson)

The season of Advent is upon us and we will be using a More Voices hymn to end each Sunday, inserting the words **hope, peace, joy** and **love** respectively. We will be lighting a candle each week to represent our theme of **hope, peace, joy** and **love**. These are ways we remind ourselves, through the four weeks before Christmas Day, that the waiting of Jesus’ birth is when hope makes a breakthrough, peace comes as we take time to think quietly, joy is shared as a Trinity congregation and love is realized in the amazing blessing of God, for us and with us.

Another hymn in More Voices is titled “Dream a Dream” and I’m going to clip a few lines from it....

*“Dream a dream, a hopeful dream, as children do on Christmas Eve...
 Dream a time, at Christmas time, when no one’s hungry or afraid...
 Dream a peace, our planet’s peace, the greening of the earth at play...
 Dream a gift, a Christmas gift that changes everything we see....”*



May our dreams, whatever they may be, hold us, keep us strong and deepen our faith in the journey to Christmas.



WHITE GIFT SERVICE (Pat Jackson)

December 15 is White Gift Sunday. The service will be very interesting as it will be shared by St. Paul’s, Pinegrove and Trinity with a delightful skit during Reflection time.

Please bring non-perishable food items wrapped in white paper (if you can) or a cash donation in a white envelope. These will be given to the Thunder Bay Food Bank.

ONLINE WORSHIP SCHEDULE

	Church	Leader
December 1	Pinegrove	Anne MacDonald
December 8	Trinity	Rev. Bert Vancook
December 15	White Gift Sunday	A Christmas Skit with participants from St. Paul’s, Trinity & Pinegrove
December 22	Trinity	Rev. Randy Boyd
December 24	Trinity - Christmas Eve 9:00 pm	Rev. Kerry McLaughlin
December 29	TBA	
January 5/25	Epiphany Sunday	First Wesley Choir and others performing a cantata

LADIES’ LUNCH

The Ladies’ Lunch for December will be held on Thursday, December 12 at Vanderwees (Tulip Café). Please call Lee-Ann at 807 345-6255 or Josie Salonen at 807 344-7302 to reserve a spot. This will be your opportunity to view the beautiful Christmas decorations and perhaps do some early Christmas shopping.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR, BAKE SALE & NEARLY NEW BOUTIQUE (Heather Schiewe)

Another successful Bazaar took place, thanks to dedicated Volunteers that have participated at past Trinity Teas and Bazaars. Our numbers are diminishing, but the enthusiasm remains high. 99 guests attended, and one lady remarked that ours was the most elegant Bazaar she had ever attended. We were 'graced' with wonderful donations of Nearly New Clothing, Jewellery and Accessories, Christmas Articles, Baking and Gourmet Foods and "Special Things" for the new "Elegant Wares" section that replaced the past Silent Auction table. "Everything Christmas" had its own area in the Chapel, and its display was wonder to behold. Musical interludes were provided by the "Young Cosby Strings Trio" with **Sandra Cosby** on the keyboard.



The added day of shopping on November 3 did not prove to be practical. However, despite the lower number of shoppers, and the many other events of the day, we were successful in realizing a profit of \$6283. This could not have been accomplished without the efforts of all the Volunteers who committed themselves to this event, ONCE AGAIN! I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

TRINITY MOVIE NIGHTS



An inexpensive and fun evening was repeated 3 times with monthly movies being shown in September, October and November in Trinity's Assembly Room. Thelma, Temple Grandin and An Affair to Remember were the three movies shown. The Movie Committee comprises **Shane & Maureen Judge, Marlene Perrier and Carolyn Enns** and they ensure that the popcorn and refreshment choices are regularly on hand. Guests are always welcome. If you have a suggestion for a

movie to be shown, please mention it to the Committee. Movies will continue in the new year.

CASSEROLES STILL AVAILABLE

There are still some frozen casseroles and pickled beets available for purchase. Meet **Jean Murray** at the freezer in the Assembly Room after church.



THIS AND THAT

- Church school classes are now suspended until the new year
- Please remember to contact the Church Office if you have moved or changed your phone number. (Many have now eliminated their landlines and no numbers are on file.) New or changes in email addresses should also be reported.
- Pennies are still being collected and jars are available downstairs and in the narthex.
- How delightful it is to have the young people taking part in the service. Thank you, **Sandra**, for bringing in the Junior Choir as well as having the Trinity students taking part in the service on occasion.
- Please note that the Church Office will only be open on Tuesday and Friday mornings during Christmas week to accept your church givings for 2024.
- Refugee donations are still being accepted to assist with the living expenses for the newest refugee arriving in Thunder Bay on December 17. Make cheques payable to Trinity United Church with a 'Refugee' notation.
- Dew Drop Inn has been chosen as the second Outreach Partner to received 10% of the 2024 net profits from Trinity fundraisers open to the public. Food Grains Bank is the other 2024 Outreach Partner.
- The Fundraising Concert for Trinity organized by Applauze Productions was well attended on November 17th. Trinity's Senior Choir, under **Sandra Cosby's** direction, presented three pieces in the program and did us proud. They looked and sounded so professional - fitting in well with the talented Applauze singers and dancers on the stage. \$2400 was donated to Trinity from this event. Thank you most sincerely Denise & Russell Krawczak.

BEST WISHES FOR A HEALTHY, HAPPY AND SAFE CHRISTMAS SEASON!