

Trinity United Church, North Bay, Ontario  
Faith Forward 2030 Status Report  
March 1, 2023



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## Welcome

Congratulations! You have found the comprehensive Faith Forward 2030 status update report that is referred to in the Executive Summary from your Sunday bulletins. Welcome to this journey we have embarked upon.

The reason why we have created this report is to provide an accessible snapshot for the entire Trinity community and for other interested parties to learn about Trinity's current status. We have been called to become the embodiment of **Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice** and over the coming months this is what we all need to come to grips with. Before we can decide where we need to go, we need to know our starting point and so to this end we have created the following report. We have attempted to present as accurate information as possible, however in a document of this size, some errors are bound to creep in, and for this we the authors, beg your forgiveness in advance. We felt it necessary to get this process underway sooner rather than later and so we have decided to 'fish rather than cut bait' in some circumstances.

We hope you'll enjoy reading about Trinity and prayerfully consider the implications of our current situation as we consider how to respond to God's call.

### 1.0 Gifts That Continue to Bless Trinity

Saint Paul wrote years ago to the fledgling Church in Corinth that they were "lacking no good gift," but enjoyed a great abundance of spiritual and material riches (1 Corinthians 1:7). Not least amongst these gifts was a tried-and-true faith, a hope that transcends mere optimism, and a caring love that translates into authentic benefits for the world around them.

The original recipients of Saint Paul's correspondence are long gone - and the Corinthian church as it existed at that time is no more. But the legacy to which they gave rise amplified the gifts identified by Paul in ways that stagger the imagination.

We at Trinity know ourselves to be blessed in ways not unlike those ancient Corinthians. For decades, Trinity has an outstanding reputation for authenticity and care-- for compassionate outreach, informed and generous engagement with the wider community, and gracious hospitality. Amongst the many outstanding gifts with which we are presently blessed:

- **A culture of stable and porous lay leadership:** A strong United Church ethos pervades Trinity's structure, which means an emphasis on well-defined democratic shared leadership open to development and change.
- **An inclusive community:** Trinity's leaders and committees strive towards inclusiveness-- we pride ourselves on being open and welcoming as Jesus was, regardless of age, race, class, gender, orientation, or physical ability.
- **A trusted core staff:** Trinity's staff are talented, responsive and productive -- they're respected, well-connected in the wider community, and much-loved.
- **A vital network:** Trinity's membership and staff maintain a reputation for connection and leadership in the United Church, with other churches and faith communities, and with service partners and care-giving agencies throughout the city and beyond.

- **A Grounded and Open-Minded Tradition:** Like many United Churches, Trinity is guided by a theology that might be characterized as “a generous orthodoxy.” We are open to people of all lifestyles, and cooperation with people of all faiths, or no faith! *We are deeply grounded in the Christian tradition, without being stuck in it!*
- **A dynamic music program:** Trinity maintains an enviably large choir. Our worship music often features guest instrumentalists and challenging material. Collaboration with other musicians, choirs and theatre groups facilitate great community engagement in and beyond Sunday mornings.
- **Engagement with technology:** Trinity has integrated audio and video equipment and expertise that make worship and events available through internet and local cable television. We are blessed with extraordinary technological leadership and practices aimed towards sustainable technological capabilities through the mentoring of younger technically oriented members of our community.
- **Engagement with the Theatre community:** Trinity has a decades-long history of supporting the arts in North Bay. Our support of arts, theatre, and music projects, combined with our niche venue makes us a partner in various experimental and fundraising community events.
- **Engagement with North Bay’s downtown:** Trinity is central to North Bay’s downtown, making us connected and accessible. Our centrality to North Bay’s core creates a natural fit to facilitate generations of charitable outreach to our downtown neighbours.
- **A diversified ministry:** Trinity’s size, reach, and history has meant a wide spectrum of strengths. We have long-established ministries to constituencies as varied as: children and youth, men, women, families, seniors, the recovery community, and with North Bay’s poor and underhoused.
- **A stable financial picture:** Trinity has a core of generous givers, many well-established fund-raising events, and a history of responsive generosity. When financial needs arise, Trinity’s members consistently respond in timely and generous ways.
- **A large adaptable church plant:** Trinity has huge physical resources, and we are often contacted for the use of our space as a concert venue, for our gymnasium space, for events, for film and television productions.
- **Sustained community outreach:** Trinity’s Food Bank, Infant Food Bank and Christmas bag Outreach are the most public and regular expressions of our determination to respond to community needs.
- **A Family ministry:** Trinity is noted amongst peer churches as a church that actually has children! This is the fruit of intentional ministry to children and families, including Sunday School, a staffed nursery, a Vacation Bible Camp, children’s theatre, and regular family-oriented programming.

## 2.0 What about the groups at Trinity?

As part of the FF2030 project we surveyed a total of 39 distinct groups of people meeting and delivering services to others. These groups were contacted and asked to participate in a 13-question survey about their membership and mission. In addition, we asked members why they did this group work and what they considered to be successful events or work. Of the groups contacted, 28 responded indicating a robust  $28/39 = 72\%$  response rate.

**(Q1). What are the names of some of the groups that meet?**

- Trinity's Monday Food Shelf
- Infant Food Shelf
- UCW (United Church Women)
- The J.O.Y. Band (Just older youth)
- Trinity Senior Choir
- The Joyful Bells Handbell Choir
- Christian Education and Outreach
- AA Friday Night Men's Group
- Trinity Family
- Ministry and Personnel
- Sunday School
- Inter Church committee (Bible Study)
- Trinity Finance and Stewardship Committee.
- Communications & Technology Committee
- A.O.T.S Trinity Men's group
- Worship Committee
- Mustard Seed Company
- Apple Pie Project
- Trinity Pastoral Care and Visiting Committee
- The Rapport Singers of North Bay
- Mossy Church
- 2nd Near North Trefoil Guild
- North Bay Scouting Group
- 4Trinity Fundraising Group
- Rev. Ted's Secret Book Club
- Trinity Testosterone Men's Canoe Adventure
- Trinity Arts
- Tuesday Morning Coffee Group

**Note on the open-ended survey questions.**

Group leaders were asked a number of open-ended questions and they responded with text answers of varying lengths and topics. For the purposes of this report, we are reporting the results in two ways, with Wordclouds where useful, and secondly, with a summarized report from a review of all the survey answers.

We used the Wordcloud software to highlight keywords from the collection of text entered. The keywords are selected by the software for highlighting based on a variety of factors including the frequency with which they occur and their relative relevance to each other. What you'll see below for each of these open-ended questions are the results created by the Artificial Intelligence based Wordcloud Generator offered by the company known as MonkeyLearn. The Wordcloud is not intended to be an exhaustive curated summary of the responses but as an easily accessible way for the reader to get a feel for the collection of the group leader's answers to this question.

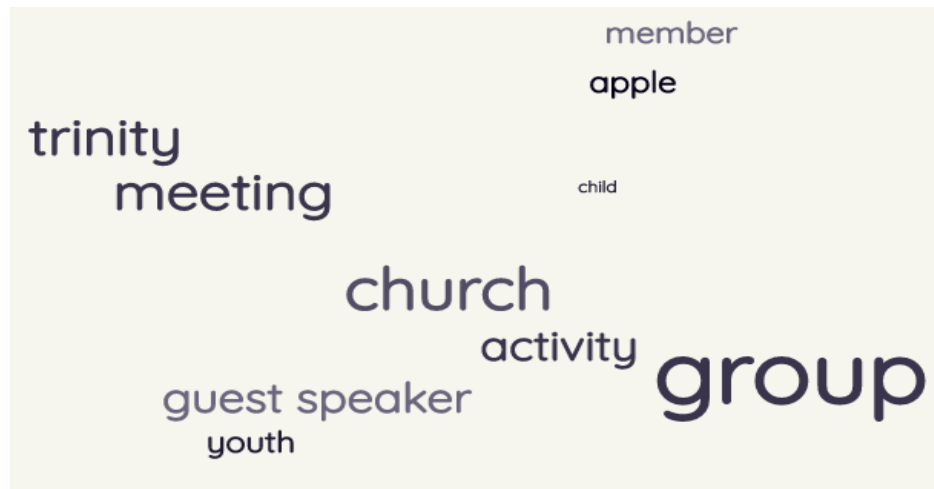
In addition, we have reviewed all the responses for each open-ended question and if any particular themes stand out, we have reported these following the Wordcloud for each question. If anyone is interested in reviewing the raw data from the survey, please get in touch with Lisa and she can arrange access to the data.

**(Q2). What is the mission/purpose of your group?**

Each of the groups indicated very specific missions oriented towards why they existed. For example, the "Trinity Testosterone" Annual Men's Canoe Trip 'seeks to deepen spirituality and strengthen male fellowship in a natural environment.' Trinity Arts has a mission to 'enrich life and faith through the arts.

As a consequence of the wide range of groups at Trinity, there was a fairly wide range of missions, however there were certainly repeated mentions of fun, loving others, community building, and connecting with God.

**(Q3). What type of activities does your group participate in? How is your gathering time spent?**



What comes through these answers is that there is a significant variety of activities happening regularly. There are ongoing multiple music-related efforts, theatre-focused activities, activities for younger children and for nature-based activities. There are significant activities reaching out to help the less fortunate and all of this is supported by multiple fundraising efforts and supportive groups. In summary, we seem to enjoy play, helping others and doing whatever is necessary to keep the programs functioning productively.

**(Q4). How often do these groups meet?**

**Table 1.** Meeting or activity frequency

Choice	Number of groups that meet
More than once per week	3
Once per week	8
Once per month	6
less than once per month	5
Other	11

**(Q5). Where do you usually meet?**



In this case, the Wordcloud does a great job of pointing out the various places the groups meet.

**(Q6). How big are these meetings?**

In terms of meeting sizes, they range in size from 1-50 people with an average minimum meeting size of 12 and an average maximum meeting size of 21.

**(Q7&8). What are the ages of the folks meeting?**

The group activity attendees range from 0 to 99 years of age with the average low age at 29.6 years and the average highest age at 76.8.

**Table 2.** Estimated average age of participants in the groups

Estimated average age	Number of groups
Under 10	4
10-20	2
20-40	3
40-60	12
60-80	14
Over 80	1

**(Q9). If your group serves others, tell us a little about who you serve (how many do you serve, their age range etc.,) and how do you serve them?**

Please refer to section 3.2 Demographics of Those We Serve, for a description of the larger activities involving serving others. In terms of who we serve, the list of projects and groups of people is very lengthy, with most of our efforts focused within North Bay.

**(Q10). What attracts people to join and remain part of the group?**



Fun and friendship and the chance to contribute one's abilities to a worthwhile activity are all mentioned repeatedly in answer to this question.

**(Q11). Tell us about how your group is successful? Share a success story or briefly explain why your members are proud or happy to be part of the group.**

Repeatedly the theme of a worthwhile 'labour of love' comes through. Group members are most proud and happy when their groups come through with results that deliver benefits to those they serve. It appears the sense of accomplishment at Trinity is widespread and cherished.

## 3.0 Trinity's Demographics

### 3.1 Current Financial Supporters – Tax receipt based

Recognition of demographic trends within our Canadian population has caused us to begin asking questions about how we at Trinity look currently. This is how we analyzed the information we had gathered through our various recordkeeping efforts.



## Methodology

Beginning with a list of around 500 individuals that has been continually updated with new supporters during the latter half of the 2010's (even if they were one-time supporters), we reviewed this list in order to identify regular recent supporters. From the original list, we removed those that had moved away, or ceased giving. Our criterion for selection on the list of financial supporters was those that had contributed regularly during the last three years. If, for example, we knew that they had contributed throughout 2020 and 2021, but then had left the area, we removed them from our active supporters list. The efforts of our staff and ministry people should be acknowledged here. They diligently reviewed the lists as they had the most comprehensive knowledge and between the various committee members, we feel that we now have a very current and accurate listing of 260 individuals financially supporting our community.

Once we had an accurate listing of current financial supporters, with help from some volunteers, our staff committee also made their best estimates as to which "10-year age bucket" the supporters fell into. While some individual ages estimates may have been placed in incorrect age buckets, (i.e. 40-50 when it should have been 50-60) others may have been estimated to be older than they actually were, so that on average, our age estimates for the group of supporters are fairly accurate.

With this information in hand, we were able to create a summary view of the existing demographics of our financially supporting members of our community.

(Note: It is important to recognize that the above sample does not capture those folks whose contributions are not captured via tax receipts. For example, younger members of the Sunday School, and other children's ministries (Vacation Bible Camp, Mustard Seed, Youth Group, etc.) are not reflected here, but when projecting forward towards 2030 and 2040, at least some of them are likely to become part of the group of quantifiable supporters we have described here. How much of an impact this will have on our overall demographic situation is difficult to ascertain.)

## Demographics Projections

How future financially supporting membership was projected.

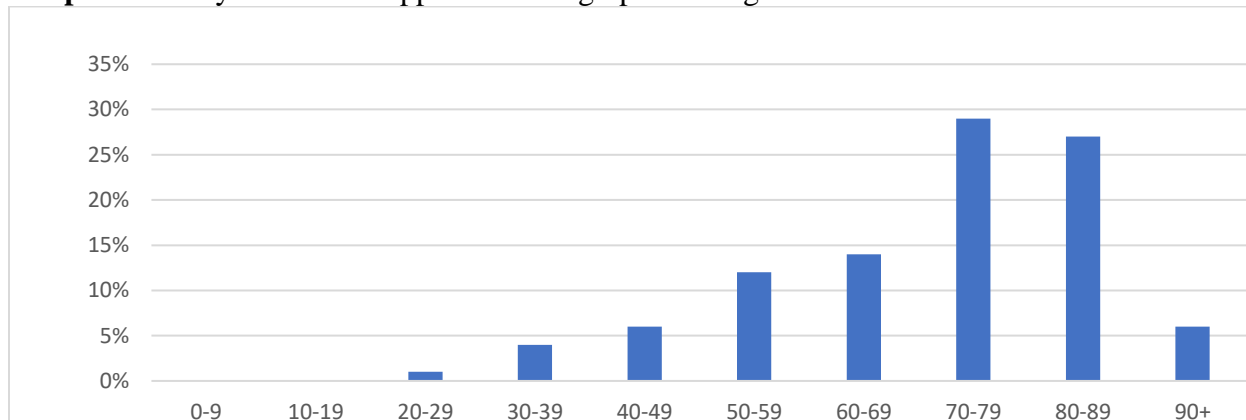
- ◆ Future membership size year2= new members per year + existing size/bucket for year1 less mortality/year/bucket.  
(e.g., if in 2022 there were 37 (thirty-seven) 40–49-year-olds and the StatsCan mortality rates predicted 1 (one) would pass on, then the projection for 2023 would be that there would be only 36 (thirty-six) in this age group in 2023. This is done for each age bucket and the results added together to calculate congregation size. This is then repeated until 2030 and again until 2040.

Other key assumptions

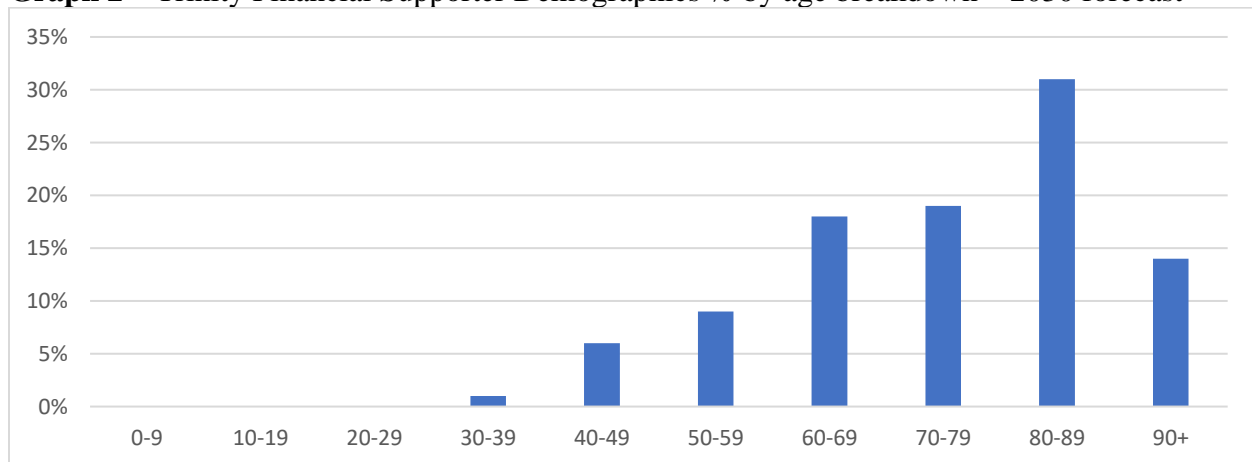
- ◆ Based on Statistics Canada publication, Mortality rates by age group and province, Table 13-10-0710 (formerly CANSIM102-0504), Accessed Jan 22, 2023

- ◆ Mortality rates for Ontario 2021 hold constant throughout projection period. Provincial births and deaths rates reflect latest rates of immigration. The federal government has announced plans for increased rates of immigration (500,000/year) which have historically been younger than the existing population, so overall mortality rates are likely to trend lower. “Immigrants to Ontario are relatively young compared to the resident population. In 2018–19, two-thirds (67 per cent) of all immigrants who settled in the province were between the ages of 18 and 44. The median age of 2018–19 newcomers was 29 years, compared to 40 years for the resident population.” (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontarios-long-term-report-economy/chapter-1-demographic-trends-and-projections>. Accessed Jan 22,2023)
- ◆ New member numbers remain constant with 2017-2021 average throughout the projection periods – (5 new members/year)
- ◆ Younger members of our community are not represented in this list of formal financial supporters identified by tax receipts. As such, we have not projected any of these entering the supporting group as we could not quantify the projections.

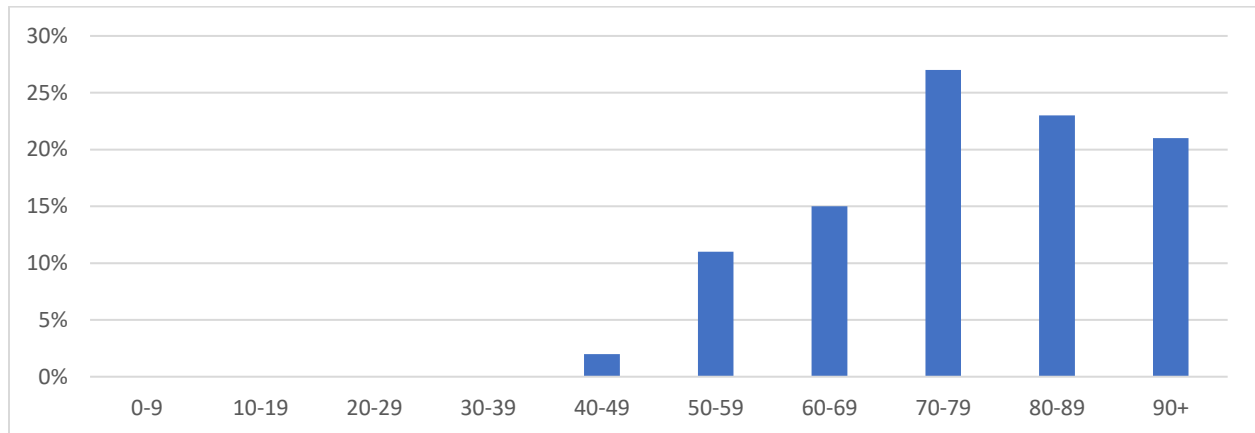
**Graph 1- Trinity Financial Supporter Demographics % age breakdown - as of Nov 2022**



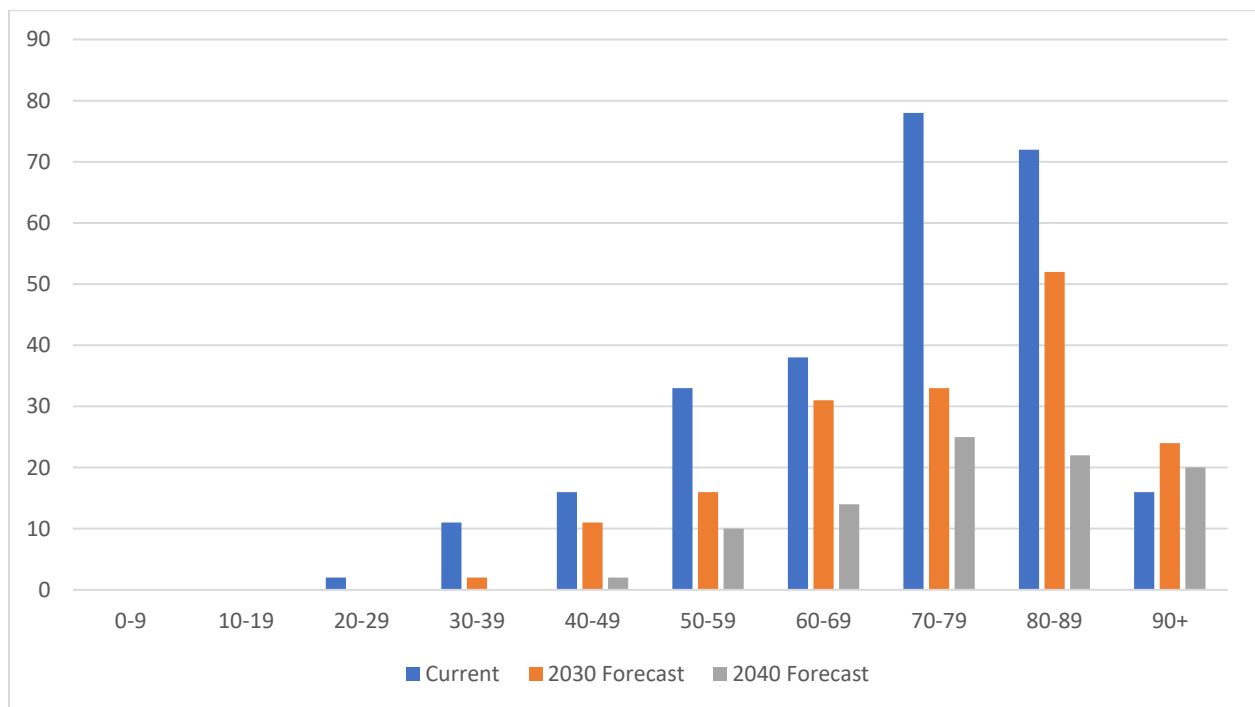
**Graph 2 – Trinity Financial Supporter Demographics % by age breakdown – 2030 forecast**



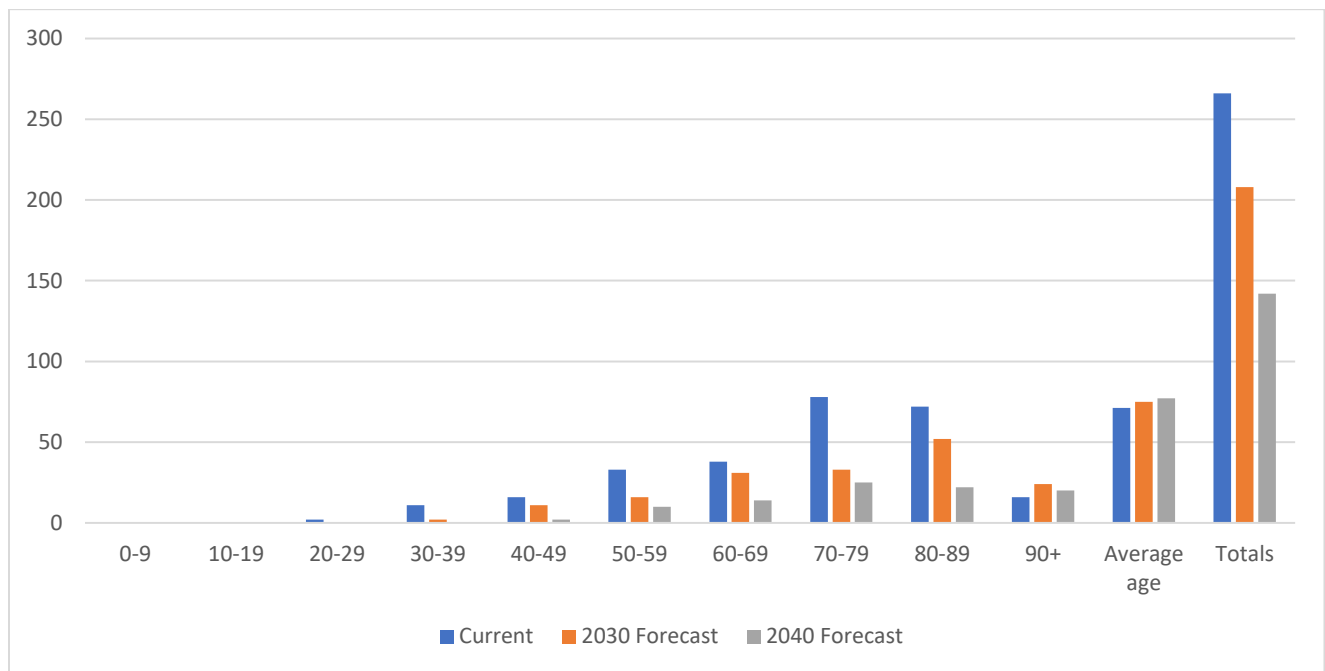
**Graph 3 - Trinity Financial Supporter Demographics % by age breakdown – 2040 forecast**



**Graph 4 - Current, forecast 2030 and 2040 numbers of financially supporting members by age bucket**



**Graph 5** - Comparative chart – Current, forecast 2030 and 2040 numbers of financially supporting members of the community, average age, and total numbers of financially supporting members



### 3.2 Demographics of Those We Serve

From the groups survey data, we can see that we have a number of folks that we serve that are not captured as tax receipt-based members of the community.

#### 0-20 Age Group

There are 4 groups that serve people between 0-10 years of age, with 2 of the groups also serving the 10-20 age and one group that serves from age 1-99. Using the average number of attendees for these four different groups, and assuming an even age distribution in the one group serving all age groups, there are approximately 55 times we serve folks in the 0-20 age range. While there is no doubt that some of these 55 service events serve the same individuals multiple times, thereby reducing the number of individuals served, there is still a significant number of these younger individuals that are affected by Trinity's efforts.

Below you will find a sample listing of the wider range of groups that serve children and youth:

- Sunday School
- Youth Group
- Mustard Seed Theatre
- Vacation Bible Camp
- Girl Guides and Scouts
- Dreamcoat Fantasy Theatre
- Trinity Family
- Mossy Church

In addition, the Infant Food Shelf group information was not captured in the group survey data, and we know anecdotally that we serve about 30 different infants and their families (some of which would be in the 10-20 age group) every month.

In summary, Trinity is likely serving somewhere between 50 and 80 individuals between the ages of 0 and 20.

#### Adult Members of Trinity and our Wider Community that We Serve.

In addition to the younger folks that we serve, we also serve the adult population through a wide variety of groups, outreach supports and venues. While the following list of groups is not an exhaustive listing, it should give the reader a flavour of the types of groups and activities available for adults at Trinity and the wider community.

- Monday Morning Food Shelf: serves approximately 100 people per month, including adults, seniors, families, and those experiencing homelessness.
- Recovery and Addiction Programs: groups such as AA and NA use our space for their meetings 5 or 6 evenings a week.
- The Trinity Pastoral Care & Visiting Committee currently visits, calls and provides support to 72 people over 80 and 19 people over 90 years of age.
- AOTS: The AOTS Men's group is comprised of 15-20 men who gather to promote fellowship, deepen the spiritual life of men, and develop an effective program of Christian service by providing encouragement and assistance to work among the youth of the church and community.
- UCW: The United Church Women meet once a month and is comprised of 8 – 10 women who meet for fellowship, caring and community.
- Inter-Church Christian Fellowship Group: an interdenominational group of between 4-8 people who meet for bible study and reflection.
- Rapport Singers: A community choir that rehearses once a week and offers musical performances throughout the year.
- JOY Band: a community band that rehearses each week at Trinity and provides musical concerts throughout the year and occasionally shares music in our worship service
- Christmas Gift Bag Outreach: over 150 Christmas gift bags are packed for adults and youth in crisis in our community

## 4.0 Finance

### 4.1 Projection of Operating Finances

**Table 3.** Summary of Financial Projections for 2030

<u>ITEM</u>	<b>2022 Actual</b>	<b>6-Year Average</b>	<b>2030 Estimate</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	368,408	394,731	409,060
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>386,323</u>	<u>409,036</u>	<u>498,370</u>
<b>SURPLUS OR DEFICIT</b>	<b>- 17,915</b>	<b>- 14,305</b>	<b>- 89,310</b>

The objective was to develop a projection of the church's finances in 2030, utilizing the demographic analysis outlined earlier, historical financial data and accounting for inflation over an 8-year period from 2023 to 2030.

Excel spreadsheets were prepared incorporating income and expense figures for the six-year period from 2017 to 2022 inclusive. Averages for each of the major accounts were calculated and totalled. This resulted in average total annual Income and Expenses of \$394,731 and \$409,036 respectively, meaning that our annual deficit has averaged \$14,305 for the six-year period. *Note: these numbers will change slightly following adjustments and audits of the 2022 finances.*

One key number from the demographic analysis is utilized for estimating 2030 income - projected 2030 Offerings of \$216,000. This figure assumes zero inflation (in other words is in 2022 dollars). It is based on 209 financial supporters in 2030, a 21% decrease from the current 266 supporters identified in the demographic work.

The offerings amount of \$216,000 was inflated at 2.5% per year for the 8-year period, resulting in 2030 offerings of \$263,175. This figure is 3.6% higher than the 6-year annual average of \$253,956. Other 6-year average income accounts, including Fundraising, Special Projects and Outreach Commitments, were then increased by 3.6%.

In order to estimate 2030 expenses, all 6-year average expense accounts were inflated at 2.5% per year for the 8-year period. Several accounts are of particular interest. Personnel increased from \$225,822 to \$275,142 and assumes that employee levels remain the same. Property, which includes hydro, heat, building and grounds and insurance, increased from \$46,000 to \$56,047. And annual Special Projects, which includes costs for major building repairs and upgrades, increased from \$60,333 to \$73,510.

Final calculations result in projected 2030 total Income and Expenses of \$409,060 and \$498,370 respectively, resulting in a deficit of \$89,310.

The excel spreadsheets which have been used to generate these projections are available upon request.

## 4.2 Reserves

The church has several investment accounts at various financial institutions.

Unrestricted funds are invested in high yield savings accounts. Market value of these funds was approximately \$43,000 at the end of 2021.

There are three Restricted Funds – Manse, Special Project and Food Shelf Funds.

The Manse Fund was created when Trinity sold its manse years ago with the stipulation that interest of the principal would be used towards the minister's housing allowance. Market value of the fund investments at the end of 2021 was about \$71,000. The process for accessing these monies was clarified in a recent inquiry. The Property Resource Team (PRT) of the Canadian Shield Regional Council would be contacted in writing with explanations of: what Trinity needs to do; amounts required; whether or not there would be any attempt to repay; and the plan to cover housing costs once the expenditures are made and potentially the Manse fund is totally expended. The PRT would then make a recommendation to the Support to Communities of Faith (SCOF) Commission, who are likely to endorse the PRT action.

The Special Project Fund was created as a bequest of a generous donor (Iris Scott) with the idea of using the monies for special plant projects as approved by the Executors. Market value of the fund investments at the end of 2021 was approximately \$153,000.

The Food Shelf Fund was created as a bequest again by the same donor and executors as the Special Project fund with the specific intent to support our food bank ministry. Market value of the fund investments at the end of 2021 was about \$227,000.

## 5.0 Building report

Construction of the North Bay Methodist Church, now Trinity United Church (TUC) began in 1905 and was completed about a year later. The original blueprints indicate that the building was designed by Burke and Horwood Architects from Toronto. Built on land adjacent to the existing church and parsonage, the new structure was magnificent in its design and grandeur.

A thriving congregation necessitated that the footprint of the church be expanded in 1956 with design from Gerald Cox, Architect. The new area included offices, relocated washrooms, a gymnasium (with stage). A proposed small chapel located where we now find Ione's garden was never built. In 1964, the Narthex/Ferguson Entrance was renovated and expanded.

Over the past 117 years, our church plant has undergone many changes. The addition of stained-glass windows, large pipe organ, and an elevator feature prominently as worthy improvements. Sadly though, as with many older structures, the passage of time has taken a toll on the building. Built on bedrock, it is clear that floor joists have deteriorated causing the significant slope evident in the fellowship hall. Age is also evident on the main structural walls in the sanctuary where sagging walls are evident.

In recent years, major work was undertaken to repair some pillars, beams and rafters on the McIntyre side of the sanctuary (2019) and a ceiling collapse in the Fireside Room (2021). Prior to this, large portions of the roof were upgraded to include metal and membrane roofing. While some of this work was covered by insurance, large portions of the costs were covered as the result of intensive fundraising. While these were significant one-time expenditures, TUC is challenged each year with the task of remedial brick work on the face of the original structure. The bricks have deteriorated due to a combination of the brick composition and as a result of sandblast cleaning that was completed circa 1970. At that time, much of the brick was stained with soot from the railyards located just down Ferguson Street. Cochrane Hall and the new front entrance were not impacted by this cleaning.

The repointing and brick replacement is necessary work that will continue each year given the significant potential for liability should a brick fall onto someone passing by on the sidewalk. At present, the work is budgeted at approximately \$25,000 each year. This cost only covers the most emergent work and focuses on bricks at elevation. The work has been completed by Greg Larochelle of Grellar Masonry who estimates that only between 5-8 % of our total brickwork has been replaced. Your building and grounds committee is exploring (with architects) alternative solutions, such as steel cladding, as these brick repair costs are simply not sustainable for the long term.

This said, regular maintenance and a goal to decrease our carbon footprint are costs that should be planned for in the future. Many of the windows are no longer sealed from the elements and our boiler is nearing the end of its serviceable life.

Members of the church board have met repeatedly with a respected retired architect, to review the physical building with an eye to establish work priorities. It is a good assumption that the present structure will continue to function for the immediate future, however it is prudent to plan



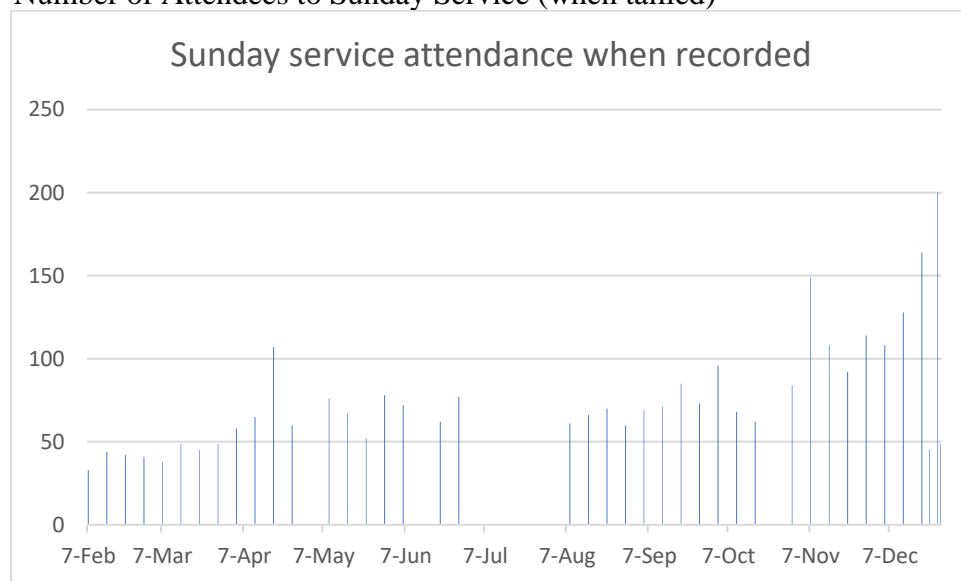
for occupancy in a new building as maintenance costs will continue to escalate, perhaps to a point where they are no longer sustainable. The current building has zero net value as estimated by a real estate professional from Century 21. The location of TUC is less than prime as the land is limited in size and on bedrock and any value would probably be nearly used up with demolition costs. Location limits future construction as a City of North Bay by-law stipulates that there must be 1 parking stall for every 10m<sup>2</sup> of program space, or approximately 104 spaces.

Your building and grounds committee will continue to ensure that our church is safe and usable while your Board explores the most responsible future options.

## 6.0 Attendance

### 6.1 Sundays in the Sanctuary – 2022

**Graph 6 – Number of Attendees to Sunday Service (when tallied)**



(Note: Church was closed for staff vacation in August)

One of the results of the COVID\_19 pandemic was that it became necessary to monitor the number of folks inside the church and so we can now report the following attendance figures. For reference purposes, our best estimate of Pre-COVID-19 attendance is that in 2018 and 2019 we would average on any given Sunday between 120 and 150 with Easter, Choir Cantata Sunday & Christmas Eve being more than 200.

### 6.2 Digital Attendance

There are two principal paths our online participants can follow to view our services, broadcasts through Cogeco (“YourTV”) and by YouTube.

With respect to the numbers of viewers on Cogeco (“YourTV”), our best information comes from Cogeco. We asked Cogeco how many folks are viewing our services through their broadcasts? Their response follows:

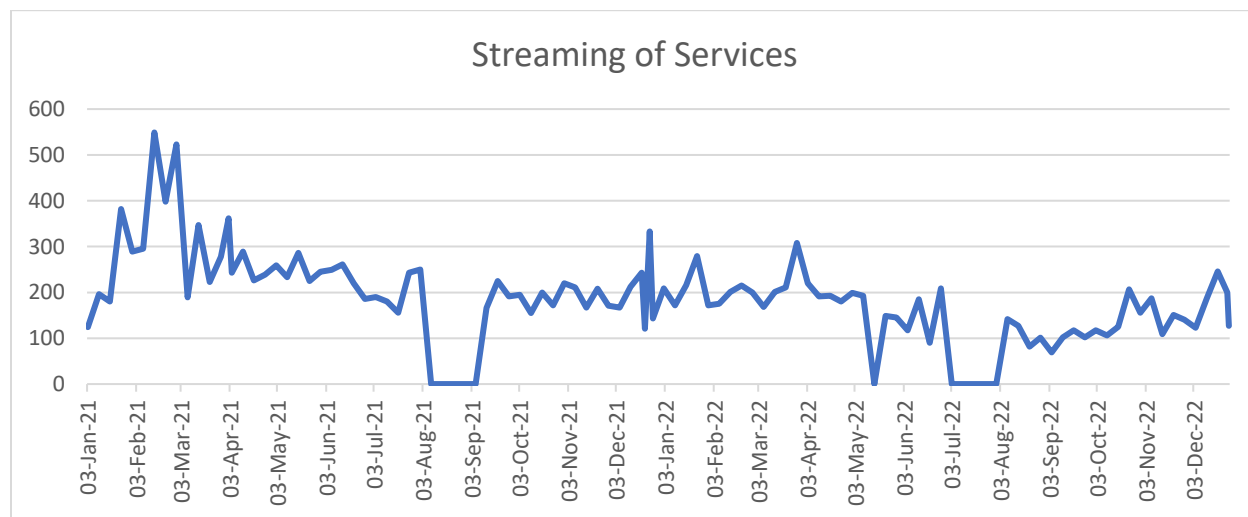
‘Unfortunately, we cannot provide you with exact viewership numbers for Trinity's Sunday Service programs as they have not been recently measured. Having said that, given that we know we have large numbers of Cogeco customers who reside in Marina Point, Empire Living, Barclay House and the Golden Age Club and that our weekly TV Bingo sales often reach 1000 twice a week, and given that we know from previous viewership measurements that both Bingo and church services are quite popular among seniors, I would be very surprised, if Cogeco-viewership numbers for your Sunday service programs weren't substantially larger than the 150 streaming visitors you average every week on YouTube,’

*(Joey Roussy – Manager of Programming and Community Relations)*

Trinity's services are typically broadcast twice each Sunday, between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and between 6 and 7 p.m. (from the service the week before). This schedule seems to change according to the hockey season (whereby sometimes our service is broadcast 3 more accessible times on Sunday).

In terms of online streaming from our YouTube account we have taken the following data from each service that we have posted over the last two years:

**Graph 7 – Number of Screen Openings of our online Sunday Service – YouTube**



These online figures are raw figures and should be used as a general indicator of volume only. This is because they reflect the total quantity of instances where the program is on a screen. These numbers will not be altered even though:

- multiple people could be viewing the same screen,
- viewers may only view a portion of the program,

- some viewers may view the program more than once,
- testing/viewing of the program by our tech team, staff and participants would also show up as a count of volume.

In terms of evaluating the past two years' worth of data, readers are encouraged to keep in mind the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place during the data period. As more public gatherings have been allowed, the numbers have shifted online towards in-person. In terms of the best data to use for forecasting our future, the last 6 months are probably closer to representing 'normal' times.

## 7.0 Economic Impact

The 'Halo Effect' estimates the socio-economic benefit that a religious congregation contributes to its local community. It was born out of the recognition that even though economic value is not the mission, congregations are critical economic catalysts. While we answer Jesus' call, Trinity serves underprivileged populations, supports local businesses, and strengthens our neighbourhoods. Although the individual impact is the largest category of economic value, congregations like Trinity contribute in many other ways including providing open spaces and education, fostering community development, and building social capital.

The 'Halo Effect' is expressed as a multiplier; that is, it estimates the benefit the local community derives from every dollar spent by the congregation. Our estimate comes from the Halo Project and is the work of Dr. Mike Woods Daly of the Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto. According to the Halo Project, for every dollar spent by Trinity, the estimated benefit to the North Bay community is \$3.39. In fact, this is the estimate for all religious congregations in our community. If we want a specific and accurate halo score for Trinity, we would need to provide more information and conduct a more in depth analysis to monetize Trinity's activities than the Halo Project's calculator currently allows.

With that said, Trinity's actual economic impact may be much larger than the estimate for two reasons. First, the methodology uses a snapshot or point-in-time approach in relating spending to impact and does not capture the long-term impact that Trinity's presence and activities has on the North Bay community over time. Second, the range of contributing activities is limited to those that are easy to monetize.

Accurate or not, the 'Halo Effect' does make one thing clear, it provides additional motivation for us to strengthen and grow our community connections.

*(Contributed by Dr. Natalya Brown, Associate Professor, Economics, Nipissing University and Trinity Member)*

## 8.0 Other United Churches in North Bay Community - Status update

At the time of publishing this report, it is observed that Trinity is the only United Church in North Bay with full-time ordained ministry personnel. Two of five churches in North Bay are in the process searching for ministry personnel. Some of the churches share a narrative of declining revenues, membership, and volunteer leadership. Several of them face dramatically mounting costs related to their church buildings. It would seem to be a good time to contemplate deeper

cooperation. Efforts in 2023 to occasionally share worship on “every fifth Sunday” might be seen as a means to testing our willingness towards more substantive partnership.

## 9.0 The Strategic Plan of the United Church of Canada

Between the identified years of 2022 through 2025, the national church has developed a [Strategic Plan](#) to disrupt the status quo of church decline “towards a bold, hopeful, sustainable future for The United Church of Canada.” The vision of the plan is articulated as follows:

*“Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.”*

On a related note, the “Call” of the strategic plan is expressed as pursuing “**Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice.**”

The United Church’s Strategic Plan has five strategic directions:

1. Embolden Justice (with an emphasis on Indigenous justice)
2. Invigorate Leadership
3. Nurture the Common Good
4. Deepen Integrity (particularly as regards climate commitments)
5. Strengthen Invitation (i.e. growth and evangelism)

Trinity’s “Faith Forward 2030” project, while it has a slightly different time frame, is clearly motivated by parallel realities, should draw on its vision, and may even find financial support for our initiatives from the wider church.

In addition to possible financial support, the national church has created the Edge group of experienced church visioning personnel. This group and other church renewal resource efforts within the United Church of Canada have developed multiple management support programs that are also available for us to access at minimal cost.

## 10.0 The Call of Jesus and “Faith Forward 2030”

The Trinity Church community has evolved and adapted decade after decade, sensitively and generously responsive to the gifts of its membership and the needs of our wider community. These responses have often involved ambitious collaboration for the public good, undertaking expansive building projects, and adapting to significantly changed realities.

It is time again to discern how we will best respond to the call of Jesus for our time and place. As we look ahead to 2030, our present challenges include an aging demographic, changing church attendance patterns, and a progressively costlier church building. We have a history of moving from strength to strength-- and we contemplate our next steps from a position of considerable strength. Trinity remains a community of great talent, resources, vitality and creativity. This is a

good juncture from which to respond to the national United Church call to embody **“Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice.”**

Trinity’s Board will create a “Faith Forward 2030 Task Force.” This group needs to be small and cohesive enough to meet and engage with the aforementioned realities efficiently. It should reflect the breadth of Trinity’s leadership, members, and wider community. It ought to consult widely and prayerfully, cherishing our proud legacy of generous community partnership.

The mandate of the Task Force will be to help guide Trinity’s decision process. At the culmination of their mandate, they will make recommendations to Trinity Board and membership about next steps. We anticipate that these recommendations will involve cooperation with other congregations, faith groups, and social agencies. They may involve consolidation and construction projects, with real implications for changed staffing, and more focused emphases in our ministry. The recommendations of the Task Group must be received with the utmost respect, hopefulness, and care.

Jesus’ compelling call to those first disciples, was “Follow me”-- and it resounds still through our own community and its long faithful service to North Bay. We remember how those earliest followers dropped their nets and followed Jesus (Matthew 4:20)-- and it is with some trepidation that we realize that we too may need to drop our nets-- that is, to relinquish much of what has been customary and taken-for-granted in how we have been, so that we can be grounded in a renewed sense of discipleship. Jesus is calling us.