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Advent Newsletter 2023

... from the Minister

“Make Room for the Child”

Advent is the traditional start of the Christian year, a full month before the rest of the world’s calendars expire-- as if to imply that Christians are in some sense *already living in the future!* The scripture readings for the Advent season seem precisely intended to soften and stretch our imaginations about that future-- because every Advent we encounter stories of miracles, unlikely prophesies, expectations both grim and wild for the world’s great metamorphosis!

Late in the Advent season, those rumours of transformation are best embodied in the “Magnificat” sung by the young pregnant Mary (read Luke 1:46-55). Mary sings with genuine certainty about an impossible world of justice and peace, *as if it’s a done deal*. Mary hasn’t even had the child, and yet she seems strangely, surprisingly composed and confident.

In her poem, “After Annunciation,” Madeleine L’Engle writes of this time: “This is the irrational season / When love blooms bright and wild. / Had Mary been filled with reason / There’d have been no room for the child.”

The scriptures, the song, the poem all suggest that this is a season to set aside rules, reason, and rigidity. Because there is a truth of love, generosity and compassion that transcends our paltry human limitations-- if we will allow our holiest stories, our boldest dreams, our most transcendent songs to bypass our critics, soften our hearts-- and *make room for that child!*

See you on Sunday,



... from the Faith, Formation and Outreach Minister

Advent is the season of waiting and preparing... of not quite yet. But typically, we get it a little wrong. Waiting is hard - we want to rush right into the Christmas season: the wonderful music, the festive church teas, the fun activities and events to participate in and so much delicious food to share! Don’t get me wrong, our celebrations can be a lot of fun – but they tend to pull us away from what Advent is all about. I am not suggesting that we have to give up all those things – I’m not Scrooge (we save that for our Dickens fundraiser), but maybe, we could make a little space for Advent. To make a point of seeking out some quiet and contemplative moments, to listen and watch for where we are being called to attend to – amongst our family and friends, within our church and wider community and in our selves. Let us prepare for the many ways that God calls us to be beacons of hope, joy, peace and love in our world.

May your hearts and homes be filled with God’s blessings throughout the season and beyond!

Lisa P.S. here is a little hot cocoa prayer to enjoy with your family this season!

Hot Cocoa Prayer

From Advent Unwrapped Resource – The United Church of Canada

Measure two tablespoons of cocoa powder. Taste it (it’s bitter).

Pray for some of the things that are bitter in your life and a little hard to take on their own.

Measure and add 1–2 tablespoons of sugar or sweetener. Taste it (it’s sweet).

Offer a prayer of thanks for all the things that are sweet in your life and are perhaps best in small doses.

Add a pinch of salt. Taste it (it’s salty).

Offer a prayer for moments of grace and clarity, experiences that bring out the flavour of life.

Warm some milk (or dairy free alternative) while reflecting on when you have experienced the Holy in the past day or week. What has warmed your heart?

Mix warmed milk beverage with hot chocolate mixture. Taste it (it’s yummy).

Give thanks to God and enjoy.



... from the Minister of Music

Sunday, November 12th was a special service of Remembrance at Trinity. Thank you to Marcel MacDonald, who played the *Last Post and Reveille*, and Rob Sanders, who played the *Lament*. and postlude. Laura Farris-Einarson accompanied the National Anthems and hymns on flute, while Marcel MacDonald did likewise on trumpet.

As we approach Advent 1, along with choir members, we are preparing special music for the Advent season, to lead you into Christmas.

The choir is preparing a beautiful **Christmas Cantata - "Love!, a Gospel Christmas Celebration"** on Sunday, December 17th, at our morning worship service. It will be accompanied by an 11 piece musical combo, featuring piano, flute, violin, clarinet, french horn, trumpet, bass and 3 percussionists. A special youth choir, members of our Trinity Youth Group, will join with the Senior Choir in singing several selections from the cantata.

Several members of the combo will also be playing in the J.O.Y. Band Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 3rd. Our "Yuletide Festival" begins at 1:30 p.m. and features a wide variety of secular and sacred music. The concert includes a sing-along. All proceeds will be donated to the Trinity Infant Food Shelf, and the North Bay Santa Fund.

As we've done in past years during Advent, choir members will be leading a pre-service sing-along beginning about 10:15 a.m.

On Christmas Eve, our choir and a group of instrumentalists will provide special seasonal music.

We thank our technical team, led by John Roberts for their time and expertise. John spends many hours each week compiling all the material for each Sunday to ensure that we "get on the air" for YouTube and Cogeco, and hear and see live worship in the sanctuary.

Thank you to our instrumentalists, whose talents have supported the choir throughout the year: Laura Farris-Einarson — flute; Marcel MacDonald – trumpet; and Chris Clarke, Peggy Millar and Matthew Whitehead – percussion.

May the hope, peace, joy and love of this blessed season remain with you and your family throughout the season.

Respectfully submitted, Betty Farris

... from the Chair of the Board

FF2030 Update and Other Board Happenings

In the fall newsletter we reported on the formation and initial efforts of the FF2030 renewal and building subcommittees and the stewardship committee. All of these groups have been hard at work throughout the fall and we are starting to see some important results.

As you probably know the stewardship initiative resulted in the recent gratitude luncheon and presentation to the congregation to recognize and express thanks for all the volunteer contributions of time and money that help Trinity do God's work. Did you know that Trinity volunteers contributed over 10,593 hours last year to our community and the folks we serve!! That is an amazing number that speaks to how much we can accomplish when we work together. And putting together these figures was just one element of this committee's work as more plans and ideas are being pursued as we recognize the importance of our collective efforts and how thankful we all should be for everyone's contribution. Thanks are owed to John Haflidson, Cindy Brownlee, Rev. Ted and Lisa and Wanda and Rev. Melody from the Canadian Shield Regional Council for all of their amazing efforts to support everyone's contributions.

With respect to the FF2030 renewal subcommittee, if you recall this committee made a decision to focus our congregation renewal efforts on the 25-45 age group and given the way this group typically gets their information, we are making strides towards digitizing our calendars and sharing our information. On Sunday, December 3rd the plan is to describe for the congregation the new calendar function and it shouldn't be too long thereafter that we all should be able to check the calendar from our own homes and update our own schedules to make sure we can participate in as many Trinity events as we wish.

For now, during this development phase we have chosen to restrict the calendar entries to Trinity events and maintain our current processes for deciding which events get listed and in which room and when. As we learn more about how this will all work, we anticipate that additional processes and calendars may develop. Thanks to Alex, Lisa, Wanda and Peggy for all of your efforts to get it to this point.

In addition to the calendar work, a working group has started to ensure that announcements of our various events are making it out to social media. Amanda and Katy, Alex and Lisa have been spearheading this very important work to reach out to our target renewal audience. In addition, the entire renewal subcommittee

has nearly finalized a survey that we will be sending out to folks that don't regularly attend church, so that we can learn more about their spiritual interests and the types of things they might look for in a church community. Interestingly much of the previous research we're reviewing indicates that this age group has maintained their level of interest in spiritual matters over the years. They still wish to explore their spirituality and we hope that they will begin to share our interest in doing God's work here at Trinity.

The building subcommittee is also making strides. At October's board meeting, the board approved the expenditure for a structural engineering study to begin in January. In addition, we provided approvals for contractor expenses in order to open up parts (walls and floors if necessary) of the building to facilitate the engineer's inspection. We are anticipating that this report should be available in March and depending upon its results an assessment of the bricks on the building may follow shortly thereafter. Getting to this stage has required a significant effort and Gerry Foster, Jim Dickson and Bob Cook deserve all of our thanks.

The building subcommittee has also been engaged in an energy audit through Green Economy North. Under the leadership of Bob Cook, Cassie Bott-Baxter and Michelina have gathered and submitted all our energy use data for analysis that will be followed by a building audit. Once complete, with the help of the United Church of Canada Faithful Footprints grant program, we hope to begin implementing some improvements to save energy, money and reduce our carbon footprint.

Cassie Bott-Baxter has also been hard at work analyzing the use of our building and is getting close to sharing her findings with the board. Thank you to Abbi Sanders for collecting all the data from the office calendar, and it's a lot of data as we are a busy place! A few opportunities for additional building uses appear to be developing and we expect that you'll be hearing more about this in the coming months. Thanks Cassie for seeing that the numbers are getting crunched.

With respect to the FF2030 process we are right in the heart of the information gathering stage with some steps already having begun to be implemented. The next six months should complete many of the things we've been working on, so exciting times are just ahead! Thanks for taking the time to read this report and stay tuned as this exciting journey of renewal continues. All of us involved with the FF2030 process want to wish all of you a joyous Christmas season and an exciting and fulfilling new year.

Christmas again!! Thank God!!

The season is upon us where we eagerly await the miracle of new life that is embodied in the Christmas story, where everything can be made new, the aches and pains of aging can take second place and smiles can abound.

The feeling at Christmas time is sort of like those spectacular mornings when you throw open the curtains and the glorious new day stretches out in front of you while a coffee waits to deliver a warm embrace. Old hurts aren't quite so vivid and it seems that old grievances might not matter that much and everything seems possible. Unfortunately, we know that when the Christmas spirit of forgiveness and new beginnings gets ignored, old grievances lead to heart-rending troubles like the war in the middle east and in Ukraine resulting in more grievances that will require even more Christmas healing. We need more Christmas, not less. Thanks be to God for bringing us this time of year again.

And I'm thankful that Trinity offers us all the opportunity to renew ourselves through helping each other. The Christmas feeling appears all year here as we support folks letting go of old hurts through our involvement with the Compassionate Committee for the homeless in North Bay, or through our thought-provoking worship services and our support for the young in years and in heart. I'm thankful for the sound of music throughout the year and the exceptional staff of our church that bless us all with their ongoing ministry.

And now it ramps up even more with all the old carols - and some new ones too - and kid's pageants and dramatic readings that all shout "Christmas is coming!!!!. We are all so lucky to share these times and I for one am so grateful for our community. I believe we are genuinely aspiring to do God's work and that as long as we keep trying to do the right thing, that all will work out. We just need to keep Christmasing all year round.

Both my wife Karen and I wish you all a Christmas that you can cherish as we celebrate the birth of the child that makes everything new and gained forgiveness for us all.

Glenn Brophey

Communications & Technology

Hardware and Networks:

The only failure we had was the remote door opener that the secretary uses to admit visitors to the McIntyre door. The wireless remote module failed and that led to the door being unlocked at all times. Luckily this happened during the day, and was accompanied by a loud buzzing, so the staff noticed the issue. Thank you Earl, for getting in there and disconnecting the remote module so the door was locked again. The remote had been unreliable for some time so we had already installed a hard-wired switch – making the fix a simple matter of removing the old wireless remote functionality.

Newsletters:

Thank you Ross for putting this Newsletter together and for keeping the “wayside pulpit” up-to-date.

Streaming:

We currently have a strong “streaming team” (thank you Andrew, Michael, and Rich) so we’re in good shape for the winter. But two of us are heading off to university next school year so we’ll need some new team members. If you are interested please speak to one of us and we’ll give you a tour of the tech. I think it’d be great to have a couple of parent/teen combos. The system is very reliable and easy and fun to operate with its joystick and pushbutton consoles.

Surveillance:

We’re still trying to correct a wiring issue caused by some building renovations, but there’s only one camera not working now and we have one last camera to install as part of the “Ontario Grant to Support Anti-Hate Security Measures” project.

Respectively submitted by:

John Roberts, Committee Chair

Finance & Stewardship

We hope that our recent Stewardship Initiative re-affirmed how your gifts of time and money are making a difference in people’s lives. This happens in many ways - perhaps nurturing spiritually, helping people grow in faith, providing connection and support or enabling local outreach projects. Your gifts are important and much appreciated.

Thank you to the people who have returned their response cards. For those who are still assessing their Trinity support for 2024, please return the card at your convenience.

In the near future, we will be reviewing this Fall’s Stewardship Initiative and discussing ideas for improving it in 2024. If you have any thoughts on this, please talk to a Stewardship team member or email the church office at trinitynorthbay@gmail.com.

The stewardship of money includes the use of both our current income and our accumulated assets. Gifts from our accumulated assets are called “legacy” or “planned” gifts because donors usually make them with considerable forethought and planning. These gifts can help congregations do various things, including funding ongoing ministries or facilitating new ministry programs and opportunities. Types of planned gifts include bequests in wills and gifts of life insurance or RRSPs.

Our Stewardship Team is planning to introduce a Planned Giving Program in early 2024.

Looking at the October 31st YTD financial summary, we see that Total Income is \$292,950 and Offerings account for almost 70% of this. Thank you for your offerings.

Year-to-date Expenses are \$338,400, leaving a deficit of \$45,450. This is \$14,000 less than last month’s deficit, thanks in large part to the Apple Pie project. The work of the folks who participated in this project is much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted, John Haflidson

Ministry & Personnel

Our year has been relatively quiet. Our staff has worked long, diligently and very well. Trinity is indeed fortunate to have such strong dedicated people.

As we approach the ‘Christmas Season’ with all the hustle and bustle it entails, let us remember why there is Christmas. It is indeed better to give than to receive. As 2024 draws closer, our committee wishes you and yours all the best for the ‘New Year’. God Bless you all!!

The Committee - Brad Stenning, Anna Wright, Darlene Laferriere, John Peddie, Bryan Boothe and Don Haslam.

UCW Report

As I write this, we are winding down from a very successful Christmas Bazaar. The number of attendees was way up from 2022. The bazaar achieved its purposes of allowing guests to enjoy visiting with old friends, and to raise money – about \$2200 this year. Most of this money will stay in the community, as the UCW supports many local charities.

The luncheon after church the end of October was very well supported by the United Church members from across North Bay. We had a lot of food left over, and were able to support the Trinity Food Bank, as well as the Crisis Center with sandwiches and goodies. We have 2 more receptions before the end of 2023 – the Rapport Singers, and Trinity Arts (Dickens night). Then we can, hopefully “put our feet up” for the winter months.

Our December meeting will involve a lunch together. We will have an opportunity to appreciate the wonders that God has provided to us.

Blessings to everyone for a wonderful Christmas Season enjoying the fellowship of family and friends. Hopefully 2024 will bring health and happiness to all.

Judy Biondi, President.

Prayer Shawl Report

It always amazes me how quickly the Prayer Shawls dance off the racks. May I remind people that there are prayer pockets to take to those who may need added encouragement to deal with their problems. While there is a prayer in the pocket, “have a blessed day”, in the pocket, you could also write your own more personal message. There are many who need our “hugs” during this time of year.

May God be with each of you during the Holiday Season.

Judy Biondi, Leader.

The Trinity Infant Food Shelf 2023

Creating Healthy Futures by Providing Infant Essentials Today

Trinity Infant Food Shelf was initially founded in September 2014 by the Trinity Food Bank Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Christian Education Committee. Every Wednesday from 10am to noon, volunteers meet with caregivers of infants less than twelve months of age and their families, in the Fellowship Hall to offer access to basic necessities for their infants during the critical first year of life.

This program is offered to caregivers on low income, monthly and includes a gift card for formula or breastfeeding supplies, plus diapers, baby food, baby wipes, bottom cream, baby bottles, baby blankets, soothers, thermometers, infant sleepers, plus a variety of changing items, thanks to the generosity of the North Bay and Trinity Community.

Pregnant women in their last trimester of pregnancy are also assisted in gathering items for a layette so they would be prepared on the birth of their child.

In addition to the material items offered, volunteers also engaged in education on safe sleep, good nutrition for both baby and mom, and up to date information on child development. Assistance to connect with Community supports like Addiction Services, Social Services, CAPC, and Public Health is offered whenever possible. Thanks to Brenda Holbein, Volunteer extraordinaire, we were able to continue supporting our families during the worst of COVID {an eighteen-month period}. Brenda and Lisa met the caregivers at the McIntyre Street door and provided required necessities.

We also had some exciting and successful Fundraisers this summer that included the Charity Day for the Heritage Train and Carousal Company that raised over \$2200 dollars; Christmas in July with Santa and Friends co sponsored by the CAS, and also the Fill A Crib Campaign with the Rotaract in September.

In addition, we have been blessed, receiving many other community donations from the AOTS, Oddfellows, Looksee Checklist, Nipissing Knox United Church, and individual donations of supplies and money.

In Addition, the Infant Food Shelf also works very closely with the Community Action Program for Women, Mother Care Nipissing and the Healthy Baby/Healthy Children Program to assist local families within the district who are unable to visit our site.

The number of families needing assistance continues to fluctuate with over 40 active cases. We estimate assisting over 120 families in 2023 alone.

Submitted by Linda McLay

Co-Chair, Trinity Infant Food Shelf

YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES - For Grade 7 and up

CHRISTMAS BAG OUTREACH PACKING

We will be packing Christmas bags for the outreach project on Sunday December 10th from 12 – 3 pm in the fellowship hall. Friends are welcome to help out too. Lunch will be provided. Volunteer hours will be granted.

Cheesy and Heartwarming Christmas Movie Double Feature – Friday December 15th 6 – 10 pm

We will watch a couple of Christmas movies, eat snacks and get our Christmas spirit on! Feel free to wear an ugly Christmas sweater or your Christmas PJ's. *Please RSVP if you plan to attend either of these events to Lisa Blais or Marcel MacDonald.*

TRINITY'S CHRISTMAS GIFT BAG OUTREACH

Each year Trinity's youth group collects items for the Christmas Bag Outreach Project. We provide over 150 Christmas gifts to children, youth and adults in our community! These bags are packed according to the age of the receiver and delivered the week prior to Christmas. We pack bags for teens and adults in transitional housing, treatment centres, the NBRHC Mental Health Unit, Suswin Indigenous Housing, and more. If you would like to contribute to this outreach program please bring in your donations to Trinity on White Gift Sunday (December 10th) or any Sunday morning prior to then. (place them in the box in the Fellowship Hall).

Suggested Items

- ◆ cash to purchase items for the Christmas Bags
- ◆ Christmas Bags to pack the gifts in (no wrapping paper please)
- ◆ word search or crossword books
- ◆ socks or slippers (we do not need hats or mitts)
- ◆ chocolate or candy (regular and diabetic)
- ◆ playing cards or games
- ◆ magazines, comics, current novels
- ◆ toiletries – especially for men (such as hand sanitizer, chapstick, deodorant, soap, hand cream, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes – **no hotel soaps please**).

Other items: Simple craft projects, adult colouring books, calendars

Thank you for supporting this Christmas Outreach program.

SOUP TASTING NIGHT

Join us in the Trinity Fellowship Hall on Friday January 26th for our popular "Soup Tasting Night" sponsored by the "A.O.T.S." Men's Group. We welcome your delicious contributions of hearty soups, AND your healthy appetite!

RED HOT CHILI COOK-OFF

Not all of our chilis will be spicy - but a night of friendly competition, great food and music is nonetheless guaranteed to "spice up your February"! On Friday Feb 9th, come to Trinity for our "Red Hot Chili Cook-Off" Dinner. A sign-up sheet for your chili and dessert contributions will be in the Fellowship Hall, starting in January!

THE TRINITY COFFEEHOUSE

On Friday, April 19th at 7pm, Trinity's fellowship hall is transformed into *North Bay's biggest musical Rec Room!* Join folks from all over North Bay for a night packed with music, talent and laughter. A sign-up sheet will be placed in the fellowship hall before Easter.

LENTEN BLUES, 2024

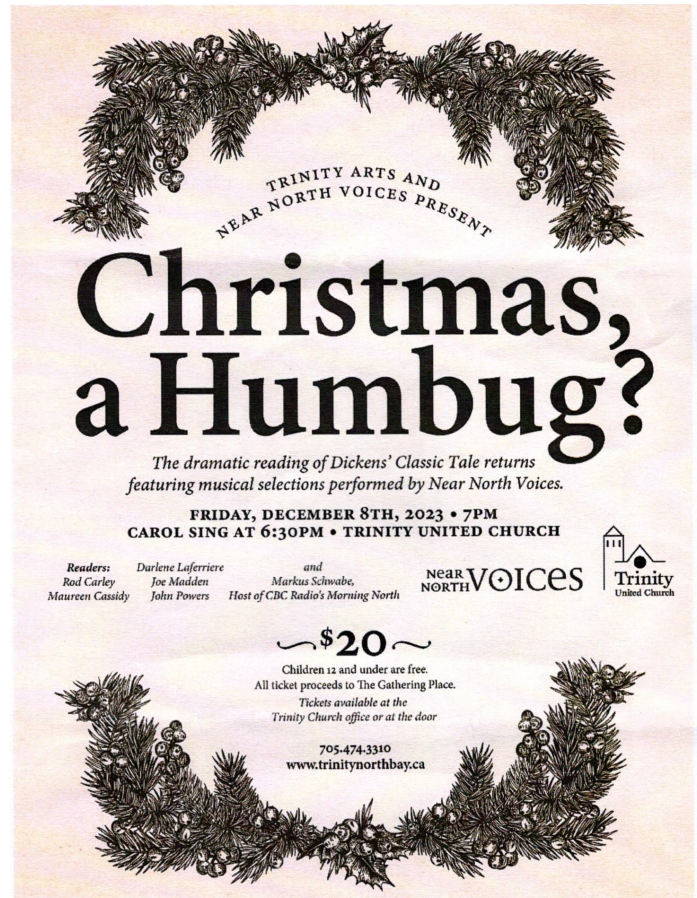
In recent years, we've enjoyed a new tradition of "The Lenten Blues." This means that local musicians-- members and friends of Trinity-- offer heartfelt songs that often bring a tear to the eye. Not hymns-- but contemporary songs that connect us to something larger than ourselves-- mostly searching songs of loneliness, heartbreak, and loss. If you or a musician you know has an idea for a song that might connect to our "Blue Lent" theme, Rev. Ted wants to hear from you before mid-January!

"CHRISTMAS, A HUMBUG?!"

The Trinity sanctuary is transformed for an enchanting presentation of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," read by beloved local thespians including the CBCs Markus Schwabe, and interspersed with heartfelt music performed by the Near North Voices choir (nearnorthvoices.com) under the direction of Dr. Adam Adler.

Join us on Friday December the 8th for our 6:30pm sing-a-long of Christmas favourites, followed by the Dickens classic which will be highlighted by exquisite seasonal mood music. Tickets are \$20 (available from the Trinity office or at the door) and refreshments will be served.

It's been seven years since we've offered a Dickens' reading-- it is back by popular demand. And this one will be worth the wait!



TRINITY ARTS AND
NEAR NORTH VOICES PRESENT

Christmas, a Humbug?

The dramatic reading of Dickens' Classic Tale returns
featuring musical selections performed by Near North Voices.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH, 2023 • 7PM
CAROL SING AT 6:30PM • TRINITY UNITED CHURCH

Readers: Rod Carley, Markus Schwabe, and Maureen Cassidy, John Powers, Host of CBC Radio's Morning North

Darlene Laferrriere, Joe Madden, and Markus Schwabe, Host of CBC Radio's Morning North

NEAR NORTH VOICES
Trinity
United Church

~\$20~
Children 12 and under are free.
All ticket proceeds to The Gathering Place.
Tickets available at the
Trinity Church office or at the door

705-474-3310
www.trinitynorthbay.ca

The LONGEST NIGHT Service

The Advent and Christmas seasons can inspire profound highs and lows in our lives. Over the period of COVID isolation, we managed to maintain and adapt our Trinity tradition of teaming up with St Andrews to host a "Longest Night" service of candlelit prayer and of heartfelt string music with "Depatie and Hyatt" in the Trinity sanctuary. Join us again on this Thursday Dec. 21st at 7pm, when we embrace a holiday opportunity of spacious prayerful pause, to contemplate the hopes and fears that fill the actual longest night of the year!

CHRISTMAS EVE

Come early for a good seat at our Christmas Eve family service, 7pm on Sunday December 24th. That Service will include the scripture story and lively singing of many Christmas favourites. This year we are experimenting with scheduling the communion service in the morning, instead of the evening. So both the first and fourth Sunday morning services this season (December 3rd and 24th) will include the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Trinity's Sunday School Presents:

The Shepherd's Christmas Story

Written by Brenda McLay

Directed by Darlene Laferriere, Musical Accompaniment by Sophia Karasseva

Sunday December 10th, 10:30 am



SAVE THE DATE! Trinity Family Day Retreat Weekend at Spirit Point Saturday February 17th – Monday February 19th 2024

Join us at Spirit Point Wilderness Academy for a fun filled Family Day weekend. Outdoor games, skating, family worship, campfires, warm indoor activities and more. Registration Packages and fees will be available mid December. Registration is limited and will be first come, first served!



FOR YOUR FRIDGE: DATES-AT-A-GLANCE

Sun Dec 3rd - Advent Communion service 10:30am, also: afternoon JOY Band concert

Sun Dec 10th - White Gift Sunday: Bring your gifts of food or cash to support the Christmas

Bag Outreach and Trinity Food Shelf. Programs. Also: The Trinity Sunday School Pageant!

Sun Dec 17th – Choir Cantata Sunday

Thurs Dec 21st– Our “Longest Night” evening service at 7pm

Sun Dec 24th - 10:30am Service features Communion. Christmas Eve Family Service, 7pm.

Sun Dec 31st: This “Fifth Sunday” means United Churches from all over North Bay will

descend on Omond United Church for a shared Christmas season service! Please note that

Omond worships at 9:30am! See you then!

Sun Jan 7th - Baptism Sunday (contact the office ASAP with your interest) 10:30am.

Sun Jan 21st - Robbie Burns Sunday

Fri Jan 26th - Trinity Soup Tasting Night hosted by Trinity AOTS!

Sun Jan 28th - after church will be a “Lunch and Learn” event about Wills and Legacy Giving.

Fri Feb 9th - “Red Hot Chili Cook-Off” Dinner

Tues Feb 13th - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Sun Feb 18th - Communion service, beginning the season of Lent

Feb 17-19th - the Trinity Families Annual Retreat at "Spirit Point"!

Sun Mar 3rd - Trinity's afternoon AGM School March Break: Mar 11th through 15th, 2024

Sun Mar 24th - Palm Sunday

Thurs Mar 28th - Maundy Thursday All-Night Youth Vigil

Fri Mar 29th - City-wide Good Friday service at Emmanuel United Church

Sun Mar 31st - Easter Sunday Communion service

Fri, Apr 19th - Trinity's Coffeehouse, 7pm!