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Lent = 2021

from Rev. Ted's (at home!) Desk: "Missing Our Third Place"

Since the nineties, sociologists have used the term, "Third Place" to refer to an important location outside of home or work where you can relax and hang out. Your Third Place is somewhere you can meaningfully connect with others, share of yourself - and maybe have a little fun! In other words, Third Places are anchors of community. They may be a coffee shop, a neighbourhood diner, or a pub. "Starbucks" was intentional about establishing many of their locations as a "Third Place."

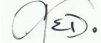
For many of us, the church is our Third Place. Of course we attend to worship God and to serve and to deepen ourselves - but perhaps the single most powerful feature of this Third Place is connecting with friends and supportive community.

Place and People were practically synonymous - until we met with COVID-19.

For many of us, home, work, church, and community suddenly condensed into a single location! And when we rarely emerge from that location, our faces are masked, safe distances are maintained. As a result, church has changed. We have changed. We can anticipate that our habits and our patterns of interaction have permanently changed.

It will be a terrible tragedy when some "Third Places" disappear as a result of this pandemic. We need those places - like Trinity - that engender community. Because if COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that our future depends on us choosing life-giving community over isolated individuality.

As we slowly emerge from our lockdowns, blinking in the daylight of our "new normal," let's not forget our Third Place and its blessed people, who have made the darkness worth bearing.

See you Sunday, 

from the Designated Lay Minister

I must confess that my first reaction to the Lenten Newsletter was to just skip writing something this year. For someone whose job centres around events, activities and a busy Children's ministry, it just didn't seem like I had much to include. Yet, when I looked back at this past year, despite the fact that we have had to cancel many of our anticipated and treasured activities, we have continued to find creative, meaningful and faithful ways to stay connected. That is something to celebrate!

In the coming weeks and months, I will continue to look at ways to strengthen and nurture our connection. Here are a few to look forward to:

- **Sunday School** continues to be on hold - but look for a zoom games event later this spring and a special Easter package that will be delivered in March;
- **Trinity Families** will be looking at a late spring Scavenger Hunt and a possible outdoor gathering (if Covid protocols allow);
- **Worship Participation** - As we continue to adapt our worship services to the Covid environment, we look for ways of including the Trinity family in our worship service. We will be looking for contributions for a collaborative *New Creed* video, jokes for Holy Humour Sunday, nature photographs for Earth Sunday and of course, we are always happy to have volunteers to read prayer, scripture and the call to worship.

As you browse through this Lenten newsletter you will find there are several opportunities to join in and celebrate our connection as a faith family. There are some fun and exciting fundraising events, special musical offerings, a zoom social and more. We will continue to look for other ways to stay connected during this time. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have an idea for an activity or event or would like to volunteer - I am always open to hearing from you! Lisa



from the Minister of Music

As we begin the Lenten season, we remember Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. We anticipate the Easter joy we know will follow, and rejoice.

As I write this report, we are unsure what the new government guidelines will dictate as we move toward spring and summer.

What I do know is that Trinity's Virtual Choir will continue to provide musical selections for each Sunday service. Choir members have received their Lenten and Easter music and look forward to sharing it with the Trinity congregation, and many worshipers beyond North Bay. There will be some new music and also the 're-sharing' of choir favourites. It is hoped to have flute, violin and trumpet accompany us this season.

Our Good Friday service will be shared with other area United churches and we look forward to some of their virtual choir members joining us for that service.

We are grateful to John Roberts and Lisa Blais for their continued audio-visual support each week, and Laura Farris-Einarson for her talents on flute.

In Easter Faith.

Betty Farris, Minister of Music

from your Board Chair

Lent ends as a season of renewal, of new life. When Lent ends, we rejoice in the celebration of Easter. This year, we enter the season with the hope that our lives will return to normal and that we will soon be able to resume our daily activities. Our dreams are similar to those of the Jewish community in Roman occupied Israel at the time when Christ was alive. We hope to be lifted from the constraints of pandemic bondage and live our lives fully and without fear. Now is a time for faith.

I write this message to you for the last time as your Board Chair. This year has been quite unlike anything we have seen for 100 years. While COVID-19 has radically changed our lives, I feel that we have found new strength and new hope through the challenges. Thanks to our Ministers, Rev Ted, Lisa and Betty, and to our digital team led by John Roberts, our church has flourished and in fact, grown stronger.

Embracing technology, our services are now available to many more people than we have ever reached before. We are now able to share our services with those who cannot attend in person. Our services are now viewed across the country and in fact the globe. We now offer Dial for Hope messages that provide inspiration for those needing a lift. And while many services have shut down, our downtown ministry with the food shelf has continued to operate with only minor changes to ensure safety. We have truly made lemonade from what to many was only a bowl full of lemons.

Our year was not only thrown into flux with COVID-19, but we also faced a significant ceiling collapse in one of our most used spaces. The pandemic may have proven a saving grace as the room and in fact the building was totally empty at the time. Our Board of Trustees Chair, Kirk Elliott, has worked tirelessly to manage the insurance claim and only recently has completed this endeavour. Managing and caring for a 130+ year old building certainly has its challenges.

Following the Annual Congregational Meeting on March 7th, I will pass along the mantle of Chair of the Board to Cindy Brownlee. Her ongoing dedication to the church and her leadership skills will put us in a strong position moving forward into 2021. For those that have not put their names forward, I hope that you consider offering your talents to the new Board.

Bob Cook, Chair



from the Finance Committee

For the year of 2020, our expenses exceeded income by about \$3,300, a positive result in view of the Pandemic restrictions and unexpected building repairs. Thank you to all the people who donated in one way or another to achieve this positive outcome.

Total expenses of \$407,000 were 3% below budget, with a number of expense areas being close to budget. Special project expenses for the roof, Fireside room and interior ceilings totaled \$64,000. A special "Thank You" is extended to those folks who donated a total of \$39,700 towards these projects.

Two thirds of the outstanding loans for the Roof Restoration Fund were paid off in September, with the hope of paying the balance by spring.

Total income of \$403,700 was 4% below budget, with a significant shortfall in Offerings being a major contributor. A priority in our 2021 Budget is increasing our PAR offerings by about 15%. Food Shelf and Infant Food Shelf expenses were significantly higher this year as Trinity answered the increased need in our community and shifted to a more costly delivery system because of COVID-19 protocols. We allocated amounts totaling \$9,400 from our deferred Infant Food Shelf funds and Food Shelf investment in order to meet this need, which impacted our total income in a positive way.

Fundraising was another income area that was hard hit by Pandemic restrictions, with income of \$18,000 being 40% below budget. In spite of the Pandemic, Trinity folks undertook some fundraising activities that are greatly appreciated. Also appreciated are the estate and memorial donations adding up to about \$26,000.

Kudos to Treasurer Michelina for submitting applications and obtaining Government financial assistance offered to organizations during the Pandemic. A wage subsidy of \$14,000 has helped to pay personnel expenses and an interest-free loan of \$40,000 provides a contingency in the event of unforeseen operating expenses.

The church bank balance at year end is almost \$45,000.

The Finance and Stewardship Committee continues to meet monthly to carry out the functions outlined in the Church By-Laws. Members in 2020 were: Bill Brownlee, Michelina Beam, Natalya Brown, John Haflidson, Brenda Holbein, Stephen Davis and Maurice Laporte . Our treasurer is Michelina Beam and our envelope and PAR administrator is Wanda Gleason. We are grateful to all these people, plus the tellers and ushers who handle the offerings, for their contribution to our congregation.

Respectfully submitted by John Haflidson - Chair

A message from the Roof Fundraising Committee

We are so close to reaching our target in raising the funds for the roof. We have come up with a few ideas for the coming months.

- ◆ We have an opportunity to participate in a unique fundraising event. Comedy icon Colin Mochrie hosts "Mass Hysterical", a Comedic Cantata. The video is a collaboration between alumni of Second City Toronto and members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. "Mass Hysterical" celebrates more than 1000 years of ecclesiastical music, taking a satirical, but loving look at the repertoire, the composers, the personalities and even the congregations themselves. The video is 1 hour 23 minutes in length.

Click on the link to watch the trailer for free. <https://vimeo.com/494280190>

Pay \$20 by credit card or paypal to watch the video.

Send me an email at Darlene_laferriere@hotmail.com or call me at 705-474-7847 to let me know that you have participated. I will keep a running total of viewers. Trinity United Church will receive \$10 for each purchase.

A fun evening of entertainment for your family or perhaps a date night! You provide your own refreshments.

- ◆ In other fundraising news, we are putting together a new Trinity United Church cookbook, just in time for Christmas gift giving 2021. Please look through your favourite recipes and send them to Cindy Brownlee cindyb@nipissingu.ca
- ◆ Stay tuned for more exciting events;
 - ◆ March Break Cruise on the Trinity Disney Line
 - ◆ Virtual Coffee House
 - ◆ Mothers Day decadent dessert auction

AOTS Report

Despite the Coronavirus limiting our meetings, the AOTS Men's Group of Trinity United Church is still out there doing our usual work. A huge **Thank You** goes out to all Trinity Members and friends of Trinity who are still purchasing our Gift Cards. By purchasing Gift Cards, you are enabling your AOTS to continue to support many of the activities which take place at Trinity.

A big thank you is also sent to Ed Rose who continues to be the driving force behind the ordering and delivery of the Cards. As a point of interest, it is noted that Trinity purchased \$4400 in Orchards Gift cards and they give back to us the largest percentage of any gift card.

In the past year AOTS has provided funds to Trinity.

- ◆ \$2000.00 as our annual donation to the General Fund of Trinity.
- ◆ \$500 for permanent Directional Signs throughout the church.
- ◆ \$300 to purchase the plexiglass for the dividers to allow for soloists in the choir area.
- ◆ \$1000 to the Infant Food Shelf to purchase formula and other needs for newborns.
- ◆ \$500 to the Noah Dugas Trust fund.
- ◆ \$500 to the Nipissing Serenity Hospice.

As we wind down the past year, we can only look forward to getting together again for fellowship and our monthly breakfasts at Burger World.

Submitted by David McKenney
AOTS Chair

UCW Report

Not much has happened since the last newsletter. We have chatted by phone, but haven't met together for about a year. Some of us have had the opportunity to "visit" with families by zoom, but that is about it. The pandemic has certainly challenged us to be creative in finding things to do. TV, talking on the phone, and reading get old fast. Many of us have thought about what the UCW will look like once this is all over.

The following story certainly demonstrates the characteristics of the UCW.

Best Beans Ever

A UCW group had been asked to serve a baked beans and brown bread supper to a Scouts group. All was going well until the women realized they were running out of beans! One lady, experienced at serving children without much money, knew the solution. She sent an emissary to the store to buy canned beans. They were dumped into the pot, along with ketchup, mustard, brown sugar and molasses. Then the ladies waited for the comments. The first one they heard was "Those were the best beans I have ever eaten. I'd like the recipe for my wife".

Never underestimate a UCW woman!

Respectfully Submitted,
Judy Biondi, Leader.

DIAL FOR HOPE

Our 'Dial for Hope' Ministry continues in these long dark days of winter. Checking the statistics shows that we have received 97 calls from December to mid January. Some of these calls are of course, our own loyal leaders who provide their thoughtful messages. The statistics reveal that we have a good sized group of 'regular' listeners, and a random selection of ones who may call in every couple of weeks.

What the statistics do not reveal to us is the impact of this ministry on those who call in. But we know how important this ministry is by the frequency of many of our callers, and by the messages they leave in response to our leaders offerings. The reply messages tell us of the depth of loneliness felt by our callers, about their delight and joy at hearing a familiar and friendly voice, and of the strengthening of their faith as they hear of God's love and hope. For our callers, this ministry is a bright ray of hope in a dark time.

This outreach ministry would not be possible without the faithfulness and the caring witness of our leaders who contribute their time and effort unstintingly. I am immensely grateful to them. Thanks to John Sheridan, Rob Farris, Karen Brophey, Lillian Roberts, Gordon Roberts, Rod Carley and Rev. Ted.

I feel blessed to be part of this outreach project, sharing in leadership and creating the schedules.

May the promises of God's love and grace fill you with hope and joy as we travel through this difficult time together.

Rev. Kathy McCallum

The Gathering Place

Trinity continues to contribute financially to the breakfast program at The Gathering Place. Their largest fundraiser is The Coldest Night on February 20th which helps them provide approximately 1450 takeout meals a week. Their total for January was 5544 meals. Their Outreach program allows them to reach many people who are unable to travel to the Cassells Street location.

Submitted by Jean Rideout

“Touched by the Blues” This Lent

There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried.”~ Oscar Romero

In recent years, we’ve frequently enjoyed a “Lenten Blues” project - which means that musical members and friends of Trinity have shared often unexpected heartfelt secular songs in our Sunday worship. Because Lent usually takes place in the cold gray transition between winter and spring, “bluesy” music often feels very appropriate - and no moreso that during a pandemic!

In 2021, our musicians are coming through for us, again. Because we can’t exchange handshakes or hugs, instead we will be “*Touched by the Blues*” as we explore some of the deep emotional places where scripture leads us.

“Touched by the Blues” is about those everyday ordinary radio songs that connect on the level of the heart, or even the soul. If you have a song that touches you like that, Lisa is compiling a congregational “Touched by the Blues Lenten Playlist”- e-mail her with your contribution to our own Trinity Lenten soundtrack at: blais.trinity@gmail.com

Proposed Amendment to Trinity United Church By-Laws

Covid 19 has taught us all the importance of technology in the life and ministry of our church. In November 2020 the meeting of the board of Trinity United Church passed a motion indicating that a **Technology Sub-committee** be established. This committee would report to the Communications committee.

As indicated in our By-laws “Any amendments adopted by the Board shall be presented as soon as possible for ratification by the Congregation at a Congregational Meeting.” This proposed change will be brought forward for congregation approval at our Annual General Meeting on March 7, 2021.

Currently the By-law indicates;

1.4 Communications Committee

The Committee shall:

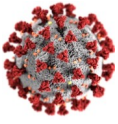
- through the Church Bulletin, or by any other reliable means, duly notify Standing and Ad Hoc Committees and other Trinity groups and personnel of deadlines for submissions for newsletters throughout the year and for year-end reports for inclusion in Trinity’s Annual Report;
- receive reports and other contributions submitted, on time, for publication;
- prepare seasonal newsletters as required and arrange for the distribution of same to the Trinity Congregation;
- prepare and distribute the Annual Report and any other official publications of the church as required.
- establish and maintain the Church web site and
- prepare a media contact list to be used when Trinity hosts important events.

The amendment is to propose the following addition;

Include the **Technology Sub-committee**, responsible for:

- facilitating the suitable usage of electronic technology in the life and ministry of Trinity;
- acquiring and maintaining Trinity's electronic technology;
- ensuring Trinity's electronic technology is protected and secure;
- ensuring equipment and procedures are in place for backups of all electronic information and
- include a designated church staff member as an *ex officio* member.

Electronic technology is meant to include, but not be limited to, computers, printers, surveillance system, streaming system, networks, Internet, website, phone system, sound system, TVs, projectors and copier.



Four Stages of our Service Evolution

Prior to COVID-19 Trinity didn't have any on line services - just in-person worship; in other words "Pre-COVID Services". Starting in March, 2020, with a forced closure, we started posting "Video Services" on the internet to YouTube. But right away we started planning for a partial reopening, designing what we called "Hybrid Services." We are currently working on our "Post-COVID Services."

- Pre-COVID Services

These are the "normal" in-Sanctuary services, prior to March, 2020. At that time we didn't have any online services, nor did we have plans to create any.

- Video Services

These are the first online services that we started to post to the internet (YouTube) in March, 2020 and ran through the summer. These are videos we build off-line. Each participant records their segment at their home, then we assemble them into a single video. We also burn a few DVDs for members who don't have Internet, and for nursing homes. Our 1st online service on March 22nd was a "Video Service".

- Hybrid Services

Our "Hybrid Services" are a mix of live and pre-recorded material. We stream them to YouTube live on Sunday mornings, and also burn a few DVDs. We started our Hybrid Services once our church reopened and we were allowed a small congregation. We also ran a few with only 10 people in the Sanctuary - the max allowable by the Ontario government - but we decided to go back to Video Services until we're allowed to have a small congregation again.

- Post-COVID Services

These will be our "back to normal" services. We're in the planning stage of our Post-COVID Services now. We don't know when we'll get there, or exactly what it'll look like, but we're planning for something a lot more like our Pre-COVID Services. That means it'll be almost entirely live, with only an occasional video and a few video effects.

There are some things we hope to carry forward from our Hybrid Services. These include the storybook camera and the use of special effects to enhance our services. These will require what we're calling in-Sanctuary projection, although we're planning to use TVs rather than projectors and screens, and neither have yet been fully approved by the TUC Board.

Do You Receive "Broadview" Magazine?

The United Church continues to publish the longest-running magazine in publication in North America - that magazine is now called, "Broadview" (The tag-line is: "Faith, Justice, and Ethical Living"). Broadview has won numerous awards from church and secular organizations for its cutting edge approach to social and cultural issues that affect us in and beyond the church.

Trinity pays the \$25 annual subscriptions for every church family interested in reading Broadview, which adds up to a considerable sum. We trust that you will reimburse this subsidized price to the church as you are able. If you'd like to subscribe (or discontinue a subscription) please call Wanda at the church office: 705-474-3310.

To learn more about our multiple award-winning magazine,
please visit: www.broadview.org

Upcoming Events

February 21st is Communion Sunday: Whether we are in-church or at home for the first Sunday in Lent, we will again celebrate a “Virtual Communion.” Bring your own bread and cup to the service of worship. Whether you have juice, milk, wine or water - whether you have bread, wafer, cracker or crisp - we will prepare ourselves for the season of Lent by partaking of the sacrament, together!

Sunday February 28th at 1 p.m. is our “**Zoom Zoom Social!**” To prepare Trinity members for our on-line ACM the following week, we will gather for some connection and some laughter as we learn about the technology of meeting via “Zoom.” If you think you understand “Zoom,” or if you’re a total beginner - we all have something to learn about “*the on-line platform that saved 2020!*” Watch your Friday newsletters for your link to join in!

Friday March 5th at 1:45 p.m. is this year’s virtual “**World Day of Prayer**” Service hosted by Calvin Presbyterian Church, North Bay. A “Zoom” link will be made available through Trinity’s weekly e-mail newsletter a week in advance.

Sunday March 7th at 1 p.m. is Trinity’s **2020 Annual Congregational Meeting**. We hope that most members will be able to view the annual reports, on-line. For those who require a hardcopy, please request one from the church office at your earliest opportunity. You’ll learn how to ask your questions, voice your concerns, and use your vote for this ACM at the “Zoom Zoom Social” the Sunday before. The link for the ACM will be available in your weekly Friday e-mail newsletter. Members can attend via telephone if that is their preference!

Friday April 2nd at 10:30 a.m. Trinity will host a virtual Good Friday worship service featuring leaders from United Churches from throughout the North Bay area.

April 4th is Easter Sunday: This service will have some extra surprises - we hope you’ll see some familiar faces that many haven’t seen for a long locked-down time!

April 11th is Holy Humour Sunday: We hope that you will send Lisa a video of you or your family sharing your COVID jokes! (Don’t have a COVID joke to share? If you’ll video the telling, we’ll provide you a joke! Write Lisa at blais.trinity@gmail.com).

April 25th is Earth Day Sunday: We want you to share samples of your very own nature photography. Many people will be immersing themselves in the beauty of nature as the seasons change - and we want you to share your visions with your church family. Please send your photos to Lisa, today!

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Watch your Friday e-mail newsletters for your link to join in!

March 7th at 1:00 p.m. is Trinity’s 2020 Annual Congregational Meeting

After our Zoom Zoom Social you will be ready for our ACM!

The link for the AGM will be available in your weekly Friday e-mail newsletter.

