

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A JOYFUL NOISE

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CHRISTMAS 2009

Greetings Trinity Family, Christmas is Here Once Again.

Christmas is here once again, and along with it comes the struggles and fears of all the years that often rise to the fore at this time of year.

I was reflecting on the Presbyterian 'First Sunday in Advent liturgy of Hope' and something struck a chord with me that I want to share with you by way of encouragement.

The biblical liturgy spoke of Jeremiah's time when the Temple was destroyed and armies marched in the streets... many were exiled to far away places, chaos reigned and everything was turned upside down.

It is no secret that our lives can get turned upside down at this time of the year; it can be bittersweet this thing we call Christmas. Sometimes (and especially at Christmas) because of family conflict, or the death of a beloved spouse, or a sense of poverty of soul, spirit and mind, we feel that all we have worked for has been destroyed and that chaos reigns in our lives or in the lives of our loved ones.

These are difficult times we live in. For some it is hard to make ends meet financially, others are living a lonely existence that feels like exile, for still others there are health problems, family problems; problems with the children, the marriage, the in-laws and the outlaws.

Like Jeremiah, we get to thinking that there is no mistaking that some part of our lives is coming to an end. Armies of fear or darkness have descended and threatened the peace and hope in our lives.

But wait, Jeremiah knew something else; he knew that God was still with them. Why?

Because God said: "That surely the days are coming when I will fulfill the promise made to the house of Israel" (Jeremiah 33:14).

You see, Christmas is all about the promises of God. Lying in the manger was God himself. God Immanuel had come to care for the problems that plague us... God had come to personally fulfill the promise of leading His chosen out of exile into a future filled with hope, a future filled with the presence and reign of God's only begotten son Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

So when life's a mess (especially around Christmas) and you find yourself searching for peace in this troubled land... then look for the new beginnings that God is starting in your life... look for the faith that God is stirring in your heart once again... look for the young green shoots from the stump... look for the poor

baby crying in a manger.

And remember. Remember that because God can and will do a new thing, because God gives us hope, peace, joy, and love through the Child born in the manger. Because the Child became a man, because the man was God Himself incarnated... because the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace... because of all this, we can face our day and the new year. We can hear God's call to us to stand and lift up our heads that we may see that our redemption is drawing near.

Merry Christmas.

God be with you as you look to the Son of God for your future in the year 2010.

Rick

You are encouraged to consider joining one of the several groups that meet, mostly at Trinity. These groups provide a warm welcoming and safe environment, where you may choose to take active part, or simply sit and listen.

The Minister's study meets Sundays at 10 am in the Conference Room.

Randy's Alpha group meets Wednesdays at 7 pm at Shirley McDiarmid's home (contact Shirley at 250-380-9695, or Randy at 250-744-1828).

Men's Coffee Hour: Thursdays 10-11 am in the Conference Room.

Ladies Prayer Circle: Thursdays 10-11 am in the Study.

Watch for extra events. Michael has just completed a worthwhile study on "The Bible Jesus Read," followed by "Walking the Bible" videos that walked us through Old Testament biblical sights. Many thanks Michael! There will likely be other such events offered from time to time.

WHOSE KING IS HE?

Matthew introduces two groups of people in the second chapter of his gospel. The first group are the scribes. Not held in a good light by Matthew. Who are they? They were the people of the Book. They spent all day copying the Scriptures, with such precision that they counted the letters in the parchment, to make sure nothing dropped out; that is was exactly the same as the original one.

If you wanted to know the meaning of a scripture, they could tell you; they had the right answer too. They were teachers of the law and loved answering questions and explaining the meanings.

When King Herod asked them where the Messiah was to be born, they didn't have to blow the dust off of old parchments to consult them, they knew the answer! "Why, in Bethlehem of Judea", they said, quoting chapter and verse.

I often wonder why the scribes didn't go themselves to search! How could they know the book so well without knowing the author?

The second group is more promising. They are the Magi, scientists, astrologers, and magicians, who asked questions about God's marvellous, majestic stars and planets in the night sky. They knew that a King was to be born to the Jewish nation, so they set out on a long journey to find Him.

We know by heart the story. The heavenly star led them to Bethlehem, and there it stopped, over the place where Jesus lay.

The Creator, who made the universe, moved this star of course. When they found the little child Jesus, they fell to the ground and worshipped Him, with great joy. Then they return to their Persian home.

We may be in both groups, think of this question. Why did God make us, and for what purpose?

We all have questions and sometimes we don't have the right answers.

This Christmas the Lord comes near again, in glorious songs, and quiet thoughtful moments in the church and in our homes. It can be a time of reflection, a time for peace coming into anxious hearts. This comes from a Person whose love for us is very great. The Magi had a longing for answers, and they found a Person.

Let us find His embrace this Christmas, and we will be a peace with ourselves.

As we near the end of our journey.

Campbell

Our Treasurer's Report

Trinity's income comes from 2 main sources - offerings and facility rentals.

Offerings may be divided into two main categories:

1. Money received from regular attendees through numbered envelopes or monthly donations via our Pre-Authorized Remittances (PAR) plan.
2. Cash on the offering plates (open offerings which include **pew envelopes** that do not specify a name or address) as well as sporadic gifts of money.

As of October 31 numbered envelope and PAR givings total \$70,144.06 which is almost exactly as estimated in this year's budget. Open offerings, pew envelopes and other donations total \$6,325 which is almost \$9,000 *less* than was expected - based on previous years' figures.

This means that there are many faithful givers in the congregation. You have consistently and generously supported the work and ministry of your church. The second offering category generally refers to visitors, and is therefore harder to anticipate or regulate. Obviously, the more the congregation grows, the higher one would expect our givings to be.

Facility Rentals: Trinity's other income comes from the rental of the Walter Street house, and the day care rental. Due to problems beyond anyone's control, the day care income started much later than originally anticipated. This accounts for over \$7,000 that had been anticipated in the budget, but not received.

Expenses have been running very close to what was expected in the budget. This is in spite of the large unexpected expenses pertaining to the Walter Street house. So Trinity is managing its expenses very effectively, and the Board of Managers should be congratulated for this fact.

In summary, if the day care income had started when expected, and if there had been no major repairs needed to the Walter Street house, Trinity would be pretty much breaking even in terms of income versus expenses. We have reserve funds to cover the current shortfall, so there is no immediate panic. We will need to manage our funds carefully in 2010, but I have no doubt that this will be done.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Isaak, Treasurer

Folk new to Trinity may not be aware that we offer a PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) program for donations. This proven method for the faithful support of this church is appreciated by many who use it as a convenient monthly withdrawal from their bank accounts, as is done for automatic bill payments. It saves a lot of time for both our treasurer and our hard working counting staff. Consider it and contact John DiCicco or Bob Gartshore for more information.

Our Camp VIP (Vancouver Island Presbytery) ran a deficit of \$4,000 this year. Although expenses ran very close to estimates, revenues were lower due to lower registrations than expected and lower donations. A concerted effort will be made to register closer to the 60 optimum (plus staff) for each 2010 camp. Donations may be made to: Camp VIP, 531 Herbert Street, Duncan BC, V9L 1T2.

Noah's Ark: (Everything I need to know, I learn from Noah's Ark!)

- ONE: Don't miss the boat.
- TWO: Remember that we are all in the same boat!
- THREE: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- FOUR: Stay fit. When you reach 60, someone may ask you to do something big.
- FIVE: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- SIX: Build your future on high ground.
- SEVEN: For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
- EIGHT: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- NINE: When you're stressed, float awhile.
- TEN: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- ELEVEN: No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

Dr. Joe Cunningham, one time senior member of our Trinity Session, slipped quietly away on November 15th at the age of 93 years. Leaving to mourn his loss are his four sons, Dr. Johann, Dr. William, Dr. Erik and Rev. Irwin. We recall his family's arrival at Trinity with Joe and Edith towing their four boys dressed in kilts. Three of the boys now live and work in greater Victoria, while Dr. Erik completes tenens locums (locums) in various parts of Canada. Our deep condolences to the family, for their mother Edith was called home only last year.

It is with real sadness that we report the sudden death of **Minou Ragheb** on Remembrance Day, November 11th - the result of a brain aneurism. She was 58. Minou became a Canadian on July 30th this year, a very proud moment for her. We loved her phone message saying "You have reached the home of a Canadian" and she often began her sentences with: "As a Canadian". We could all take a leaf from her book, couldn't we?

Life wasn't easy for her here as she was unable to find employment, despite having a PhD in Arts and Music from the Conservatory of Music in Vienna and her experience gained in managing music colleges both in Alexandria and Cairo. While she was a well-known musician all over Europe, Victoria has an over abundance of musical talent, and her failing vision would have been a concern to employers. She was a gifted accompanist who could be depended upon to play flawlessly and we will miss her, for she added a special colour to our lives.

Also on November 11th, **Brian Pope**, a former active member of our church, died peacefully in Victoria. Brian had been living in Lake Cowichan for a number of years where he no doubt kept busy helping those that needed him. Always active (notably in our church kitchen), he was much missed when he moved away, but we know of at least one individual in our church that has been a recipient of loads of wood. There could well be others!

Operation Christmas Child

Franklin Graham, International President of Samaritan's Purse, says every shoe box offers an opportunity to share the good news of our Saviour with a hurting child. Trinity filled 44 boxes this year and all who participated know that a child will be blessed on Christmas morning, not just with a gift from a stranger, but with the knowledge that there is a God who loves and cares for them.



To all who participated, may your hearts be forever changed because of these gifts you have given.

Love and take care of one another,
Roberta Adlam

A young lad, when asked how a stranger could tell if two people are married, replied "you might have to guess, depending on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids."

Lisa McCormick has kindly volunteered to take on the job of "Kitchen Co-ordinator." Lisa has put a "wish list" on the refrigerator for items needed to restock the kitchen for coffee hours, so if you notice items such as coffee, tea, cookies, milk or juice running low, please write them on the list.

And many thanks to **Doug and Terry** who have kindly provided hand sanitizers at various critical points throughout our church. Much appreciated!

Also **Whitney Hanna** has kindly volunteered to assume the position of Sunday School and nursery co-ordinator. It is truly wonderful to see a church family pull together to satisfy perceived needs. Our warm thanks to you all.

June and Robbie have had **Kathy, Suzy and her son Kael** visiting from Australia for three weeks; a great opportunity for June to have a good visit. She

was sorry to have missed Suzy's graduation last year, but didn't feel up to the long plane ride. Not many of us are anymore; flying somehow just isn't what it used to be, its only advantage being that, once airborne, travel is faster than in the good old days (like when they used to feed you and provide a pillow for your back)!

As loving grandparents, June and Robbie stood with Suzy Robinson on November 29th as her son Kael was baptized. It is great to see Trinity's children's children returning to church.

As Christmas approaches, Trinity has gladly welcomed the **Macphersons** into full membership. **Ian and Cynthia** have been worshipping with us for some time and have become active participants in our church.

JeeWan Hee ("G one") has waited for her husband **Kayu Tan** ("**Vincent**") to join her during a break from his contract in Brunei, Malaysia. Both are teachers and, as landed immigrants Vincent is looking at the steps required to become a Presbyterian minister. We look forward to welcoming this lovely couple as members in our wee church.

We are often reluctant to approach those from "offshore," fearing we may not understand their accents. These fears are usually groundless and both Vincent and JeeWan are warm, approachable people with a fascinating story to tell so make yourself acquainted with them.

"TOC H" – A Service Organization - by Ian Macpherson

I was introduced to Toc H on board a troop ship en route to the Middle East during WW2. One of our group was a Toc H Member who arranged a meeting room for 12 of us each evening, and several of us became Members before disembarking in Egypt.

In 1915, a Rest and Recovery house was opened in the Belgian town of Poperinghe, behind the Front Lines. Named "**Talbot House**," this was soon shortened to "Toc H" in signalers' language. Early in 1920, ex-servicemen who had experienced comradeship in the old house established a house in Central London to provide lodging and an opportunity to do volunteer work in the community. A Royal Charter was granted in 1922 and branches opened across Great Britain, then into Belgium, France, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, India

& South Africa.

Every branch was given a unique oil lamp which was lit at the opening of each meeting as Members recited the words “Let us Remember our Elder Brethren.....” and closed with the charge “LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GLORIFY OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.” It is interesting to note that one such unique oil lamp lies within Christ Church Cathedral on Quadra Street.

Their ministry of volunteerism and helping neighbours, which grew out of our membership in this organization, has remained with Cynthia and myself throughout our lives.

The Worship and Music Committee has once again had a successful clothing drive, with a van chock full of items delivered to the Open Door. Many thanks for all your donations which are always received with much gratitude.

Will Rodgers: “Lettin’ the cat out of the bag’s a whole lot easier’n puttin’ it back!”

Our congratulations to **Luka and Nyamuch Pal**, who have just welcomed a baby boy to the family and named him “Sunday.” Luka has a job with Country Grocer, the large grocery chain. He works on Sundays, which is why we haven’t seen them for some time, but we do wish them well.

Mary Ames has changed her name back to her family name of Connolly, as she feels much more comfortable having the same last name as her children. So if you have been confused, be assured that she is the same sweet Mary that we all love.

Ralph Peltier has moved to #205 Beacon Hill Villa, located at 635 Superior St. He seems quite content there, and while he loved Parkwood Manor where he has resided for 16 years, he was finding it a bit too difficult to cope. He always enjoys a visit!

If there is one thing that we at Trinity love to do, it is to eat! We had a great pot luck Thanksgiving Dinner, and perhaps by the time you read this, we will have enjoyed an Advent Dinner as well. We do these as pot lucks because no one is terribly interested in working the kitchen for hours to turn out a meal; beside, we

get a great variety of food this way.

Several of our members have taken the food safe course and would remind you that both hot and cold stuff needs to be **kept that way in transit!** An easy way to do that is to pack a box with newspaper, place the container of food in the middle, then more newspaper on top. (They used to use straw and hot bricks on the Prairies! No one had newspaper back then! Just a bit of useless information you can tuck away in your memory bank!!!)

Did you know that peroxide is the cheapest and safest disinfectant you can possible buy for your home? A solution of 50/50 works great as a spray for counters, bathrooms, cutting boards and the like, and it is a very good solution for washing windows, etc as it doesn't leave smears. I soak my toothbrush in it too. If you have a stuffy nose, spray some into it and it will kill germs. I should add that it very nearly blows your brains out too, but it works!

Why not use bleach? Because chlorine bleach was invented 'way back in the 1700's and in various gas forms was used to kill our troops in WW 1! Nice stuff eh?

And say, did you hear about the dog that gave birth near a road? She was cited for littering!

FROM HERE AND NOWHERE

Speaking of dogs, I was sitting in the kitchen lazily watching one of the grand-dogs wolfing down his dinner one day, when my mind began to wander back through 55 years. How many dogs have owned us, I wondered?

I couldn't remember, but it would appear that most of them were Yellow Labs and all of them, without exception, were nice-natured, gentle creatures, whose whole purpose in life was to express how happy they were. Only two were purebreds, so they varied in size. One of them must have been crossed with a kangaroo, because he was capable of jumping a five foot fence without taking a run at it. Bob once clocked him running at 30 mph. Another one used to screw up his face and bow when caught doing something he knew wasn't allowed; such as eating a whole box of chocolates. NB Eating chocolates does not kill Labs!

They were perfect dogs, except for the fact that they shed mounds of hair,

slobbered on every window that was reachable (half way up), and had voracious appetites, dining happily on garbage, or steak. Not at all fussy.

At some point, I made the executive decision to buy a small dog, on the theory that they couldn't possibly shed as much, be easier to bathe and wouldn't eat as much. The first one was a Boston Bull. Bad tempered, never fully house trained, bit anyone that was available, ate anything in sight, created enough gas to clear the living room in ten seconds, and killed all the neighbours' cats, as well as a pheasant. We were not at all popular!

Next time I did lots of research, and decided, after phoning a number of owners, that a Cocker Spaniel would be the perfect dog. Wrong again! After much agony, I got him house trained, but convincing him that carpets were not the same as grass took some time. More time was spent convincing him that if he piddled in the middle of our queen sized bed one more time, I would kill him. He took a one way trip to the vet when he began howling like a coyote in the middle of the night. Several times per night. Bob slept through it, the dog slept all day, and I began to look like the Witch of Ender. One of us had to go! And I knew how to cook!

Having thought about all this for a few days, I began to wonder how dogs manage to get water into their mouths without using their feet, so I poured myself some water, got down on the floor and attempted to drink, using just my tongue. Do you know how difficult that is?

Just then Bob walked in, looked a bit taken aback, then said: "This ought to be good! What exactly are you trying to do?" He had to help me off the floor, 'cause this old dog ain't what she used to be,' so after I changed my clothes and wiped up the floor, I attempted to explain. His eyes kind of rolled up into his head, so I knew a Bible quote was coming. It seems that in the Old Testament, if you couldn't demonstrate an ability to lap up water, they shot you or something. No putting your face in and sucking it up (the water that is, not your face). Weird huh? It seems that the warriors had to be able to drink while keeping their eyes on the enemy, and they could do that while lapping - not while sucking. Want to know where that is? Don't ask me, ask Bob. My eyes glaze over when he tells me stuff like that.

A Babe in the manger? That interests me! A Saviour? That captures our attention. Angel choirs? I can hardly wait!

Dear friends, do have a blessed Christmas!

Joy