

# Shelburne Primrose Pastoral Charge Christmas Newsletter 2020



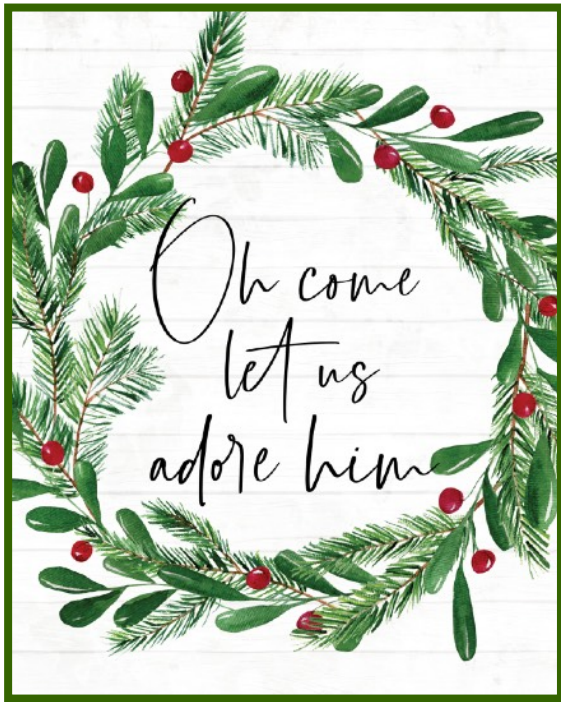
GREETINGS THIS LAST WEEK OF THE ADVENT SEASON

Welcome to the celebratory  
Christmas Season

And no, Christmas will not be the same this year.  
But that does not mean that there is any less reason to hold forth  
hope, peace, love and joy.

For these are gifts we may offer and gifts we may receive.  
They are divine gifts, and as such, are as perennial as the season.





### Greetings from Gail Brown, Clerk of Council, Primrose United Church

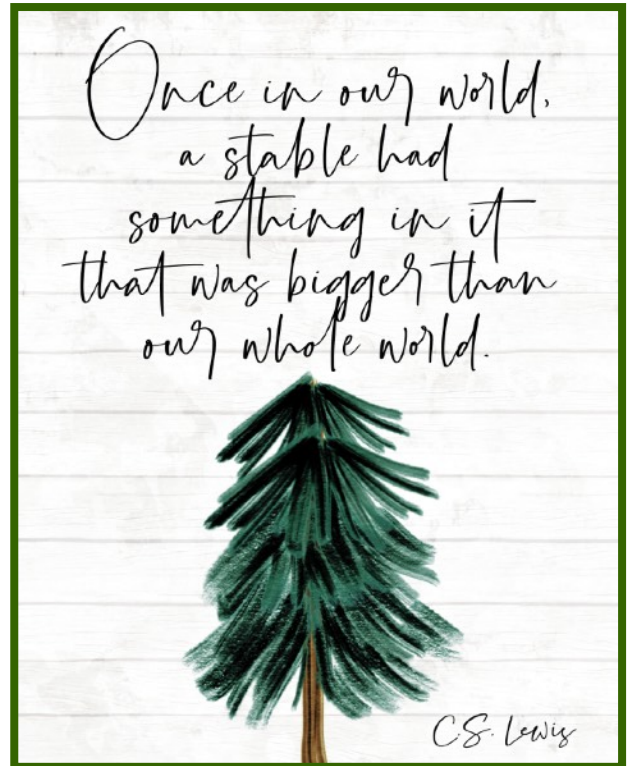
Christmas brings us warm thoughts of family, friends and neighbours, of hot chocolate by the fireside, caroling and glowing candles, our favourite foods and Christmas goodies – what a wonderful time of year! This year our traditions will take on a new look. There will be different ways to celebrate, different ways to enjoy all the season has to offer. Change is always hard but 2020 has taught us that sometimes it is necessary, and that change is not all bad. There will be new traditions started, and we will have more time to relax and appreciate all we have around us.

This coming year will bring more change. We will say “thank you” and “good bye” to Candice, after all she has done for us, and wish her all the best in her future endeavours. We will look forward to working closely together and trying new forms of worship as we enter 2021. Our search committee will surge forward in their efforts of finding us new leadership. Our care groups will keep us together while we need to stay apart. I look to the past year with a smile and sigh, and look to

the new year with hope and anticipation—all is good.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas, and a happy and safe New Year.

Gail



### Greetings from Ann McAlpine, Clerk of Council, Trinity United Church

‘Tis the season to be jolly’, so the secular song sings. But for Christians it should be: ‘Tis the season to be joyful’ and I suggest we sing it this way throughout the year and throughout our lives. This Christmas season is entirely different for all. As a church building we remain closed, but our hearts are open to the hope, the joy, the peace and the love all around us. We will be joyful whether or not we are open or closed. You’ve demonstrated your hope for and love of our church by maintaining your tithes and offerings. We will not be afraid but together turn our gaze in hopeful anticipation - with peace in our hearts - to what might lie ahead of us. Our church truly reflects the

collective hearts of our congregation and the many caring people within it. I started making a list of our accomplishments in 2020, and I couldn't believe it when 2 pages stared back as a reminder. And please note we were closed for most of it! Thank you Trinity!!

Sadly, at the end of this month, Rev. Dr. Candice Bist says goodbye to leading our congregations after nurturing and nourishing our spirits for 5 years! Please bless both Candice and Bruce with your prayers. Candice looks forward to a well needed rest but will remain nearby to help. Bruce will continue to tinkle the ivories and work with the choir via MP3 voice recording technology, and be ready to lead us musically when we reopen. Thank you Candice for your teachings and spiritual guidance. I know all of you will join me in extending to Candice your heartfelt thanks, for hope, lots of joy, peace and love shared in our precious time together.

Take care everyone, keep safe and always, love one another, with thanks and many Christmas blessings,

Ann McAlpine



If you want to bring  
happiness to the whole  
world, go home and  
love your family.  
-Mother Teresa



## Prayer for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Loving God, as we approach the day of Christ's birth help us to throw wide the doors of our hearts in preparation. Help us to sense the importance of what happened so long ago when Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel, to remember the words of the angels and the prophets and the teachers of old, and to celebrate all the promises that you made through them. Help us to take firm hold of the meaning of all these things and to know in the depths of our being that even now you are seeking to work in us and through us to fulfill the promises you have made.

Holy One, be the light in the darkness.

As we have lit the candle of hope,  
we pray for those who feel hopeless . . .

As we have lit the candle of peace, we pray for  
all victims of violence . . .

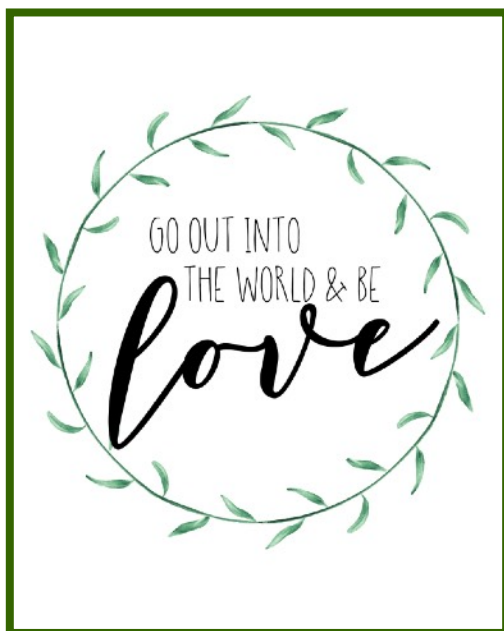
As we have lit the candle of joy,  
we pray for those whose hearts are weighed  
down by sorrow . . .

As we have lit the candle of love,  
we pray for those who do not feel loved, for  
those who struggle to love others . . .

Holy One, be the light in our darkness this day,  
that we might reflect your light into the dark  
corners of our world.

And this particular year, hold all those who  
have suffered the loss of one of their own these  
last days, hold them and grant them grace and  
comfort even in the midst of tears.....

At the centre of the Christmas story is our very  
own Jesus. He taught us so many things. May  
we draw strength from his teachings this  
season, and learn anew, how to embody the  
spirit of Christ, which is compassion, in all we  
say and do. Amen.



## Considering 2020 and 2021

As frightening places go, we would have to admit that Mary found herself in a terrifying one, balancing precariously on the edge of a great uncertainty. She was, by all accounts on the outside looking in, a rather unlikely choice for a heroine. But God's ways are always a surprise, a mystery. It is not our job to know the way forward. It is our job to invite the divine into our lives, as Mary did, to open our hearts

in love, and to sing, as the angels did - peace on earth and goodwill to all people.

Though our church buildings have, for the most part, been closed since the middle of last March, much has been going on in our church community and beyond. We are able to see that the church is more than a physical building, or a minister, or a Sunday service. These are all important, of course, but only so that we can share them with others.

As our scriptures tell us, God is present wherever two or three are gathering together in good company with good intentions.

Still, a lot happened in 2020, even with the doors closed. Have a look!

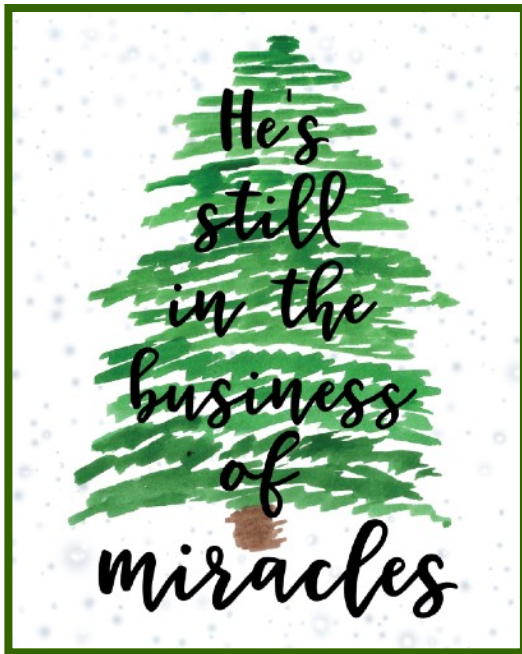




## What Happened in 2020

### Pastoral Charge

- \* Updated all financial matters to electronic operations
- \* Bookkeeping converted and maintained digitally by Gord Gallagher
- \* Adapted changes in staff to volunteers during COVID, post office, paying bills, filing, tracking all monies, gifts, grants etc.
- \* Applied and received TEWS, Temporary Emergency Wage subsidy, and CEWS Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy
- \* Renewed our formal partnerships with First Line for Syria and Partera International
- \* Initiated a new partnership with Muslims of Dufferin and Faith Immigration who will be working to sponsor up to 15 refugee families
- \* Offered parenting workshops, yoga classes, and meditation gatherings during the spring and summer to the community
- \* Paid for families to attend parenting classes in the summer and fall
- \* Supplied food cards, gas cards and telephone cards to those in the community in need as well as emergency benevolent funds distributed
- \* Provided crisis care/ministry of introduction to community resources
- \* Continued to work on our visioning for both churches
- \* Contributed to the Shelburne Hamper Project with items, finances, manpower, and use of our Trinity space in December
- \* Offered a Lenten study, both in person, and on line with Seven Sacred Pauses, the practice of dividing the day into times of praise and gratitude.
- \* Offered a study both in person and on zoom of Practicing Compassion by Frank Rodgers
- \* Established connections for all social programs offered in Dufferin, and following cancelation of on site gathering, are building this on the website for public use
- \* Similarly, building a resource for understanding the anti-racism movement, palliative care and spiritual practices to be fully launched in January to be shared in our immediate community and beyond
- \* Commissioned and launched a professional, interactive website
- \* Our email correspondence is opened by between 85 - 100 homes weekly
- \* The website has had 2100 unique viewers since its launch in early summer, and they have viewed just over 8,000 pages
- \* Designed, delivered and posted 40 podcasts since the churches closed, analytics suggest there are between 100 - 150 listeners a week, as well as 900 downloads on Apple and Spotify since it began.
- \* Mastered the tricky business of recording the choir over technology - thank you Maestro Bruce and the SPPC for all your efforts - more to come in 2021



- \* Great effort expended creating, visioning, writing the church hub profile for the Pastoral Charge/Search Committee
- \* Search Committee meeting regularly to review candidates for new leadership in 2021 - not an easy task during a pandemic
- \* Re-opening committees formed in both churches, monitoring protocol updates
- \* Continued to develop care groups in both churches
- \* Updated and purchased office computer phone system, furniture for pastoral charge office
- \* Painted both offices and initiated refurbishing them with grant monies, cleared out office cupboards, files, and stored legal documents
- \* Created and prepared lay leadership for 2021 until new minister is in place
- \* Budget drafted for pastoral charge for 2021
- \* Council met four times, to meet again in December to plan budget for 2021

### Primrose United Church

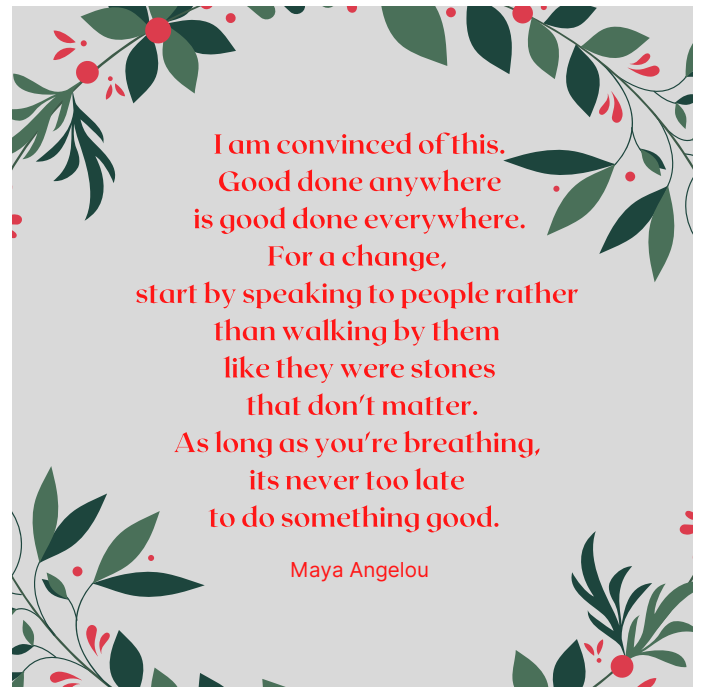
- \* Held smaller services in congregants' homes from January through to mid March

- \* Offered several outdoor services in the summer when weather permitted and indoor services with protocols in place
- \* Offered special, palliative care to Loretta Foster
- \* Pastoral Care leaders maintained regular connections to 40 families throughout COVID.
- \* Delivered Mother's Day flowers to our community
- \* cookies for care group members living on their own
- \* Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> had a social distanced fall plant sale (Shirley, Sharon, Bev and Gail)
- \* Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> had a Vintage/ Antique Sale (Gwynn, Faye, Phyllis R.) with left leftover knitted lap blankets donated to nursing homes
- \* Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> hosted a Christmas Market (Gwynn, Faye, Phyllis R.) with donation to food bank and leftover items donated to new mothers (through Shelley D.)
- \* Meditation Garden has been maintained and cared for throughout the spring, summer and fall for the community's pleasure (Bev P.)



## Trinity United Church

- \* Finished up the furnishing of the YBH room with new carpet, table, and window blinds
- \* Cleaned and repaired flooded bathroom downstairs
- \* Replaced minister and office windows to bring them up to environmental standards
- \* Ordered new front doors on Owen Sound street entrances to bring them up to environmental standards
- \* Did a full environmental audit of the building, commissioned and received a complete working drawing of the church footprint
- \* Replaced old boilers with new energy efficient ones
- \* Organized shared office space with the Catholic Church for their bookkeeping practises
- \* Welcomed Shelburne Towne Fitness to teach classes in our spacious basement this fall
- \* Offered yoga and spiritual meditation classes in the YBH Room in November and December through Shelburne Town Fitness who have been so careful with pandemic protocols
- \* Repaired and upgraded elevator to meet compliance standards
- \* Drafted a new Structure for Trinity Church Council, (approval Spring 2021)
- \* Pastoral Care leaders reached out and maintained regular connections to 80 families throughout COVID.
- \* Co-ordinated with the Shelburne Hamper Project and Shelburne Family Chiropractic to offer space for toys and shoes to be organized and collected in our sanctuary and basement for the Hamper project
- \* Hired new custodian
- \* Council met 10 times



## Some Important Year End Reports

### Search Committee Chair, Karin Klouman

Our committee has been very hard at work ; meeting every 2<sup>nd</sup> week for most of the year - and then this fall we renewed our efforts further and started having weekly meetings. We have carefully reviewed well over 260 profiles of potential candidates and have sent out personal invitations for further discussion with approximately 60 of these . As a result of further correspondence back and forth (as well as phone-calls) we eventually have ended up doing a handful of interviews.

Currently we are talking to two rather promising candidates and we are starting the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of interviews with them both in the first week of January. The ongoing search for a new minister has been an interesting process, at times rather challenging, but also immensely rewarding. We look towards the future with prayerful optimism and give much thanks for the support and encouragement we have received.

Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas season,  
Karin Klouman

**Care Group Co-Ordinator**  
**LeeAnn McKenna (Primrose)**

The creation of care groups ('flocks') for our churches was truly inspired. Amongst the five of us - Gail Brown, Gwynn McGhee, Sabine Rohner-Tensee, and myself - we are tending about 40 households, including our own. From the beginning, a few said, thanks-but-no-thanks—but that's OK; our prayers still include their names. For many of us, the only time we would see one another has been in church on a Sunday morning, where we chat over superb coffee and exquisite treats. But, for some of us, with some of our 'sheep', we are finding ourselves in conversations we never imagined, conversations that cross borderlands of age and history.

Two of our shepherds are new arrivals—by comparison to those whose time here spans generations, who skied to one-room school houses, who tell stories that bring the landscapes around us to life, whose ancestors built our little church—depths not usually plumbed during coffee hour. We relay news to Candice when particular care and prayer are warranted; we talk by phone and most of us have lambs whom we have been able to visit in person, on the porch, in the garden while delivering fun things or flowers, or goodies, as well as love and prayers.

Wishing all of you a blessed Advent and Christmas. God comes down at Christmas wherever we are. Love to all.

Rev. LeeAnn McKenna



**Note from Care Group Co-Ordinator**  
**Geraldine Sherritt (Trinity)**

Dear Friends,

First of all, I would like to thank this group of caring people who belong to the Pastoral Care Committee. Jamie and Ann McAlpine, Shelley Doney and Paul Sutcliff, Linda Moore, Karen and Joe Bojin, Faye and Grant Ferguson, Ellen Montgomery Smith, Ruth Cruikshank, Mary and Glen Laverty, Marion Webb, Susan and Paul Boon, and Darlene Morrow.

Our purpose is to phone, visit, perhaps have a cup of tea, as well as to let them know of things that may be going on in the church or community. The most recent thing we did was to prepare jars and newsletters for Advent and deliver them to their homes. This shows that although the church may be closed there are things going on behind the scene. This is just one committee that is under the church's umbrella.



We would like to say a special "THANK YOU" to Rev. Dr. Candice", who at the end of this month is going to retire. We wish her well and know in the summer we will find her in her garden.

Blessings to all and be safe! Geraldine Sherritt



### **Message From Pastoral Charge and Trinity Treasurer, Jamie McAlpine**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

A hearty thank you to all members and adherents in our congregations for your offerings this year. Your generous and consistent support has enabled us to meet our budget requirements and carry on in a positive and productive way entering 2021. I want to specifically thank Michael Hofman, Candice and the Visioning committee for securing a \$30,000 grant from the "Faithful Footprints and the Common Good" organization that is associated with the United Church of Canada for Trinity's new boilers. I would also mention that we have received about \$9000 from the Canadian Government CEWS program (CRA) for the pastoral charge.

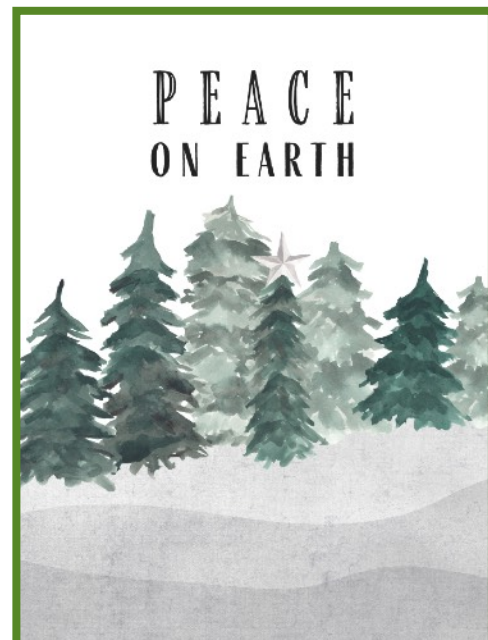
Being fiscally prudent, we will monitor our financial situation as we hopefully re-open in the Spring and continue to seek new ministerial leadership. We look forward to

sharing a draft budget and the financial details when we can hold our Annual Meeting.

At Trinity, we're aiming for total offerings of \$80,700 once again. Although this is an ambitious amount I feel together we can achieve this lofty goal. This amount will help us continue our strong commitment to our church and the community we serve. We give because the presence of the church is important and we have been blessed with so much. Since taking over this position, I have been blessed with great help from Ann, and especially Gord Gallaughier who has freely and expertly looked after the books and kept everything running smoothly.

I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas, a safe and peaceful holiday and even if your associations are at a distance this season, you will find peace in your heart and know that this challenging time will soon be over. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to Trinity and the Shelburne Primrose Pastoral Charge.

Blessing to you all, Jamie McAlpine



## Special Report from Trinity's Trustee Chair, Wendy Crewson

The Trustees, on behalf of Trinity United Church, were pleased to receive a generous gift from the Estate of Dorothy Ann Smith. The donation is divided into two sections, a bequest for \$10,000.00 and a portion of the Estate residue. The \$10,000 bequest was received on December 8, 2020 and will be deposited to the Memorial account. The remaining portion of approximately \$65,000.00 will be received in 2021 and will be invested by the Trustees for future visioning projects. Dorothy attended Trinity from 1995 to 2000. During this time, she sat on the Christian Education Committee, acted as Nursery Coordinator for four years and played an important role organizing our Autumnfest fundraisers. We are very grateful to Dorothy for remembering Trinity with such generosity and thoughtfulness. We look forward to recognizing Dorothy in an appropriate manner once the Church reopens.

Wendy Crewson



*A Christmas Prayer for Action*  
*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone, when  
the kings and princes are home, when  
the shepherds are back with the flocks,  
then the work of Christmas begins: To  
find the lost, to heal those broken in  
spirit, to feed the hungry, to release the  
oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to  
bring peace among all peoples, to make  
a little music with the heart. And to  
radiate the Light of Christ, every day,  
in every way, in all that we do and in  
all that we say. Then the work of  
Christmas begins.*

*—Howard Thurman*

## Special Report from Michael Hoffman, Trinity Property

Environmental Upgrades Full Steam Ahead!  
The church doors may be closed but the church environmental upgrades are ongoing and nearing completion. The old boilers have been replaced with state-of-the-art technology, and the drafty exterior entrance doors for the Sanctuary will be replaced with new insulated doors. We have experienced delays with the doors due to building permit and supplier issues, but they are expected to arrive and be installed in February. The Visioning Committee has submitted our follow up report to Faithful Footprints and we have received \$29,000 of the \$30,000 grant monies so far! The Visioning Committee wish to extend our utmost thanks to everyone that has supported this greening initiative and especially to those that have stepped up and contributed financially. These upgrades were long overdue, and without your

unwavering support, projects of this magnitude are very difficult to undertake.

### **Fran Braiden, Primrose Treasurer**

We, the congregation of Primrose United Church, want to thank everyone who supported us in our fundraising events this year and to those who have made special contributions in some way.

We look forward to a more "normal" next year and hopefully we can enjoy more fun and activities as we get back together.

Thank you and A Merry Christmas to All 🎄

**Note from Candice** - I just want to add to Fran's report that the three fundraising events that were put on by Primrose were beautifully executed, followed all the proper pandemic protocols and though perhaps their intent was to raise money - which they did - they also offered into the community lightness and joy. The Christmas Market raised \$1700 for the Shepherd's Cupboard, so grateful thanks to all who created it, and supported it. And I am happy to see that our Primrose treasurer, having entered her 8th decade, is in good health, we are all thankful for this special blessing.



### **Report from Mary Hawthorne, Western Ontario Waterways Presbytery Representative**

WOW continues its work with many meetings being held by Zoom during the past year. All Commissions are working hard to continue the work of The United Church. The Mission & Discipleship Commission, of which I am a member, reviewed and approved requests for grants totalling \$126,600 for Chaplaincy work, summer camps for children, resource centres and community ministry for the year 2021. These funds, used in our region, represent part of your M&S dollars. Thank you for making these grants possible.

The next regional meeting is planned for May 2021 likely in a Zoom format. Lots of resources are available on the United Church website as well as WOW region website. Check them out this winter.

Submitted by Mary Hawthorne

#### ***A Christmas Prayer for Christmas Eve***

*Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.*

*Amen.*

*-Robert Louis Stevenson*

# Our Plan Going Forward in 2021

As Karin Klouman has advised you in her search committee report, the search for new ministerial leadership is well underway, and has been in process for the year. Karin and her team are doing a thorough and thoughtful job seeking out a good match for both congregations, someone who will offer intelligent theological reflections and tender pastoral care, and at the same time be able to continue on the extensive visioning work both churches have undertaken. As you may well imagine, this is a challenging endeavour given the changing face of ministry, the diminishing number of seminary graduates, the number of ministers retiring, and the added complications due to the pandemic. In order that the search committee can continue to focus on their job, a nine month plan has been put in place to keep everything on an even keel until our churches open up physically again and/or you have new spiritual leadership in place. It is primarily lay led, with the addition of specific short term contracts and the possibility of visiting ministers in the future. It can both transition easily to new leadership, and/or be extended if need be. Here is an outline of this plan that has been approved by both councils individually and by the pastoral charge collectively.

**Administrative Work:** Ann McAlpine, Gail Brown, Mary Hawthorne, in co ordination with both the treasurers and of course the on going supervision of Ann Harbridge

**Financial Business:** Jamie McAlpine (Treasurer Trinity, Pastoral Charge), Fran Braiden (Treasurer Primrose), Gord Gallagher (digital book keeping and monthly reports, Trinity and Pastoral Charge)

**Trustees/Property Trinity/Primrose:** Will continue on as before, working closely with financial as well.

**On Going Pastoral Care:** Geraldine Sherritt (Trinity), LeeAnn McKenna (Primrose) oversee the individual care groups at each church, collectively looking after 120 families plus. They will be touching base every two months, able to distribute newsletters, congregational updates, and special gifts to keep in touch with those not using technology.

**Newsletter, Annual Report:** Linda Moore and Ann McAlpine will look after these in the new year, important tools for keeping everyone connected and informed outside of the website.

**Crisis Care:** A list of serving ministers in and associated with our church have agreed to be on stand by for funerals, weddings, counselling of various kinds. Ann, Gail, Geraldine and LeeAnn will have this list to work from.

**Sunday Worship/Spiritual Leadership:** Candice has assembled a list of suitable resources for Sunday morning, including more traditional streamed services as well as less traditional podcasts, link sources, films, magazine / podcast sources. She will be working with Sabine Rohner Tensee (Primrose) and Darlene Morrow (Trinity) so they can choose each week something suitable, both traditional and less traditional, for the congregation to consider. Please make every effort to keep tied in with them.

**Website/Social Media Presence:** Colin Simmons, who designed the website, has been hired to continue with all the weekly website postings, facebook, instagram (new), and email correspondence so you will continue to be informed all that is going on digitally. A template has been designed so that the information he needs each week will be sent to him on a regular basis from the various sources.

**Councils:** Councils will continue to meet when necessary. Trinity is proposing a simplified council for 2021. Gail will call council when necessary. \*\*\*Our zoom account is available to all council members, and in fact, all members of the church.

**Ministry and Personnel:** Ed Crewson and his team will continue on as before, though for the moment they are in a holding pattern.

**Visioning Groups:** will continue on their own and to meet when needed.

**Fundraising, Special Events:** Spearheaded by individuals as they feel called



## Message from Candice

I might as well admit to being good and weepy these last couple of weeks. I have been busy trying to put things in order for the new year - so many details. But somehow I keep thinking of all of you and really and truly how I will miss you all.

People think that the minister's job is to provide Sunday service, attend meetings, be there for hospital visits and pastoral care when needed. And each minister will have strengths and weaknesses in the various areas of administrative, teaching, care and so on. Some ministers will be liked by some and found wanting by others. And in this way, a minister's job is always an impossibility for it seems all we ever do is balance too many balls in the air, invariably dropping several throughout the day. At least that is what is seen on the outside.

I don't think that is really the minister's job at all. I think the minister's job is both simpler than that, and more important. The job of a minister is to stand in the middle of the spiritual chaos that is this world and hold their heart open and tender, without regret, or fear, or reproach. It is to hold steady when everything around seems to make no sense, when all the world shouts as loud as it can that God is no more than a fake imaginary friend and that Jesus Christ is not on the invitation list to the party. It is to say, as Martin Luther did, 'Here I stand.' And then to love those who are shouting, to minister to the hecklers, and to keep their eyes on the divine source of all goodness and love that is God, and never flinch. And in this way, they model all that is needed for those who wish to follow in the way of Jesus, the way of compassion, the way of love, grace and peace.

This is, of course, an impossibility.

But what helps make it seemingly possible, and encourages a minister in this strange pursuit, is the never ending kindnesses of their congregations, the moments of tender conversations, the knowledge of thoughtfulness extended to those within the church proper and to those in the larger community, and most especially the endless graces that are extended towards themselves. And in this, I have been much, much blessed during my time at Shelburne Primrose.

As I leave, I take all those blessed moments with me, dwelling as they do in my heart.

Wishing you, each and every one, a truly joyous Christmas season and all manner of wonders in the New Year.

Candice

"And all will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things will be well." Julian of Norwich



YOU'RE INVITED

December 24th  
Christmas Eve Service  
the story of the birth of Jesus as told in the book  
of Luke in scripture and song

Set aside some quiet time with your family, or friends, in person, on the phone, or on the computer, light a candle, and tune into our website anytime during the day or evening, or through the season.  
<https://www.shelburneprimrose.com>

W I S H I N G   Y O U   A



S H E L B U R N E   P R I M R O S E  
P A S T O R A L   C H A R G E

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