



# Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Larry Gravill, president • André Lavergne & Anne Anderson, pastors • Bob Marshall, interim parish musician  
Jill Merner, parish secretary • Brian Racho, sexton • Helen Toman, visitation pastor • Bob Thaler, preacher  
Erika Mueller, youth & family worker • Cywin Murray, emerita director of music • Syd Hills, pastoral assistant

December 2, 2011

Grace and peace to you.

Early this morning, I had a conversation with Lori Arnett. It followed upon a far-ranging conversation I had yesterday with David Pfrimmer, Principal-Dean of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. (He sends his love and greetings!) These conversations follow, in turn, upon a number of conversations I've been having with Pastor Anne and other congregational leaders in recent weeks and months.

Come the New Year, we are looking forward to turning a corner, of sorts, in our ministry here.

For the first time in a couple of years, our staff team will be at full-strength. I won't be transitioning into my new work with the national church. An intern will be neither coming nor going. Our new Minister of Music, Jamie Courtney, will be in place. Both our Visitation Pastor, Helen Toman, and Youth and Family Worker, Erika Mueller, will begin their first full years without the expectation that something may change tomorrow or the day after. Bob Thaler will continue to preach once a month and Jill Merner and Brian Racho will be about their regular, steady-as-she-goes, work keeping the Trinity ship afloat.

In recent weeks, the Mutual Ministry Committee has been revamping position descriptions for the *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual* and working hard behind the scenes to bring various items to the December meeting of Council. Council, for its part, will begin to integrate this material into a new *Manual for Congregational Council Members and Officers*. At the same meeting, Council will look at the first draft of a program budget for 2012. The final version will be approved in January when the year-end numbers come in.

As we turn the corner in the New Year, the first piece of the puzzle, if you will, will be a stable staff complement to be about the work of ministry in this place.

The second piece of the puzzle has to do with the work itself. David Pfrimmer, Pastor Anne and I, together with many others, have been reflecting on the changing realities of ministry at Trinity and in the wider church. Pastor Pfrimmer is retooling our seminary to prepare pastors who will be equipped to minister in an environment that is much different from that of 10, 25, or 50 years ago.

In particular, younger families are spread thinner than they have ever been. The competition for family time is fiercer than it has ever been. At the same time, the sensibilities of younger folk and younger families are different from those of earlier generations. Their sense of identity within the Trinity community is less shaped by "who their parents were" and "where they grew up" than by what family and personal needs our congregation can address in their lives. Moreover, they are more likely to see themselves simply as "Christian" where a former generation would have seen itself as distinctively "Lutheran".

At the same time, we have significant cohorts of seniors and Baby Boomers moving through the system. They, too, have needs and concerns unique to their time and generation. The differences from one generation to the next are much starker than was once the case.

This new and shifting reality is something we're trying hard to address both within particular programs — Faith Adventures, for example— and in the broader ministry —and staffing!— of Trinity Church. In any event, here are some things to look forward to in the New Year.

**Families at Five** ~ Families at Five is what is called “Messy Church” in other communities. You've been reading about it in TRINITY DOVE. *Families at Five* will be a form of gathering that happens once a month in Trinity Hall. It's an opportunity for adults and children to enjoy expressing their creativity together, to gather for a meal, to experience worship and to have fun within a congregational setting. *Families at Five* was born as *Messy Church* in the Church of England and is happening in various communities across Canada. To find out more, visit [www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk). Watch for *Families at Five*, on the first Tuesday of each month, beginning February 7. Doors open at 4:30 pm!

**Music at Trinity** ~ Come January, Trinity's music program will begin to reflect the gifts of our new Minister of Music, Jamie Courtney. For example, beginning in the New Year, the rehearsals for the Affirmation Singers will move to Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. A name change for our young choristers is also contemplated. At the same time, Trinity Choir will maintain rehearsals on Thursday evening, but will move from 7:45 pm to 7 pm. So... Would you like to join us to sing?

Then again, perhaps you play a musical instrument? Jamie is also looking for musicians who might play at worship, whether with the piano, with the organ, or on their own. The new choir schedule will permit Jamie to rehearse soloists and musicians around the choir rehearsals. Jamie's first rehearsals will take place on January 3 and 5. We'd love to have you come and make Jamie and his family welcome and we'd love to have you join us to sing or play!

**Both / And Conference** ~ This Spring, Trinity will host a Both / And conference for pastors and lay leaders in our Synod. The focus will be upon fresh expressions of Lutheran and Christian identity in worship and community life. This event will be underwritten by a grant from the Missions Committee of the Eastern Synod. This conference will address the tension between honouring ministry as we have done it in the past and exploring new possibilities where ancient truths are honoured, contemporary needs are met and future possibilities are anticipated.

**Interfaith Celebration** ~ Interfaith turns 30 years old in 2012! This morning, Anne and I met with Lisa Akey, Interfaith's clinical director. Apparently they are seeing the same sorts of changes in family and society that we have observed. (It's always helpful to have the Dean of the Seminary and the Director of the Counselling Centre confirm your sense of reality!)

However, the reason for our conversation was not our changing response to the changing needs of our community. It was something else. Sometime in the new year, Interfaith wants to honour Trinity for our 30 years of continuous support for their excellent work. What a lovely surprise! I mentioned to Lisa that David Pfrimmer was instrumental in helping Interfaith to get off the ground some 30 years ago. I do believe he will receive an invitation!

So for now.

Please join Pastor Anne and me, together with the rest of Trinity's staff, to greet our New Year with joy, optimism and a sense of the terrific possibilities that await us on Trinity's faithful Journey.

Blessed Advent! Blessed Christmas! Blessed Epiphany!



André Lavergne, with Anne Anderson,  
pastors in the community of Trinity Church.