



THE COMMUNICATOR



MINISTERS EASTER REFLECTION

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.

John 20:1-3

Times of uncertainty and unwelcome change, particularly when thrust upon you, leave you with little sense of control as circumstances continue to unfold in unexpected ways. In such times, it is common for folk to try to "get ahead of it." Folk will seek out times, places or strategies when it is reasonable to expect a pause or a break or a brief window in which it is likely that they can gain a little control back. Some folk go into work on a weekend when everything is closed so they have the time and space to catch up. Imagine the disappointment if, when doing this, you find somebody else already there, creating more work or problems in what was supposed to be your quiet, catch up space. Your last remnant of hope greets you tattered and torn and you wonder, "My God, when is this going to stop? What else can possibly go wrong? Will I ever get ahead of this?"

What a horrible feeling it must have been to arrive at the tomb, early in the morning, while it is still dark and to find the stone rolled away and Jesus' body gone. Mary Magdalene was the woman who anointed Jesus with expensive perfume, mingled with tears; while being criticized by the other disciples. Mary Magdalene was one of the women who accompanied Jesus to Golgotha; while Roman Soldiers and Insurrectionists mocked his suffering. Mary Magdalene was one of the women who hastily packed Jesus' body in spices and left him in a temporary grave, rushed due to time and circumstance. This Mary finally finds a time, a window of opportunity, to be with Jesus and properly and with dignity prepare him for the grave. She had hoped to find time alone and quiet, a time sacred and set apart when nobody else would be there, when no other expectations or pressures would interrupt the final completion of this most sacred task. This is how she would get ahead of everything that had taken place, outside of her control and had robbed her of peace. Instead, the stone is rolled away and Jesus is gone. Surely, this series of trials must end.

In 1858, Irish painter and songwriter, Samuel Lover, noted in his Songs and Ballads of 1839: There is a beautiful saying amongst the Irish peasantry to inspire hope under adverse circumstances: 'Remember,' they say, 'that the darkest hour of all, is the hour before day.'

"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb."

"They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

This was Mary's darkest hour.

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Trinity United Church, Smiths Falls

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(Continued from Page 1) Sunday, 15 March 2020, was our last regular worship service prior to a long period of uncertainty and change. Up until then, we were routinely thrilled and energized by the promise of new possibilities. Programs that held promise, were relevant to the community and attracting new folk to our fellowship, ceased. We also lost a significant number of long term supporters and leaders. Discouragement replaced the hope that once filled some of our most energetic folk. The road to recovery was much longer than the few days it took to shut almost everything down. New ways of working were not as satisfactory as those we were forced to leave behind. We were left weakened. Finances became a preoccupation. Then the ceiling fell. We do not have to reach very far into our own feelings to understand the discouragement and disorientation that Mary Magdalene must have felt.

“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.”

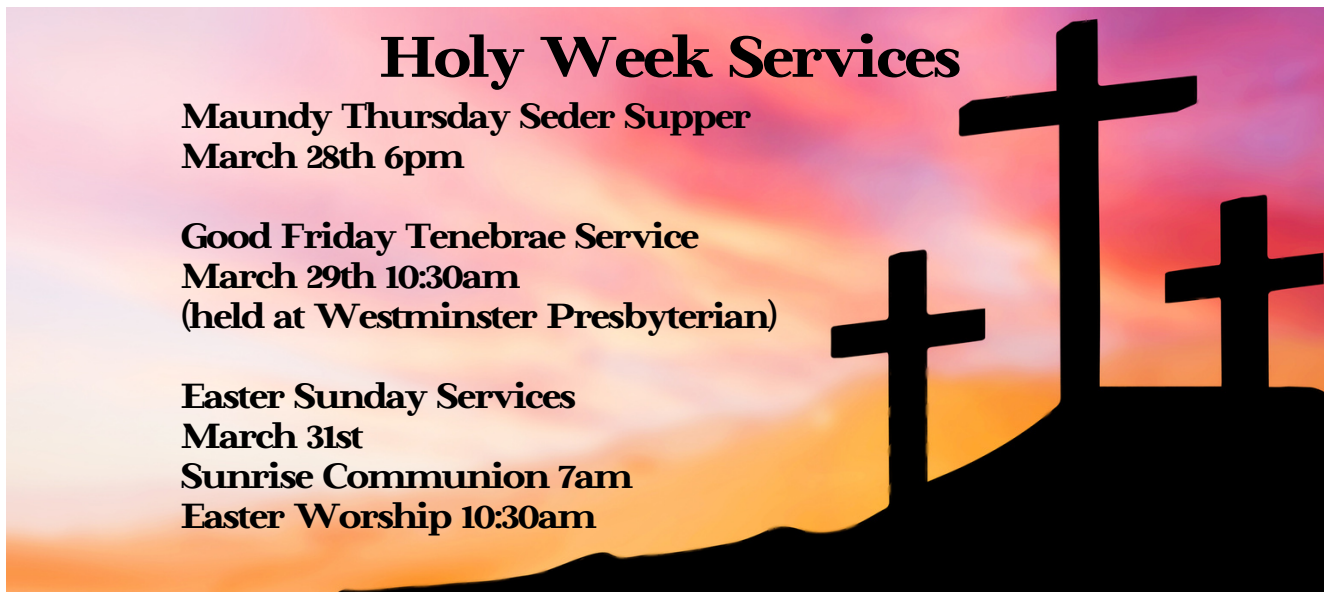
This was Mary’s darkest hour. This Easter, we stand with her. This is how that first Easter started. It is not how it ended. ‘Remember that the darkest hour of all, is the hour before day.’

The hope expressed in this ancient Gaelic proverb is consistent with the hope of resurrection that Mary Magdalene would soon discover. This realized hope, this promise fulfilled, this unimaginably bright, new day would dawn with a light unquenchable. It would spread to Peter, John, the remaining members of the Eleven, Mary mother of James, Salome, Cleopas, and his companion on the road to Emmaus. It would be proclaimed at Pentecost. It would seize a Pharisee named Saul and ultimately throw light to the ends of the earth.

The Congregational Faith Story / Profile Writing Team is completing their work. We pray that soon a new, fresh wind will blow and will bring with it much hope and joy and life. This is the promise of Easter.

Just as surely as we have tasted something of Mary Magdalene's despair in that dark hour before the first Easter dawn, we hold the hope of feasting in that great banquet of hope and life that is Resurrection’s promise.

Many Blessings, Reverend Christopher



Holy Week Services

Maundy Thursday Seder Supper
March 28th 6pm

Good Friday Tenebrae Service
March 29th 10:30am
(held at Westminster Presbyterian)

Easter Sunday Services
March 31st
Sunrise Communion 7am
Easter Worship 10:30am

REPORT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The transition from conducting services in the Fellowship Hall back to the Sanctuary, from a technology stand point, required significant expertise. Our goal is to be more open and accessible which means Trinity members must be able to see and hear clearly both in the Sanctuary and at home, either online or on Cogeco. Upgrades to speakers, microphone ports, wiring and wireless technology have all been critical to achieving our goal.

A new computer has been purchased to enhance the visual elements of worship. Our sincere thanks go out to Andrew Livingston, Bill Dickson and Cory Agnew for their time, expertise and patience.

If you cannot worship us in person on a Sunday, please watch the service on YouTube www.youtube.com/@TrinityUnitedChurch-ck9ce, or on Cogeco.

PROPERTY AND TRUSTEES REPORT

Property Team

Sanctuary Restoration: By the time you receive this newsletter the restoration of the sanctuary will have been completed, except for several of the lighting fixtures that need repair. ServiceMaster is waiting for the stained glass to arrive. The total cost of the restoration is \$201,339.10 (including taxes) and has been paid. You will find that some pews have been removed. The purpose is to improve seating accessibility, to provide a quiet reading area/ gathering space and to potentially present important church historical artifacts and memorabilia. ServiceMaster, at their expense, prepared and painted the hallway and stair-well leading from the sanctuary to the North Elmsley St. fire exit. The UCW hosted a lunch on February 9, 2024 to thank the men of ServiceMaster for their tireless work, and professionalism throughout this seven (7) month odyssey. The sanctuary has truly been beautifully restored.

United Church of Canada – Faithful Footprints Energy Reduction Grant Program: This project has also been completed. As a reminder, the program works like this – we invested \$10,000 towards energy reduction projects and the United Church will provide a grant of \$20,000. The property team selected three projects:

- installing LED lighting throughout the church;
- improving insulation in the two church towers, on the sanctuary ceiling and on the left side and behind the choir loft;
- replacing the main entrance doors.

One of the conditions of the grant program is that Trinity fronted the cost of the upgrades and then submits the application and the invoices for re-imbursement. The total cost of the three (3) projects is \$30,966.51 (including taxes). The total cost has been paid. So, the cost to Trinity for the upgrades is \$10,966.51. The application for the grant (\$20,000) will be submitted to the “grant” administrator as quickly as possible.

Church Main Entrance Foyer: While not part of the two (2) preceding projects, the property team took advantage of ServiceMaster’s presence to repair and paint the walls and ceiling in the Church’s Main Entrance and mezzanine. This work has also been completed at a cost of \$3,255.54 including taxes.

In 2024 - the three projects listed above (Sanctuary Restoration, Energy Reduction Projects and the Painting of the Main Entrance Foyer) were the main projects for 2024.

Looking at the remainder of 2024 and into 2025 - Along with the task of maintaining the church in good repair, the property team’s top project will be the installation of two (2) accessibility ramps from the Market (gym) Street entrance into to the gymnasium. One ramp will be from Market St into the building and the other ramp will be from the entrance down into the gym. The project will take some time to complete as each ramp requires professional design, Town of Smiths Falls approval, and construction. It is anticipated that the project will not be completed until sometime in 2025.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sale of the Bell Avenue Property: In the Christmas 2023 Communicator, Trustees reported that there remained two important details to be completed before we can close the “books” on the Sale of the Bell Avenue Property:

- 10% of the proceeds of the sale needed to be remitted to the United Church of Canada (General Council Office) to support United Church of Canada Indigenous Ministries. The transfer of funds (\$105,000) was made in early December 2023; and
- The remaining 90% of the proceeds is retained by Trinity. A sustainable “Ministry (Financial) Plan” for the use of the remaining proceeds requires Regional Council approval. The plan to be submitted to the Regional Council will entail a mixture of short-term and long-term investments, within Trinity’s current “Funds-in-Trust” investment portfolio in which the “proceeds from the sale” are included. The investment portfolio is held at BMO Nesbitt-Burns (Perth). As of March 15, 2024, the value of the “Funds-in-Trust” investments is estimated to be (\$934,000). The revenue generated by these investments will be used to support the immediate and long-term needs of the church. The approval process for the use of the funds is contained in Trinity’s Legacy Gift Program (2015) Policy and Procedures document.

Submitted by Bob Swam, Property Team and Board of Trustees



Stewardship & Finance Team

The 2024 Budget presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting was a very conservative estimate of our Revenue and we fully expect that the congregation will meet the challenge so we can have our Revenue exceed our projected Expenses in 2024.

In 2023, the Church Council had to draw from “funds-in-trust” to finance the cost of the Sanctuary Restoration project, the “Up-front costs for Faithful Footprints Energy Reduction Grant as well as provide funds for the cash shortfall in the General Fund (Operating) Budget.

In 2024 funds again will be needed from Funds-in-Trust to complete those projects as well as support the General Fund (Operating) Budget should a cash-flow shortage arise. The cost of living continues to rise. What will 2025 and beyond bring? So, it becomes even more important, for financial sustainability, that the congregation maintain a level of contribution that pays for all expenses. “Funds-in-Trust” earn interest while invested and any drawing down of funds means less interest earned to fund operations and capital projects.

Once again it would be helpful for everyone to consider using the PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) method to make your monthly donations. Application forms are available at the back of the Sanctuary by the Offering plate. If you are currently donating by PAR, please give your prayerful consideration to increasing your monthly donation, especially if you have not done so since signing up some time ago. Alternatively, as a PAR contributor you can also make donations in addition to your monthly commitment by using an envelope in the Offering plate. Thank you for your consideration. We have some upcoming events which will generate some revenue for the life and work of Trinity:

1. ANNUAL GERANIUM SALE coming soon. Pre-Orders will be taken in April and May while quantities last. Pick-up date for the pre-ordered geraniums is scheduled for SATURDAY, MAY 25. Details will follow.

2. THE STARDUST OF A SONG with PETE WOODS QUARTET including Campbell Woods. Think of the song-writing greats of Hoagy Carmichael, Willie Nelson and Duke Ellington as the inspirations for this concert offering a gently swinging mix of genres between classic jazz and country. SATURDAY, APRIL 27th– TICKETS: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. Available at Trinity United Church secretary@trinityunitedsf.ca or on Sundays. Also available on www.eventbrite.ca

3. ANNUAL COMPOST SALE – SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2024, 9:00 – 4:00 and SATURDAY & MONDAY, (NOT SUNDAY) MAY 18th & 20th, 9:00 – 4:00 at the REAL DEAL STORE parking lot, 85 William St. Smiths Falls. The bags will be 25L for the remarkable price of \$10 each! If you have any bags from last year, bring them along and we will refill them. Volunteers will be needed to bag the compost during the week of May 6th. Contact Jan Montgomery at jmontgomery827@gmail.com or 613-812-1881. Bring shovel, gloves and wear old clothes and shoes/boots – the stuff is really ripe but your gardens will love it!

4. If you have some fundraising ideas and would like to undertake a project, please let us hear from you. Contact any of the team members listed.

At this Easter time, let us be mindful of the generosity God has bestowed on us. Easter Blessings from Janine Hanna, Bob Swan, Joanne Hunter, Mike Murphy, Jan Montgomery

Janine Hannah - Trinity's New Treasurer

Janine has been a member of Trinity United Church for over four years. Serving as treasurer for the UCW for the past 3 years, she has recently accepted the role of treasurer for Trinity United church. Her love for finance has led her to an accounting career at P3Panels and UESC where she oversees the daily financial duties. When not crunching numbers, you can find her spending time with her pug, children, and grandchild.

With unwavering commitment to her faith Janine hopes in taking on this responsibility to inspire and uplift those around her.



OUTREACH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

“There you will see him. Just as he told you.” (Mark 6:7)

These words were spoken to the women at the tomb when they were unable to find the body of their friend, Jesus. They were meant to reassure and comfort them in their state of fear and panic. For they had been left behind and had no understanding of resurrection or life after death yet. These words were given with clarity and confidence. No guile or insincerity. A simple direction and reminder. Go to Galilee and you will find Jesus, just like he promised.

This scenario seems to be so far from our current social reality of misinformation, half-truths, and angry insinuations. Every day, it seems, we have to be on our guard when opening our emails, responding to texts and answering phone calls so we do not unwittingly give personal and financial information to scammers. How would we respond to the words of this stranger at the tomb? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to take someone at their word? To hear this statement and believe. To trust that Jesus is in Galilee waiting for us. Just as he told us.

This Easter season members of the Outreach and Social Justice team continue to look for ways we can go and meet Jesus in Galilee. It is crucial that we also help others make that journey as well. In particular, we invite those who have been left behind in the past like the women at the tomb. Promising if you come with us the Galilean waits for all of us, just as he said.

Please mark the following dates on your calendar:

April 14, 2024

Farming Sunday

April 21, 2024

Earth Day / Camping Sunday

April 28, 2024

5th Anniversary of Affirm United

May 05, 2024

Red Dress Day (MMIW)

May 17, 2024

International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

June 02, 2024

Pride Sunday

June 21, 2024

National Indigenous People's Sunday

May you have a blessed and peaceful Easter season, Lorraine Ryan, Chair of Outreach and Social Justice



Outreach and Rainbow 101 celebrated PIE Day in Smiths Falls on March 14th. PIE stands for Public, Intentional, and Explicit. Those are the standards to which Trinity United Church holds herself and her welcome when we seek to live into being an affirming, welcoming, and inclusive people and community. On National Affirming PIE Day, we are reminded of this commitment to being Public, Intentional, and Explicit. This year, we focused on the Public part of PIE. Our theme was “PIE in the Public Square.”

Updates and Activities from the United Church Women

The beautiful Artwork in fellowship hall has now been put up on the wall and a donation plaque has been purchased to honour Arlene McKibbon's donation.

Our winter fundraisers were a big success, Wreath Sale (\$891), Holly Fair (\$3184) and Christmas Cookies (\$650). Please join us for "CRAFT AND CHAT" every second Wednesday, the next one is March 27th. Don't worry if you don't craft, drop in for a cup of tea and a social chat!

UCW Policies & Procedures Manual has been updated and ready for everyone to view.

Photo Memorial for Hugh Morrison is almost completed and hopefully will be up for viewing.

We have not one but two new stoves to help us enhance our kitchen skills and meals for fundraising and social time.

Kitchen Co-Ordinators put on a Soup and Sandwich Luncheon for the restoration workers as a thank you for a job well done!

Norma Wrightly, as Four Rivers President, performed the installation of the following Officers: Betty Lou Kempt - President, Becky DeGroot - Vice President, Treasurer- needed, Patty Agnew - Secretary.

We have joined Spiritual Leadership Team and Christian Community Team with our visits to Van Horne on the first Tuesday of each month at 2 pm.

We have a UCW Rep to keep the current events public on the program FYI on YourTV. We now have a UCW rep on the Property Team.

Chair Yoga resumed on Mondays at 11 am, and will go until May 13th. More to follow in the fall.

We had an awesome Potluck in January. A Certificate was presented to Mike Murphy, welcoming him as an Honorary Member. We welcomed guests from Bethel United Church, our two Honourary members, Mike and Ron Stronski, and also Andrea Minaker, Wendy Earl, and Rev. Christopher. It was great fellowship with each other and an opportunity to socialize and have fun! We laughed, we ate, we played a gift exchange game that was hilarious at times, and we even played "Name that tune."

UCW members attended the World Day of Prayer Service, an ecumenical prayer service at the First Baptist church on March 1st.

We would appreciate your donations for the New to You Sale.

We are looking for gently Used Clothing, Books, Shoes, Purses, Jewellery, Trinkets, Glassware, Linens, Puzzles. Please note - No furniture or large items. Please bring your donations to the stage area in the Fellowship Hall.

NEXT UCW MEETING: MONDAY APRIL 1, 2024.

All are welcome. Submitted by Betty Lou Kempt



**Sunday School
continues on the
2nd and last
service of each
month**

NEW TO YOU SALE

Trinity United Church

41 Market St. N Smiths Falls

April 20, 2024

8AM - 1PM

Clothing, linens, bedding, jewelry,
puzzles, toys, dishes and more.
Something for everyone!

Funds raised go towards outreach projects.