



TSP TIMES

CHRISTMAS EDITION

December 4th, 2011

Trinity-St. Paul's United Church and Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts
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Ministers' Christmas Message

by Vicki Obedkoff and Hans van Nie

In the church season of Advent we prepare for Christmas which celebrates the birth of Jesus into our lives and into our world. During Advent we normally turn to scripture readings from the prophets of ancient Israel. Those prophets looked forward to a time when people would live together in a just society characterized by harmony and compassion. The Christian faith tradition maintains that Jesus had a God-given mandate to implement the vision of the prophets and to create a new world order in which a "Reign of God" would bring "peace on earth, goodwill to all." This message of peace and goodwill has formed the Christmas celebrations essence throughout the ages.

It doesn't take any special insight to see that the new world order envisioned by the prophets has not yet come to fruition. Many would say that things are only getting worse; that the world is going to hell in the proverbial hand-basket. And yet, people of faith cling to the joyful Advent hope for a coming reign of peace and love. Not only do we cling to that hope, we act on our hope by investing in structures and ways of life which reflect the vision that we long for. We are confident that such investments contribute to the implementation of "God's reign on earth as it is in heaven."

We each make our investments in our own way through the living of our daily lives. We make investments in just relationships characterized by mutual respect; we make investments through the pursuit of honest work done with integrity; we make investments through our stewardship of creation and care for planet Earth. Those of us who participate in the community life of Trinity-St. Paul's also make an investment through our contributions to the work we do together at TSP. We know full well that Trinity-St. Paul's is not the manifestation of the vision we are longing for; it is simply a facility which serves to enable us in our pursuit of the vision. As a community, TSP provides us with mutual encouragement and spiritual resources for faithful living; as a place, TSP provides us with a location in which to gather and a space in which to enjoy a

See Ministers' Message on page 2



Ministers' Message*(From page 1)***Christmas at TSP:****Sunday, Dec 18 - 10:30 a.m.***Christmas Pageant***Sunday, Dec 18 - 7:00 p.m.***Carols by Candlelight***Saturday, Dec 24 - 7:00 p.m.***Christmas Eve for all ages
(combined service with Bloor St)***Saturday, Dec 24 - 10:00 p.m.***Christmas Eve Communion
(combined service with Bathurst)***Sunday, Dec 25 - 10:30 a.m.***Christmas Day Worship
(combined service with Bathurst)***Sunday, Jan 1 - 10:30 a.m.***New Year's Day Worship
(combined service with Bathurst)*

multitude of activities in the realms of faith, justice and the arts. We see value in maintaining Trinity-St. Paul's as a facility that helps us in the pursuit of "peace on earth, goodwill to all" and it makes eminent sense that we gather as a TSP community to celebrate Christmas together.

There will be plenty of opportunities for further celebration in the year ahead. During 2012, we will mark the 125th anniversary of Trinity Church. Some exciting anniversary events are being planned including a production of Benjamin Britten's "Noah's Flood," a homecoming weekend, other open house events and special services. A 125th Anniversary Campaign steering group has also been struck, with Betsy Anderson and Barbara Lloyd as Co-chairs along with Kay Fallis and Walter Pitman as Honorary Co-chairs. All of us will have opportunities to continue our investment in the life and ministry of TSP.

As your ministers, we are grateful for the opportunity and the privilege of working with all of you in the community of Trinity-St. Paul's United Church and Centre for Faith Justice and the Arts. We extend to each one of you our Christmas greetings as we pray together for peace on earth, goodwill to all!

From your pastoral ministry team,

Vicki Obedkoff & Hans van Nie

Trinity St. Paul's Children Church Presents:

An Angel's Work Is Never Done!

a Christmas Pageant

Written by Martin Dove

Adapted by Mary-Margaret Jones

Musical direction by Mary-Lou Fallis

Sunday, December 18, 2010

10:30 am Worship

at Trinity St Paul United Church

We are looking for volunteers!

Please contact Mary-Margaret Jones (marymargaretjones@gmail.com)
or Cathy Watson (tclwatson@sympatico.ca)



“Silent Night: The Story of the World War 1 Christmas Truce”

By Shirley Farlinger

This is a Christmas story for Christmas Eve.

World War 1 was a war between the armies of two of Queen Victoria’s grandsons, Kaiser Wilhelm II and George V. On one side were British, French and Belgium forces along with troops from the Empire - India and Africa. On the other side were Prussians, Saxons and Bavarians from the states that would become Germany.

Each side was certain it would win. The recruiting propaganda in Toronto assured recruits, like my father, that the war would only last 6 weeks. It lasted almost 5 years.

Artist Otto Dix described the war as “lice, rats, barbed wire, fleas, shells, bombs, underground caves, corpses, blood, liquor, mice, cats, artillery, filth, bullets, mortars, fire, steel: that’s what war is. It is the work of the devil.”

But there was one beautiful time; it was Christmas Eve, December 24th, 1914.

The weather that day changed from rainy to clear and dry. The mud, so deep, had entombed both men and horses suddenly froze and the men could walk confidently.

“It was just the sort of day for peace to be declared,” recalled one soldier. “I sloshed along the trench to a dry lump and gazed at all the scene around: the stillness, the stars, dark blue sky. Songs began to float up from various parts of our line” - strains of *Stille Nacht*, *Heilige Nacht*, *O Tannenbaum*. The truce bubbled up from the ranks. No one was ever certain where or how it began but it covered most of the front. “It was an amazing spectacle” wrote one soldier, “and must arouse bitter thought

concerning those high-born conspirators against the peace of the world, who in their mad ambition had hounded such men on to take each other by the throat rather than by the hand.”

Early in December 1914 fraternization between the sides had begun along the front. The response from a commander was quick. “...it discourages initiative in commanders, and destroys the offensive spirit in all ranks Friendly intercourse with the enemy, unofficial armistices, and the exchange of tobacco and other comforts, however tempting and occasionally amusing they may be, are absolutely prohibited.” But most higher-ups looked the other way.

The truce was dismissed in official histories as an aberration of no consequence. But author Stanley Weintraub has researched museums, libraries and the letters and diaries of the men who experienced this miraculous time to produce the book “*Silent Night: The Story of the World War 1 Christmas Truce.*”



Cont. to Silent Night.... on page 4

Silent Night

Only one Christmas truce memorial still stands. It is in Flanders. ‘The event appears in retrospect somehow unreal, incredible in its intensity and extent and seemingly impossible to have happened without consequences for the outcome of the war,’ writes Weintraub.

There was great sympathy from the homeland on both sides so that soldiers were deluged with cigarettes, Christmas puddings, socks, wine, cognac and chocolate. Armed with these gifts the two sides approached each other sometimes a bit cautiously. Signs of “YOU NO FIGHT, WE NO FIGHT” and Merry Christmas banners and greetings were exchanged along with postcards, newspapers and family photos. The two sides didn’t really hate each other. The Germans too were weary of a war they too had been assured would not last long.



Christmas trees with candles lit up the parapets of the front lines. Shouts of “No more war, It’s what God wants” were heard. “Never” wrote one soldier “was I as keenly aware of the insanity of war”. Soon few cared about higher authority.

Maybe it was the singing that touched every heart: *Tannenbaum, Stille Nacht, It’s a*

(From page 3)

long way Tipperary, Good King Wenceslaus and Auld Lang Syne. It became a singing contest. A French soldier with a splendid tenor voice left both sides “awed and dead silent.” Sometimes there was a makeshift altar and a Padre to lead in worship.

On Christmas Day No Man’s Land became a vast burial ground. The two sides took advantage of the peace to exchange corpses and bury their dead. The cooperation was so unpredictable and extraordinary that they wrote home about it.

After the burials, there were times when the space was used for “something resembling football”. One soccer match with the Scots revealed that they did indeed wear nothing under their kilts.

It is fascinating to note that Hitler was there too as a volunteer at first. When he received the Iron Cross from Kaiser Wilhelm for bravery he declared it “the happiest day of my life.” As for the truce he did not think such a thing should happen in wartime, “Have you no sense of honor left at all?”

In some sectors a semblance of peace lasted into the New Year. Some thought the outburst of fraternity meant the war was over. “There would be no authority on earth powerful enough to set those men fighting again.” Yet there was and there continues to be authorities powerful enough to set one person against another in murderous wars. In the first 5 months of World War 1, the war to end all war, a million were already dead and there were almost four more years to go.

As one soldier wrote “The festival of Christmas has momentarily united in the same emotion the enemies of yesterday and tomorrow,” May our Christmas so unite us today.

Peace,
Shirley Farlinger

Report on Season of Commitment Pledges for 2012

It was a good Season for pledges. We had 110 pledging households, up from the 104 last year. Forty-five pledgers were able to respond to the 6% challenge and fifty-eight maintained their same level as this year. Only seven had to decrease their pledge.

Starting with the best news, we received **\$45,700** for our Fall Appeal, well beyond our \$42,000 target. That extra \$3,700 will cover some of our projected shortfall for the 2011 congregational income.

The 2012 pledges for the Local Church reached **\$214,548**. This is 87% of the \$246,750 target and about \$4,000 less than pledged last year. This does not mean that our givers are pledging less; rather it reflects the loss of one or two major donors who died during the past year.

Mission and Service pledges at **\$107,424** were down by about \$9,000 from last year, for the same reason. These pledges were closer (at 93%) to the \$115,000 target.

This year's pledges mean that we will need to reduce our budgeted congregational income slightly for 2012 to \$225,000 for Local and \$110,000 for M & S. It is important, however, to emphasize that TSP members are not less committed. On the contrary, 94% of TSP donors either maintained their pledge or increased it by 6% (for many now for several years in a row). We are simply beginning to lose some of our larger supporters.

Many thanks are due to each other for this strong affirmation of support and to the leaders of this Season of Commitment: Allison Savaria, Jane Wood and Vera Callaghan!

Bob Fugere, Treasurer

2011 Fall Community Meals

By Allison Savaria

Over 90 people attended this year's fall community meals, and had some lively discussion! On a beautiful evening in early October James and Willy launched the series by hosting a welcoming campfire and barbeque on Centre Island. This year we were looking for ideas on how TSP might celebrate their 125th anniversary which is coming up shortly. The Island group did not disappoint us as they came up with some ideas and more great ones followed from those attending the next Ten meals. All suggestions have been passed along to the 125th organizing group. Many thanks for your great contributions, and to all our generous hosts who provided such delightful opportunities to meet with each other, and share delicious food – Carolyn, Susan, Marilyn and Walter, Linda Dawn, Lynne and Paul, Cathy, Imogene, Gillian and Gordon, Lois and John, Bob and Allison.



A letter from the Chair of the Church Board

From: Duncan Holmes
To: TSP Working Groups

I wanted to inform everyone that I met with our Staffing Group who requested my input and one of their questions to me was, "What am I hoping for from theirs and other groups by the next Annual Meeting?" I am going to outline as best I can my response and invite your input.

At the September Board retreat, my subtitle for the retreat was "Deciding where and how we want to invest in our future." I believe, as a congregation, we are at a great point along our journey where we are positioning ourselves for the next 5 years or more, given the outcomes of this work and the work to follow.

I personally hope for a "**BOLD VISION**" - one in which we must invest in order to create the future we envision as a congregation. To do this I see the need to step forward and take a bolder position (in our mission and vision) than we have in past; and as we wrestle with key strategic questions that come in the guise of issues or problems - if we view them for what they are - strategic questions then our answers will depend solely on our vision and choice of direction.

In terms of Congregational staffing, I believe we are looking at this from a standpoint of what we require in order to allow us to carry out our vision.

When looking at volunteers we look at this from the perspective of how do we best engage our volunteers in order to assist them in carrying out our vision - so whatever role a volunteer is in, they are aware that their position is critical to our being a community of faith carrying out our understanding of god's call to us. And, we are looking at governance from a perspective of how to best steward this great resource (the building) to assist us in carrying out our vision.

I shared with the Governance group about the time during which I was dating and that Gloria Gaynor's song "I Will Survive" was always being played and every time I heard it, I changed the words from I will survive to *I will thrive*. I believe we're looking at the future of these three groups from the perspective of what decisions need to be made now to allow us to thrive in future.

I ended with sharing with the group my hopes for the Annual Meeting; that I will stand before the entire congregation and with a painted vision of who we will be as a Congregation and how we will be carrying out our mission if we choose to invest in these ways, that the groups are proposing.

I know this is a significant task that you are taking on. Thank you for all your efforts.

Duncan Holmes

Celebrating this Centre for Faith, Justice, and the Arts Season!

By Vicki Obedkoff

We give thanks for the great events we've co-sponsored this fall and new connections made. Susan Starkman, our congregation's "associate member", has joined our folk music team which has already met to begin planning next year's concert. Our hope for renewed folk community bookings in our Sanctuary is already being realized and more outreach continues. We thank our talented neighbours and musicians Anne Lindsey (Major Street), and Susan Lawrence (Washington Street) for their involvement along with other superb artists at our Oct. 1 Folk Concert.



(Bird by Patty Zuver)

Brad, Amber and Mary Lou are working on contemporary worship and music led by young adults and we look forward to a Palm Sunday beginning.

The Sanctuary was packed on Nov. 3rd for the evening with Stephen Lewis and Michelle Landsberg, with a fundraiser for the CCPA

(Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives) following in the gym. We co-sponsored this event as part of our "healthy democracy" emphasis and raised the profile of our CFJA that evening for future collaboration. We anticipate another "democracy" event soon.

Patty Zuver is working with *Central Tech* students on an exhibit at the May 10th, 2012 "open house" we are planning as part of our 125th anniversary celebrations. We welcome you to join the planning for this Thursday 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. event of "showcasing" some of the music, dance, art, and groups that find a home in the building as well as inviting contributions from the community. Please email vobedkoff@trinitystpauls.ca if you can help with this event.

We are thankful to the TSP Board for mandating 2 days of Vicki Obedkoff's time in 2012 to support our work, as well as "seed money" to initiate programs and events and partnering that helps TSP-CFJA thrive and flourish and brings benefits to all who weave the CFJA vision in this place.

On October 16th Lyn Gaetz, the chair of the CFJA Implementation Committee gave an update on the work of the centre in the morning worship service. She reviewed the history of the CFJA and four strategies that the committee is using to live out its mission and purpose. Hard copies of those remarks are available from John Bell. They will also be posted on the TSP website.

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Faith, Order and Good Governance: Update from the Governance Task Group

This fall the congregation asked the Governance Task Group to look at new models for managing the Trinity St. Paul's (TSP) building. The Task Group is Betsy Anderson, Bob Fugere, Moira Hutchinson, Jim Lewis, and Walter Whiteley. We will report to the Church Board in December and February, and file a final report with recommendations at the March 2012 congregational annual meeting.

Our discussions have been full, frank and challenging. We are looking at options for improving how TSP manages its' building operations, opportunities for attracting financial support from the wider community and, ultimately, how we can enable a lasting and relevant ministry on Bloor St.

We are working faithfully to the guiding principles laid out at the congregation's September retreat which include:

- ensuring a new governance model that aligns with the congregation's vision and mission
- establishing a new structure that makes better use of TSP's volunteer time and capacity
- creating opportunities for new external investments (e.g. grants and donations) in the building
- reducing the draw down on our trust funds for ongoing operations
- streamlining and improving decision making related to building use and maintenance.

We are consulting widely in our work; a field trip was taken to *Grace Place* in Brampton, a community resource centre recently established as an incorporated United Church ministry. We are meeting and sharing information with other TSP working groups like the Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts to ensure our work is informed by congregational needs and interests. We are drawing on TSP's history with its neighbourhood and its own centre. Finally, we will engage Presbytery and Toronto Conference to ensure we are working with and benefiting from the policies and structures of The United Church of Canada.

Half way through our mandate **three options** have emerged:

Option 1: Streamline existing building management functions including establishing an expanded role for the Board of Trustees and Property Committee. This would entail establishing a new building account fund for outside investments, actively pursuing new users for our building space, and implementing a new fee structure which includes the congregation paying for all or some space use.

Option 2: Create a new United Church incorporated ministry with responsibility for managing the TSP building, attracting new users, and pursuing external grants and donations. This option would also include the congregation paying for its use of some or all of its space. This model would see TSP have the majority role on the board of the corporation.

Option 3: This model would incorporate Option 2 but TSP would be an equal partner on the governance board with outside partners.

Faith, Order, and

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In our discussions to date, we have agreed that any change must have clear benefits for the congregation (i.e. this will not be change for the sake of change). We also believe that work implementing the new model must begin immediately after the March 2012 congregational meeting in order to address the volunteer, financial, ministry and mission concerns of the congregation.

An important piece of our work has included financial projections for our congregational funds and budgets over the coming four years. For 2011, our congregational income allocated to local expenses is \$255,000. Our congregational expenses for staff and internal expenses other than building is \$326,000. This leaves a deficit of \$71,000. Projections show this deficit increasing over the next four years.

We have dealt with **four distinct variables**:

- 1) TSP paying office rent and later on, space use rent
- 2) Impact of hiring a coordinator to market our building space
- 3) Restructuring building staff (e.g., create a position of Building Manager which would include marketing responsibilities & reduce building maintenance)
- 4) Reduce congregational expenses including staffing.

The impact of each variable differs, but combined they show within four years TSP reaching a break-even point (even including \$90,000 of capital building expenses). The financial analysis shows our congregation carrying a serious deficit, but additional building income and reduced congregation expenses could offset that deficit. The Church Board will have to review these projections at its December meeting.

With careful changes to the building income and staffing, in 2015 we can just reach a deficit in the congregation of \$150,000, but a surplus in the building of \$156,000. In this model, we would draw from the trust funds for the next three years, and just keep them constant in the fourth year. If in addition, the congregational expenses are decreased by \$50,000 in 2014 and 2015, then we start to replenish our trust funds - as well as open the option of planning improvements to the building to improve how we and other users can benefit from the spaces available.

Our own deliberations are still underway and we have consultations to complete. We are excited by the prospects of a new governance model but recognize it will (and must) bring change to how our congregation uses and provides for its building. At the same time, we believe implementing a new way of managing our building will free us, as individuals and a congregation, to focus on ministry and mission. Our report will be carefully considered by the Church Board and congregation along with reports from the Staffing and Volunteer Working Groups. We are confident that a way forward will emerge from our faith, work and collaboration. We welcome your thoughts and questions.

In faith,

Jim Lewis for the Governance Task Group

Concert and Conference in Support of Restorative Justice

By Elda Thomas

Steve Bell and his friend Mike Janzen provided wonderful music for the November 18th concert and Steve eloquently told some powerful stories about men and women who have been in conflict with the law, people who have been imprisoned, others who have been in abusive and unhealthy relationships and those who have touched his life.

He opened by sharing his experience about how he became a musician who travels the world; when he was a child his father was Chaplain at Drumheller Penitentiary, a maximum security prison for men in Alberta. Several prisoners met regularly in the chapel for “jam” sessions which Steve often attended with his father. These men recognized Steve’s love for music and told his father he should give him a guitar which he did and one of the men made an amplifier for it. As Steve puts it, his life career came about “because some of the most despised people in the world ... saw something in me and encouraged me.” Ever since, Steve has continued his interest in and support for prisoners ever.

During the concert, a moving moment came when an ex-prisoner went up to Steve and told him he had been incarcerated at Drumheller and remembered Steve’s father well. He mentioned to Steve a particular song he remembered that was sung in the chapel and although Steve had not intended to play it, he did so for the man, and told the audience the reason for doing so.

The Conference’s Saturday morning session was about working with people touched by crime: victims, offenders and congregations. One of the speakers, Reverend Steve Authier shared his experience about how, 3 weeks after moving to a new church, he was faced with the murder of a much loved member of the congregation along with the destruction of her home by arson. The

congregation was dealing with the following:

- Their grief over her death
- The arrest of her partner for her murder
- Their guilt at not having been more supportive of her when she was struggling with a bad situation, of which some of them had been aware
- Some who were angry with the accused who they had been trying to comfort for her death
- Some who were angry with the minister because he believed he should visit the accused, and they felt the accused should be ostracized
- Others, including two of the victim’s adult children, who were angry at the church and the minister because they believed God had allowed this to happen.

All this transpired two years ago and the case has not yet gone to trial and the situation is unresolved. As you can see there are many questions and issues to struggle with and much needed restoration for all parties.

Many of those attending the conference on one or both days said what a wonderful church we have: a beautiful sanctuary, superb acoustics and a warm, welcoming and inviting atmosphere.

I want to express my thanks to Trinity-St. Paul’s on behalf of all those who were part of the Restorative Justice weekend - especially to the Public Witness Circle and the Church Board for making it possible to hold the event at TSP. I also want to thank the staff who gave such great support to the whole project through the planning stages as well as the actual event.

We heard some powerful, some shocking and some thought-provoking stories from victims, from people who work with prisoners

Concert and Conf.

and ex-prisoners and from offenders - reminding us why restoration of persons in community is central to our faith.

Written on the front of the program was a quotation from *Father Gregory Boyle* who spent a lifetime working with marginalized

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people. He says, “we imagine with God this circle of compassion, we stand with those whose dignity has been denied...we situate ourselves next to the disposable so that the day will come when we stop throwing people away.”

Selamat Hari Natal – Merry Christmas

By Vivianti Santosa

In our small town, on the Island of Java, where I was raised, there was no cold air or snow to announce the coming of the Christmas season; it was either “bright and green” or “gray and wet” and the temperature was always mild. We knew Christmas was coming because the shops had Christmas decorations in their windows, cassette stores played Christmas songs, and you would see Christmas trees and Nativity scenes at the homes of Christians.

Like most Christian children all over the world, we loved and looked forward to the Christmas season. Unlike here, presents were not put under the tree; we inherited the Dutch - East Indie custom of Sinterklaas (St. Nicholas) and Zwarte Piet (Black Pete) which took place on Dec 5th when young children were given gifts of chocolates and peanuts.

By mid-December the school semester had wrapped up and we kids went to school just to play and prepare for our Christmas shows. There was singing, dancing and various performances but the main highlight of the show would be the Christmas Story play. One year I was so very proud of having the honour of playing the role of the Virgin Mary.

When I was little, my Mom and Dad always attended midnight Mass - which was held at a time when it was safe to do so, from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m. We children attended the morning children’s mass when another Pageant would be performed. I would meet with many of my

classmates in the front of the church and we would wish each other “*Selamat Hari Natal! - Merry Christmas!*” Years later, when I went home for the holiday, I often met my childhood friends there, once again.

Following our local tradition of “*Halal Bilhalal*”, friends and acquaintances paid visits to one another to wish each other a happy holiday. My father was a well-know local doctor, so our house would have visitors coming and going throughout the entire Christmas day. We always had a giant Christmas tree with lights, ornaments, and of course chocolates; kids love searching for them on the tree. People exchanged gifts during the holiday; my parents would received so many cakes that we ended up having cake for breakfast, lunch and dinner for days after!

I remember the 70 and 80’s as a time of religious harmony; on special holidays, the mosque next door opened the gate to its parking lot because ours would be overflowing; friends from various religions visited with one another and women’s organizations held both Lebaran (Muslim) and Christmas (Christian) parties which were attended by people of all faiths.

Although “presents under the tree”, “Christmas TV programs” and “special meals” were not part of our small town’s Christmas traditions, it was a very special holiday - for Christmas is about Jesus, friends and family.

Selamat Hari Natal, Merry Christmas!!!

TSP Outreach Support Fund Report for 2011

Each year members of the congregation are invited to recommend projects to be considered for grants from the *Outreach Support Fund*. Projects are evaluated according to the criteria set out in the Outreach Fund document, available on the *Public Witness* page of the TSP website.

Projects are evaluated primarily on the basis of the applicant's commitment to advance social change, empower marginalized groups, address inequalities and focus on issues of systemic injustice.

In the five-year plan, TSP has chosen to focus our public witness in the areas of climate justice, Aboriginal justice, peace making and restorative justice. Applications which fall into one of these categories are given special consideration.

The projects funded this year are as follows:

Barriere Lake Solidarity

Funding will go towards a legal defense fund for the *Algonquins* of Barrier Lake who are mounting a constitutional challenge against Canada for the imposition of "Section 74" of the Indian Act on their community. Up until August 2010, this community governed themselves by their ancestral constitution, a customary code that connects them to the land, animals, each other and to everything that grows. The destruction of customary codes is an abrogation of Aboriginal rights as protected in Section 35 of the Constitution.

Congregational Contact: Lynn Jondreville

Cordillera Peoples' Alliance (CPA) - Philippines

Funding will support the *MAQUITACDG Council Leadership Training*. The proposed activity contributes to strengthening Cordillera indigenous peoples' capacity to assert ancestral land rights. It particularly aims to further equip local leaders in Indigenous communities with greater knowledge, understanding and skills for the assertion of indigenous peoples' rights through campaigning and lobbying.

Contact: Bern Jagunos, Asia/Pacific Area Relations, General Council

Toronto Christian Resource Centre

Funding will go towards hiring a full time tenant support worker for the 87 units of deeply affordable housing that are nearing completion at 40 Oaks St. The goal is to provide a compassionate and safe environment for those who have experienced homelessness.

Congregational Contact: Michael Bourgeois

Fraternidad de Presbyteriales Mayas (FPM)

Funding will go towards the construction of 5 organic composting toilets in the community of Los Claveles del Cruz de Losa, La Esperanza. The compost will be used to improve agricultural production.

Congregational Contact: Christie Neufeldt

TSP Outreach*(From page 12)***Indigenous Sovereignty and Solidarity Network**

Funding will support Indigenous Sovereignty Week which seeks to create a broad-based, informed social movement that challenges and seeks to overcome colonialism by supporting the self-determination struggles of Indigenous peoples. The project also seeks to build strong relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous supporters.

Congregational Contact: Lynn Jondreville

Nagarik Aawaz (Citizens Voice for Peace)

Funding will support the *Peace Kitchen*, a weekly meal provided for the homeless of Kathmandu. The meal is prepared and served by internally displaced youth who are part of a larger peace-building program. In essence, funds for the Peace Kitchen feed the hungry but also support youth in their bid to become the community organizers and peace makers of the future.

Congregational Contact: Lynne Brennan

FJC Refugee Centre

Funding will support the work of assisting refugees throughout the process of hearings, appeals, and other aspects of the refugee experience in Canada.

Congregational Contact: Jeanne Moffat

Student Christian Movement at U of T

Funding will support the efforts of SCM in connecting students with faith and social justice as a life-long practice.

Congregational Contact: Sheryl Johnson

Women In peace building Network (WIPNET) - Liberia

Funding will go towards the continuation of the cotton project. The goal is to empower rural women by building their capacity to produce and process cotton and to weave their country clothes for providing a form of income generation.

Congregational Contact: Lois Kunkel

2011/12 SEASON



amadeus
choir

LYDIA ADAMS - Conductor & Artistic Director

Glorious Sounds of the Season

Saturday, December 17, 2011, 7:30 p.m.
 Yorkminster Park Baptist Church
 1585 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario

Celebrate the 25th anniversary of our Seasonal Song-Writing Competition.
 Featuring the winning compositions with other holiday favourites.
 Special guests The Bach Children's Chorus.

Eleanor Daley, piano
Shawn Greenke, piano
The Bach Children's Chorus &
Linda Beaupré, conductor
Lydia Adams, conductor



Adams Greenke Beaupré Daley

www.amadeuschoir.com • 416-446-0188

Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability

By Lynn Jondreville

In 2010, TSP, as a congregation, adopted climate justice as one of the foci of our public witness. A policy statement entitled *TSP's Commitment to Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability* was approved by the Board in October 2010. What follows is a summary of some of the actions undertaken in the past year to implement this policy.

Public Witness was charged with responsibility for the **Education and Advocacy** section of the *Climate Justice and Sustainability Policy*.

Education

- As part of our commitment to support United Church initiatives in this area, we offered the “*Be the Change*” Program developed by the *Green Awakening Network* of the Toronto United Church Council. A series of five sessions was organized by Vicki, with facilitation by Bathurst and TSP congregational members. The program purpose was “to support each other to Be the Change necessary to bring forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling and socially just human presence on the earth”.
- As follow-up to the *Be the Change* series, Christine Wong and Judi McCallum (Bathurst) started the *Green Living Group* support group for individuals attempting to live more greenly and as a forum for sharing hopes and plans for living on the earth with a smaller carbon footprint.
- Vicki took part in a workshop with Joanna Macy called “*The Work that Reconnects*”, and subsequently offered a session on this theme to members of the *Green Awakening Network*. The purpose was to give Green teams a “spiritual recharge” for their action work. There were 20 participants with 3 facilitators.
- In the Sunday bulletin, the “*carbon footprint*” information series has begun,

using the book “*How Bad Are Bananas*” by Mike Berners-Lee as a resource. Background information is provided on the *Climate Justice* page of the TSP website.

- TSP hosted a Town Hall climate change meeting last winter which was organized by *JustEarth*. The idea of working on projects with community partners fits well with the vision of *The Centre for Faith Justice and the Arts* and plans are underway to continue in this direction.

Actions

- As follow-up to the *Be the Change* sessions, an initiative to green up TSP's garbage system is underway. A full proposal is coming once a team of major partners in our building is established. Tafelmusik and Bathurst congregation have named representatives. This team will present a plan to Jackie van't Voort, the Building Coordinator.
- In the spring, Christine Wong, Mary-Margaret Jones and Vicki Obedkoff met some members of the *First Narayever* congregation to discuss the success of their local food and food security program. We are looking at ways to work with *First Narayever* to use food and faith as a focus for building community. In the works is a “*faith, cooking and friends*” Program featuring local food experts.

Advocacy

- In September, the action organized by *Greenpeace*, the *Council of Canadians* and the *Indigenous Environmental Network* to protest the expansion of the tar sands and the Keystone XL pipeline was brought to the attention of the congregation. To register strong opposition to government policies in this area, members of both Bathurst and TSP participated in civil disobedience on Parliament Hill.



TURTLE HOUSE ART/PLAY CENTRE

By Tamam McCallum

What is Turtle House Art/Play Centre?

Why do we call it Turtle House?

What is Art Therapy?

Why only refugees?

Where is the Centre?

These are a few of the usual questions I get asked when I first mention that I am from *Turtle House Art/Play Centre*. Below, I will attempt to address these:

What is Turtle House?

I will begin with our Mission Statement: "*Turtle House Art/Play Centre* is a unique art-based organization in Toronto, designed primarily for children and families from refugee backgrounds to explore their creativity, play, express themselves, and make meaningful connections".

Or, I might say that *Turtle House* is a small non-profit organization in Toronto which offers a special arts program to children (ages 4-12) and parents who come from regions of conflict. Our goal is to provide a welcoming and inclusive place for refugee families from different ethno-racial, cultural and faith backgrounds.

Why "Turtle House"?

We've been asked this question many times. It's also a question we ask children and parents in the opening Circles: Why do you think we called our program 'Turtle House'? It's a powerful symbol and discussion starter. We get answers such as 'The Turtle is old, it's ancient and wise'. Children from many different cultures identify with the turtle.

We chose the name *Turtle House* for a few

reasons: Firstly, because it's playful! The survival of the turtle - despite destruction of its habitat - is symbolic of the resilience of refugee families as survivors of trauma and forced migration. The turtle's shell might represent a protective home the turtle carries with it. The slow and steady pace of the turtle represents the unhurried, non-pressured healing of children through art and play.

Why only refugees?

We know that resettlement can be difficult for all Newcomers, but our primary focus is on refugee families. Children and families coming from experiences of war and forced migration have to deal with traumatic past experiences while facing the challenges of settlement in their new home.

Is it Art Therapy?

The program is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for the families' social and emotional needs, but it is not therapy. Through clay-work, painting, music, conversation and culturally appropriate food, parents and children have the opportunity to connect with each other, build relationships with other families and with *Turtle House* artists and volunteers.

Where is the Centre? - A difficult question to Answer

We have offered successful programs at the *Children's Peace Theatre* site in East York, at *Victoria Village Library* (Victoria Park & Lawrence) and most recently at *Forest Manor Public School* in the Don Mills & Sheppard Avenue East area. We see great value in the transferable nature of the program to different areas and schools whose populations

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Solidarity with KI First Nation

By Lynne Jondreville

The Aboriginal Rights Working Group has endorsed the following statement in support of the KI First Nation. KI is located in north western Ontario, and has been in a struggle against mining interests which are intruding on their territory. Three years ago the “KI 6” were incarcerated for preventing Platinex, a gold mining company, from gaining access to their lands. The Government of Ontario responded with a new Mining Act in 2008, which requires mining companies to consult with *First Nations* prior to exploration. The government has now broken its own law by issuing an exploration permit without any consultation to God’s Lake Resources, a gold mining company. At a solidarity event on Nov. 22, Judy Rebick linked this behavior to ever-continuing colonialism: “Our ancestors took this land and they’re still taking it.”

Support Statement for KI Declaration and Consultation Protocols

We, the undersigned, recognize and respect the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) Water Declaration and Consultation Protocols which were passed by a community referendum on July 5, 2011 with the support of 96% of ballots cast and brought into force as Indigenous Law by KI Chief and Council through a Band Council Resolution along with a spiritual ceremony and blessings of the results. The KI Watershed Declaration applies to a vast 13,025 square kilometer area of boreal lakes, rivers, forest, and wetlands in KI Homeland that is over 20 times the size of the City of Toronto, including 661 square kilometer *Big Trout Lake*. It states that: “We declare all waters that flow into and out of Big Trout Lake, and all lands whose waters

flow into those lakes, rivers, and wetlands, to be completely protected through our continued care under KI’s authority, laws and protocols... No industrial uses, or other uses which disrupt, poison, or otherwise harm our relationship to these lands and waters will be permitted.” Activities affecting KI’s lands and resources must only proceed with KI’s free, prior and informed consent.

The Consultation Protocol sets out how KI consent will be given freely, where KI people are fully informed of the consequences prior to any decisions being made, and according to KI’s own laws and decision-making processes. The KI Water Declaration states that “We call on our supporters to recognize and respect this declaration. We call on you to fulfill your duty as treaty people to take action, under our direction, to hold your governments accountable to respecting this declaration.

Please stand with us as we assert and implement our Indigenous Laws and responsibilities. Together we can protect this sacred water for all people, all animals, all plants and all life.” We commit to supporting KI in implementing and enforcing these Indigenous Laws, and we accept our joint responsibility to protect water as the sacred source of life. We call on the governments of Ontario and Canada to recognize and respect KI’s Water Declaration and Consultation Protocol.

KI has governed the watersheds that are at the core of KI culture since time out of memory. We call on Ontario to begin respecting KI’s Water Declaration by immediately giving the watersheds interim

Cont. to Solidarity on page 17

Living with Grief – A Bereavement Support Group

By Mary Simpson

*“They can be a great help - words.
They can become the Spirit’s hands and lift and caress.”
(Meister Eckhart)*

Under the auspices of Trinity St. Paul’s Pastoral Care Team a grief support group will be offered in 2012.

With Mary Simpson and Elaine Gort as leaders, the group is intended to offer a confidential and safe space for people to share the uniqueness and commonality of their grief with their peers.

As a bereaved mother, daughter, aunt and sister-in-law, Elaine has been both a principle mourner and a support person for others on their grief journeys. For over 20 years she has been part of bereavement support groups - first as a participant, then as a trainee facilitator and co-facilitator.

Mary is a member of the Pastoral Care Team at Trinity St. Paul’s United Church. She has accompanied people facing death and grieving and she is a bereaved daughter, sister-in-law and friend.

Death is a part of life, but increasingly in this day and age it is not a part we are prepared for or know how to respond to when it happens to someone dear to us. The death of a loved one can be a traumatic and isolating experience. Each person connected to the one who has died is launched on a journey not of their choosing and one that has few sign posts. While each person’s grief has unique aspects there are often similarities and connections to the grief and mourning of others in one’s community.

The grief journey is not about forgetting and assigning it to the past. Rather it is about remembering, honouring and hopefully integrating the richness of the relationship without denying the pain of the loss. It takes hard work to achieve a new ‘normal’ - life without the physical presence of your loved one. Some of that work or processing can be done alone - meditatively and through meaningful rituals. Often being able to talk about the multiple aspects of one’s grief is an integral part of the grief journey. However, over time the fear that sharing ones story yet again is a burden on family and friends can silence a griever. A person who is grieving may also feel they no longer have anything to offer others and this assumed loss of mutuality in daily interactions compounds the initial loss. In a support group, sharing one’s grief story with other grievers is a possible way to achieve a measure of healing. Listening to others tell their stories and share how they cope and how they get through the day is both a resource and a way to reacquire a sense of mutuality.

Finding the courage to meet the demands of the grief journey is not easy, but knowing that you are not the only one on this journey can be a source of strength and a blessing. If you are interested in participating please contact John Bell at the T.S.P office (416 922-8435 ext. 21) or Mary Simpson (email b_msimpson@sympatico.ca or 416 203-0398).

What's Happening at TSP – next year

Living with Grief: A Bereavement Support Group

Under the auspices of Trinity St. Paul's Pastoral Care Team a grief support group (open to all) will be offered in 2012.

Date: Feb 15th, Feb 22nd, Feb 29th, & Mar 28th, (Weds) & April 4th (Tues).

Time: 7.00 - 9.00 pm

Where: Memorial Room, Trinity St. Paul's United Church

Co-leaders: Mary Simpson and Elaine Gort

The group is intended to offer a confidential and safe space for people to share the uniqueness and commonality of their grief with their peers. If you are interested in participating please contact John Bell at the T.S.P office (416 922-8435 ext. 21) or Mary Simpson (b_simpson@sympatico.ca or 416 203-0398).

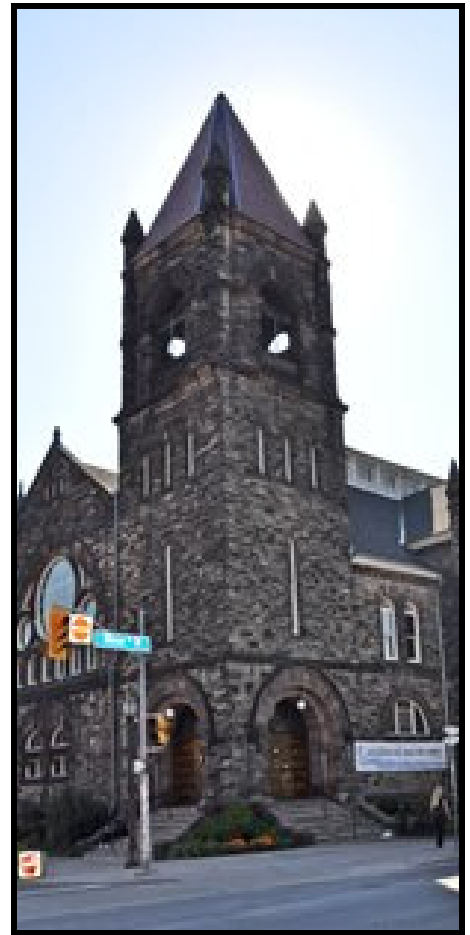
Back by Popular Demand: Country Dancing at TSP

Even if you know nothing about dancing, you'll enjoy this evening. More details to follow in the New Year.

When: Saturday, February 4th, 2012!

Where: Gym, Trinity St. Paul's United Church

Who: Caller Lorraine Sutton and Vicki Obedkoff's Band.



Vital Steps Bone Building Classes

Osteoporosis is a disease that currently affects 2 million Canadians. It is characterized by **low bone mass** and **deterioration of bone tissue**. At least **80% of fractures in people 60+** are related to osteoporosis. Vital Steps Bone Building Classes can assist individuals suffering from these diseases in living a healthier, happier life. Designed to be **fun, safe and effective**, the classes offer specific exercises that build bone, contribute to reduced joint pain and minimize the risk of injury

Where: Trinity St Paul Church

When: Tuesdays 10 to 11a.m.

Date: January 10 to February 28th 2012 (possible additional days)

Cost: \$88 plus HST

**Complimentary Introductory class: Jan 10th. RSVP by calling 416 785-8828 (new people only)*

About the TSP Times

The TSP Times is a bi-monthly newsletter for members and friends of Trinity-St. Paul's United Church and CFJA. Submissions from all members of the congregation are welcome. Please send your items to buyandsellwithsarah@yahoo.com. The deadline for the next issue is the beginning of **March 2012**.

Sarah Landry - Editor, Vivianti Santosa - Layout.

Are you on the List?

TSP has an on-line **list serve** that sends out information on activities, upcoming events, the weekly announcements, and other items of interest to people at TSP. You can get each email message or a daily digest. It is an easy way to keep track of what is going on. To join the list serve, log into the website. (You will need to register if you haven't already) On the right side of the page, there is a grey box with your name at the top of it. Click on the "My Account / Mailing Lists" link. Scroll down to TSP list on the left and click on the button for emails. Then you too can be up-to-date!

Alternatively, you can go to: <http://lists.trinitystpauls.ca/listinfo.cgi/tsplist-trinitystpauls.ca> and provide your name and e-mail.

Trinity St. Paul's United Church and Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts

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