

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
A JOYFUL NOISE

Volume 27 Number 3



And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. Luke 2:8

CHRISTMAS

2010

To our Readers;

Following the sudden departure of Rev. Rick Cleaver and his family, Michael Kellogg, our Clerk of Session, has kindly consented to write our Christmas message:

Looking Back; Looking Forward

As we rapidly approach the year end and begin the search for a new minister, I thought it would be beneficial to review events which led us to this point, and to talk about the near future, as far as possible. Here is the sequence of events leading to the Cleavers' departure:

- Mar 20th I met with Suzy who requested Trinity's help to buy a house.
- Apr 21st The elders discussed this request and concluded that Trinity was not in a position to do so.
- May 17th Bob and I met with Cleavers over lunch and gave them the elders' response.
- Mid July: Bob and I had a difficult meeting with Rick.
- Sept 12th Unbeknown to us, Rick preached for a call in Edmonton.
- Sept 15th Rick informed Harland and me that he was leaving.
- Sept 16th Rick informed the session that he was leaving.
- Sept 19th A Citation to appear before Presbytery was read to the congregation and we said good-bye to Suzy, Elijah and Abbigail.
- Sept 26th Rick lead his last service and we said goodbye to him.
- Sept 28th Presbytery approved Rick's irregular call to Edmonton and appointed the Rev. Irwin Cunningham from Saanich Peninsula Church to be our Interim Moderator.
- Sept 30th Rick left for Edmonton with Hannah and Barry.

Now what? Our search committee has been formed consisting of Michael Kellogg and Randy Brown from the Session, Harland Bell and Jeanne Spinelli from the Board, and Ian MacPherson, Betsy Wicks and Whitney

McCormick from the congregation.

While they begin the process towards recommending a minister to us in the new year, we carry on under God's guidance and in full confidence that He will reveal the future and our future minister in due time. In the meantime, I want to express my deepest appreciation to all of you who carry on so faithfully through your weekly attendance, your participation in events, financial support and the love and support you show for one another.

At year's end, you might find yourself discouraged, or living in chronic pain, or suffering from a decline in your standard of living, or simply not feel appreciated or valued by others - any one of a hundred things may be assailing you and making life miserable. While this is normal, it is important to get beyond the questions and return to our faith - and it is in these difficult times that Advent is of such crucial importance to us - that turning to God, remembering before Him all that He is and all He has done for us, is so very significant and very helpful.

Advent plunges us back to the times when God's people awaited the coming of their Messiah. It's as if, at the start of Advent, we enter a time-machine and are transported back to the time of John the Baptist, and further back again to the times of the great prophets of the Old Testament. These prophets spoke about the coming Messiah, thus keeping alive the hopes of the people of God.

But we are in a very different position. We have known the coming of the Messiah. It would be a futile exercise to return to the days when people awaited his coming. We must live in the present, but may be tempted to ask "Yes, we have known about the coming of the Saviour, but what difference has it made? Does the world not go on as if he had never come?" These are indeed very relevant questions.

Christmas introduces us to the mystery of the Incarnation - the mystery of God's own Son leaving his throne, taking flesh and coming to live among us. It is impossible to explore its height and depth. It is above all a mystery of God's love for mankind in general, and for each of us in particular. Christianity is a very humanistic religion, in the sense that its chief task is to enable us to find ourselves, to be the people we were made to become, and to achieve our destiny.

We cannot find ourselves, or be ourselves, or achieve our destiny, without Christ. The great writer Dostoyevsky once said "While we are on earth, we

grope almost as though in the dark and, but for the precious image of Christ before us, we would lose our way completely and perish.” I don’t think he was exaggerating. - Michael

A Christmas Message in the Old Testament

Isaiah 40:1-5

This text is so relevant to us at this time of year. I see that all four gospel writers quote it as they begin the story of Christ, and it will be read in the many Advent services of our churches too.

Israel had been taken from Jerusalem to Babylon, and their captors hoped they would be assimilated into their Babylonian culture, as they would be a great asset to them in many ways. But while they longed to return to Jerusalem, it seemed that they had lost their God and that God had lost them. Then God told Isaiah that their captivity was over; their sins were pardoned and He is about to bring them home. He will show His people His glory and come down and rescue them.

Their whole attitude to God quickly changed.

This is the extent of God’s deep love for His people; not only for the Israelites, but for all of us.

When our grandchildren come running into our home, they have lots of energy. Sometimes we play a game of snakes and ladders and as I watch their laughter and groans, I sometimes think that this game is a bit like our lives.

We begin well and have good success; even rise to the top. We have good friends and we enjoy life when suddenly, out of the blue, things go down fast. We feel forgotten, lonely and out of control. Then God steps in!

Like the Israelites in Babylon who felt in their misery “how much lower can we get?” we may feel lost and forsaken. Then God stepped in and lives changed. The people comforted and encouraged one another. They gained new hope, for soon they would be in the promised land of Israel once again. What happened?

They saw the glory, or greatness, of the Lord who had come down to save them.

The gospel writers tell us that it happened once again; when Jesus Christ was born. God had come to rescue His people.

In the lowly birth of Jesus, the lives of many people are changed, and we celebrate Christmas, for in Him, we see the glory of God who came down to save us. - Campbell

While choosing a new minister is always a lengthy process, we are very grateful to Michael who has backstopped our church and who, together with Randy Brown has ably supplied our pulpit since September. Michael continues his Tuesday evening study series "Praying through the Psalms" while Harland Bell leads the Sunday morning study "Essentials of our Christian Faith" by Dr. R.C. Sproul. Please accept our grateful thanks.

Our Remembrance Day Service was once again capably led by Gary Hall, assisted by Keith Jamieson, Jim Millar and Ian MacPherson. Kostin Enns read *In Flanders Fields*, and Bob Gartshore read the Eulogy. We are indeed grateful for our dedicated service personnel.

It was a real joy as well as a privilege to have Dr. Arthur Currie share communion with us on December 5th. Dr. Currie is the busy "visiting minister" from St. Andrew's and he and his wife Anne are always most welcome here at Trinity.



While in England, Bob and I were able to have a lovely visit with Sandra Carslaw and Harry. It was a joy to see her smiling face and watch Harry's tail begin to wag as he recognized Bob. One could almost hear him say "That's my pal who used to walk me every morning." They are living in her van and having a good time moving about England, visiting old haunts and seeing new places. No sign of a job yet, but Sandra assured us that she will not return to Canada. While England is not in good financial shape just now, we trust that situation will improve and that jobs become available. We do miss them.

Operation Christmas Child

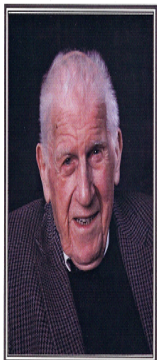
Franklin Graham is the President and Chairman of Samaritan's Purse International with its Canadian HQ in Calgary. Like the Good Samaritan of the Bible, it travels the world's highways in 70 countries, seeking victims needing help. It also sponsors Operation Christmas Child, collecting and delivering shoe boxes filled with gifts for needy children throughout the world, such as the 76 boxes which Trinity's Worship & Music Committee collected last month, with many thanks to you, Trinity givers!

On February 18th, Roberta Adlam plans to leave for Chile (southern South America) with a team of volunteers to distribute the Christmas Child shoe boxes to children in Biobi, just south of Santiago, and also to visit local Samaritan Purse project sites. Her cost for this long journey will be \$3,400 of which she has already raised \$500. With many thanks to those who have donated, if you wish to help, make your cheque payable to "Operation Christmas Child" with reference number "082116 FOCC REA1 - Chile Trip" on it and give it to Roberta for an income tax receipt. As a fund raiser, Roberta is also selling Purdy's chocolate bars (both dark and milk chocolate).

Upon her return, Roberta plans to share her experiences with us (with pictures) and express her thanks for our part in this undertaking.

Trinity celebrated the life of Ernest Wirtenen at a crowded Memorial Service on August 12th. Ernie and Lavonne enjoyed our Trinity fellowship for a number of years until ill health forced their move into town. As an electrical engineer, Ernie installed guidance systems on Canadian warships during WW2. After the war, he opened Wirtenen Electric in Edmonton, followed by Wirtenen Electric Foundation in memory of his son. This has given a great many underemployed and unemployed their start in life, with fully 95% of his "students" graduating! Two years ago, Ernie was granted an honorary Doctorate of Engineering from his Alma Mater. We offer our most sincere condolences to Lavonne and his family.

In Loving Memory



Ernest Wilfred Wirtenen
1919 - 2010

During a visit to a doctor, a senior asked “How do you determine when a person should be put into an old folks’ home?”

“Well,” he said, “we fill a bathtub and offer the person a teaspoon, a teacup and a saucepan and ask him or her to empty it.”

“Oh I understand,” the senior replied brightly. “A normal person would use the saucepan because it is bigger than either the teaspoon or the teacup.”

“No,” he said. “A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?”

From your Entertainment Committee

Our annual Advent pot-luck supper was held on Saturday, December 4th in the church hall, with many thanks to our dedicated and hard-working Entertainment Committee.

The Committee wishes to thank all who replied to their recent survey and encourages others to express their views about our social functions to Jim Andres or Betsy Wicks.

As a result of the survey, future dinners will begin at 5 pm and while Thanksgiving and Advent dinners are relatively fixed events, a third dinner will celebrate either Shrove Tuesday or Easter and most respondents wanted the bunwiches continued but on a quarterly basis.

The issue of dinner entertainment had split results with most wanting to see it occasionally but not necessary for a successful dinner.

We appreciated that numerous respondents offered to assist with either the set-up or cleanup of events. The committee has moved away from the team approach and will, for the time being, organize each event on an ad hoc basis in terms of help so thank you for your offers.

The Camp Committee is planning several smaller camps in the coming year and will roll out its full program in the spring. Your Canadian Tire money is still welcomed, for it provides life jackets, flashlights and all the other small camping essentials that are so necessary to have on hand at each camp.

From Your Worship and Music Committee

Our annual clothing drive for the Upper Room was a great success, with lots of wonderful items donated (in the nick of time too!) by our caring Trinity people. We received a lovely letter from the Upper Room telling us how much they appreciated our van load of warm clothing. And so we thank all of you who so generously donated items this year to a very worthwhile cause.

A very successful Tea and Fashion Show was held on November 6th which the excellent turnout all seemed to enjoy. The ladies (plus Bob Kater) enjoyed looking at, and hearing about, each beautiful fashion. We were pleased to present a cheque for \$100 to the Historical Society for their bursary fund at Uvic for a student in fashion design, and a cheque for \$365 to St. Andrew's Church in downtown Victoria to help with the expenses of their Saturday morning breakfasts for folks in need. The committee wishes to thank all those who helped make this event such a success. In particular to Glenda for her table decorations and to Arnold and Harland for setting up the hall. Thank you so much!

Next on the agenda is the Advent/Christmas season for which we will be decorating the Sanctuary. We are happily accepting donations for poinsettias to help decorate the church and the elders will visit our shut-ins with Christmas cards signed by all the members of Session.

The committee wishes our congregation and their families a very Blessed and Joyful Christmas Season.

For those with more stuff than they know what to do with, the Bibles For Missions Thrift Shop at 2520 Government Street accepts most any clean useful donations. The volunteer staff feel a real calling to send Bibles abroad, and only building rental and utilities come from their profits. They need volunteers to sort and organize donations and operate the till. Do pop in and look around. It's a great place to find odds and ends such as bits of furniture, jewellery, clothing and books, plus a truly wonderful assortment of gently used small appliances. Have fun! And if you offer to volunteer, you would be most welcome.

A kindergarten teacher was observing her class of children while they were drawing, and occasionally walked around the room to see their work.

She came upon one little girl who was working away diligently and asked her what she was drawing.

“I’m drawing God,” the little girl replied confidently.

The teacher paused, then said “But no one knows what God looks like.”

Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied “They will in a minute.”

Joan Tigchelaar has moved from her own home to room #237 in the Alexander Mackie Lodge, (753 Station Avenue) but her phone number remains the same and she seems quite happy with her move. Coincidentally, this lodge has been the home of Frances Widdifield for some time. While Frances is a member of Trinity, she has been unable to get to church for some years due to ill health.

Both Margaret Bandeen and Flora Clarke are happy to be back in their own apartments after trying recoveries from bad falls. While Flora lives just across the road from Trinity, it is a long journey in a wheelchair and it is nice to see her back in church again. And Margaret will be missing all her volunteer work, for she worked part of every day except Sunday, doing things for others

We owe many thanks indeed to all who assist to keep our church a happy place in which to worship, for “Many hands make light work.”

Dianna Heal has sold her home of many years and has bought a town home in Broadmead, to which she will move at year’s end after renovations have been completed.

Just a gentle reminder that our Compassionate Fund box is often called upon to supply a few groceries for the less fortunate in our area. You should find it on the coffee table after church and it allows us to buy Fairways “grocery only” vouchers to assist those in need. As you know, Trinity does “live” in a low income area.

We have been missing Phyllis Andrews for some months after she suffered a fall, injured herself and has been slow to heal. She also finds traffic a bit much now, but we want her to know that she is missed.

We are so happy to have Evelyn Carlson back in church with us, as she is able to leave her husband again. And returning after their summer absence are Ken and Judy Matthews. Good to see you back.

It is also great to see both June Robinson back again after hip surgery and Sarah Cunningham after her bad fall. Both appreciated the prayers of their church family. Sarah was in “rehab” for some time and spoke of her struggle to get dressed each morning for her appointment with “the drivers.” She found that the young physios were indeed quite pushy, requiring her to walk around the block the very first day! She was still in much pain, so they eased off a bit, although they still got her out every day. When fellow “rehab” discovered that she had lived in Africa, they got her to tell stories about her life on that continent while they all rested from their exercises, and Sarah has many stories to tell!

Bulletin notice: At this evening’s service, the sermon topic will be “What is Hell?” Please come early and listen to our choir rehearse.

And this one: Miss Charlene Manson sang “I will not pass this way again,” giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.



It seems such a long time ago that we enjoyed a great day at Barbara Smith’s cottage on Saltspring, and remember it with pleasure.

It soon became obvious that that day was good for a lot of us, for they had the largest turnout ever! Not that many went into the lake, but those who did marvelled at how warm it was. As usual, the food

was wonderful and the fellowship cherished. Many thanks indeed to Barbara, Ethelwyn and David for all the work that went into it. Many others helped of course, even if this just meant staying out of the way!

Barbara has up and taken off to New Zealand again, without even so much as a “by-your-leave!” She loves to be with her “down under” relatives over Christmas and we are so happy that she has been able to do that again this year. We sure can’t blame her for trading our cold rain and snow for their summer weather and we wish her safe journeys.

If you never stay for coffee after church, you don’t know what you’re missing, for it’s a great time to visit friends as well as welcome newcomers. There is a sign up sheet on the notice board (as you enter the hall on the left) and we invite you to sign it and help prepare the coffee and tea. It isn’t difficult and there are always others to show what needs doing. Home made cookies are always appreciated, but certainly not essential, as Bev Andrews ensures that supplies are always on hand.

A sub-committee of the Board of Managers has been formed to liaison with the Day Care which, as you know, has operated in Trinity since July of last year. This committee consists of Bev Andrews, Jeanne Spinelli, Roberta Adlam and Joy Gartshore. It is hoped that this ongoing liaison will reduce tensions which arise. The Simply Fun Day Care is owned by Brenda Irving, who also operates a day care from her home, so Courtney Vanston, a highly qualified Child and Youth councillor and Special Needs advocate, is left in charge of our facility. Although the day care started out to be just that, word soon got out that Courtney was a qualified and gifted worker with special needs children. As a result, while there are currently 53 children in care in Trinity, the vast majority are dysfunctional, and only two are living with both parents

! Poverty is but one problem and stress on parents trying to cope with a special needs child, grandparents trying and failing to raise children, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and a great deal of verbal abuse, are all thrown into the mix. Children often arrive with no lunch, poorly clothed and traumatized. One single dad has three children, two of whom are special needs! He works, but cannot earn enough for their needs and, for some unknown reason, single dads don’t receive the same help as do single moms. Although too proud to accept clothing for himself, he is forced to take it for his children.

Many of these children don't trust anyone and, because of severe trauma, it is well nigh impossible to get some of them, even the older ones, potty trained. The day care buys some clothing, but when a child wears it home, it is never returned. Through all this, the few children who are not special needs are amazingly nurturing with the troubled ones, often hugging them and playing games to distract them. Some counselling is available from the Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health which, in fact, pays some of Courtney's wages. Dealing with these children all week would be difficult, but nearly all of the staff take one or two children home for the weekend to give them special care and allow overstressed parents a break. Although we don't see their day to day activity, you just have to know that great things are happening in our building and thanks to the very special care that is provided, some of these children will no doubt turn into functioning adults some day.

If this has touched you and you feel led to helping in some small way, here are some ideas: knit sox, hats or slippers and gather used children's clothing (size 3-12) - underpants, pants, sweat tops, rain boots. They constantly run out of crayons and paper to draw on, because the little ones stuff them into their pockets. Little stuffed animals can be a comfort to a child as well. A blue bin will be left in the vestibule on weekends for any donations you can provide from the list above. We know that at Christmastime, donations for worthy causes are called for regularly but this is just for clean used clothing you might have to spare. And most importantly, remember them in your prayers and if you hear some sobbing, know that they are well cared for in the day care and receive love that they most often don't get anywhere else. These kids are part of the future, and without this special care, their future would indeed be bleak.

Christmas is a bleak time for most people in our area, but the day care buys each child a Christmas gift which will be handed out at their concert planned for our Sanctuary on Wednesday, December 8th at 5:30 pm. If you come, be advised that theft does occur at this time of year in our area after dark, so don't leave valuables exposed in your car. Smash and grab people are out there, frantic to get extra things for Christmas.

And give thanks for your blessings, for they are many!

This, from Peter Boldt:

A Jewish father was concerned about his son who was a year away from his Bar Mitzvah, but sorely lacking in knowledge about his Jewish faith. To remedy this, he sent his son to Israel to experience his heritage and nearly a year later, the young man returned and embraced his father.

“Thank you father, for sending me to the land of our Fathers,” he said. “However I confess that while in Israel, I became a Christian.”

“What have I done,” cried his father and so, in the tradition of the patriarchs, he went to his best friend and sought his advice.

“It is amazing you should come to me,” stated his friend. “I, too sent my son to Israel and he also returned a Christian.”

And so, in the tradition of the patriarchs, they went to the Rabbi.

“It is amazing you should come to me,” he replied. But I, too sent my son to Israel and he returned a Christian. What is happening to our sons? Brothers,” he volunteered, “we must take this matter before God.”

And so, with faces raised in supplication, they poured out their hearts to the Almighty.

As they prayed and began to wail, the clouds above parted and a mighty voice stated “Amazing that you should come to Me, for I too sent My Son to Israel.”

Trinity’s Financial Update (Courtesy Linda Isaak)

	Jan – Nov 2010	Jan – Nov 2009
Offerings	\$71,600	\$84,090
Other income	\$49,025	\$32,662
Total income	\$120,625	\$116,752
Expenses	\$112,836	\$125,826
Net income	<u>\$7,789</u>	<u>-\$9,075</u>

From Here and Nowhere

If you missed getting a Thanksgiving newsletter, you are in good company for I missed it too. So here is a double dose!

As most of you know, we took off in September for a once in a lifetime Mediterranean cruise, and I'm here to tell you that once is all I could survive! I kind of expected to be lying about the pool, watching the scenery go by whilst being regularly supplied with cool refreshing drinks. That isn't how it worked. With the exception of one day at sea (and I spent that day sleeping), the ship moved about at night and I was expected (by you know who) to move about all day.

Walking has never been my favourite pastime, whereas Bob can slap on great hulking shoes and walk 'til he runs out of daylight, and not notice he has had any exercise. At the end of each fascinating day (and each truly was), I would ease my broken body into the bath and check to see if I had any feet left. After ten days of this, I anticipated being a foot shorter, having worn that off climbing mountains or searching for a good place to go to the bathroom (like a large bush), for at times the loos were not exactly salubrious.

We just barely survived the cab ride in Rome; the drivers there are totally nuts! Ours rushed up to us, yelling like a maniac, threw our bags into his truck, us into the cab (at least it wasn't the other way around), and began driving as though he had a death wish. He yelled the whole hour, often at us; at every other driver; and into his cell phone at some poor critter, all the while smoking a cigarette, and alternating between slamming on the brakes and flooring the gas pedal. At no time did he ever seem to use an available lane, seeming to prefer creating one on his own, and only in passing was his hand on the steering wheel. Oh, by the way, it was a standard shift and generally he was waving his shifting arm about in the air, or just pointing out the scene of his last accident, I'm not sure which. His English was limited, mostly confined to "long way, more money."

At the end of that trip which took an eternity, I was so carsick that I had pretty much lost any interest in surviving.

Travelling in the area where Paul spent so much of his time was

really interesting. Ephesus was an enormous city built by the Greeks and famed for its Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Under Rome, it became the second largest city in the world and its main streets and communal toilets were flushed by running water. We walked through the 25,000 seat amphitheatre where Paul was prevented from preaching by his followers (Acts 19:30). We were told that John had written his Gospel nearby and shown ruins of a house where they said he looked after Christ's mother - as Christ had asked (John 19:26). You can do what you like with this house story; to me it simply wasn't believable, as travel in those days wasn't easy.

Ephesus fell because of an earthquake in 614 AD and is still in the process of being reconstructed, stone by stone.

We were likely very close to Patmos but didn't see it. It's only about 13 square miles and not really close to any place of note, so one assumes that John was free to move about his island prison as he wrote *Revelation* and died a natural death - the only disciple to have done so.

We were also on the island of Malta where Paul had been shipwrecked, and walked into the catacombs where he walked. These aren't natural phenomena, but dug out of the soft rock by people burying their dead. There they dug a hole just large enough to stuff the body in, covered it with a large stone and had a celebration, which included wine. After a suitable time had passed and the corpse had just become bones, they took the lid off, shifted the bones into a smaller hole, reused the large hole, put the lid back on, and had another party!

It seems that around the Mediterranean, people spend a good part of their lives having parties to celebrate whatever, consuming vast quantities of wine in the process. They produce a lot of it, but mostly drink it before it gets to market. I tried some ouzo, which tastes like licorice and is so potent that two sips was probably one too many. Everywhere we went, we were presented with small portions of food from that region; some quite good; others not so great. But it was fun to try it all, and it was necessary to eat in order to survive the ouzo.

We saw cork trees growing, and were taken into a shop selling clothing made of cork. This can be washed by hand, but not with soap; it

wears well and is very soft and pliable and feels a lot like chamois. It is also so expensive they didn't put a price tag on it. If you had to ask, you couldn't afford it and no, I didn't bring you one.

No matter who we spoke to on the ship, all had heard of Victoria, or had been here, and said that it was the most beautiful city on earth. That blew us away, because there are lots of stunning places in this great world of ours and, while I always thought Victoria was lovely, I hadn't appreciated it through other peoples' eyes. How blessed we are to live in this land of Canada, and while I would never be so bold as to say that our city is the most beautiful, I do know that our country is unique, our size is vast and our privileges are countless. The thrill of getting home is worth going away for, and I thank God that He has allowed me to live here. But most of all, I thank Him daily for the gift of His Son and the freedom to worship Him without threat of violence or death. That is not the case in many countries.

As we celebrate His birth again this year, take a few moments to give humble thanks. - Joy