

# Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Deb Roth, President  
André Lavergne & Nadine Nicholds, Pastors  
Syd Hills, Pastoral Assistant  
Gywin Murray, Director of Music

November 16, 2003  
Pentecost 23

## TO THE PEOPLE OF TRINITY CHURCH

Dear friends,

Grace be yours and peace.

This morning, I heard the church bells as I've never heard them before. Our community was at worship. Kim and I were at home together with Ruth, John and Lynne. Kim and I found ourselves listening to the bells and pacing the service: bells at the Call to Worship; bells at the Great Thanksgiving; Lord's Prayer... It was both a strange feeling —not being there— and a wonderful feeling —being there nonetheless.

In June, I wrote you about what was going on in the life of our family —about Kim's recent diagnosis and about how our world was being shaped in that reality. In August and October I updated you on how our journey was unfolding. With this letter, I want to bring you up to date and to offer some continuing words of thanks.

When I wrote you in August, Kim had begun chemotherapy at the "old" Grand River / K-W Hospital. In October, I mentioned that the treatments had been relocated to the new Grand River Regional Cancer Center, a lovely new facility. I told you that we had received some relatively good news insofar as the chemotherapy had arrested the growth of the tumors —at least for a time.

In the weeks since I last wrote, our journey has turned hard. As is the way of such things, there came a time where the good of the chemotherapy was overshadowed by the harm that came with it. At some point, chemo was discontinued to give Kim's body a rest. That was a few weeks ago. As time passes, the likelihood that treatment will be resumed has all but disappeared.

Kim is very sick. We live our lives a day at a time and cherish such moments as are ours to enjoy. While Kim continues to benefit from the care of some terrific medical people —people like Jim Hicks, Kevin Bezanson, Heike Lackenbauer, Dianne Osborne, Rae Mavor, Marg Butt and many others— and while the love and support of our congregation, community and friends have been overwhelming, it is a very hard journey that we are making.

I mentioned in an earlier letter that I had taken a break from my non-parish

responsibilities. About a month ago, at the request of our Mutual Ministry Committee, Trinity's Council met to consider the possibility of a compassionate leave from parish duties as well. A leave was granted, to be taken at such a time and in such measure as might prove helpful. I am very grateful to our Mutual Ministry team, to Council and to the congregation for their —your!— thoughtfulness and generosity.

This week, I am taking the few remaining vacation days that are still on my calendar. By the time you read this, however, I will be on compassionate leave from the parish. It feels very strange. I never dreamt I would see this time.

In recent days, Pastor Nadine and I have talked about what a leave might mean. There are some few small things that I can do from my home office that somehow allow me to keep connected to the parish community. These are things that I can easily pick up or put down —some TRINITY DOVE preparation; some planning for adult learning; that sort of thing. I also like to fetch the mail and to visit with people at the post office. At some point, though, even these will be relinquished for a time. In any event, and in the main, the reality is that I will not be at church for the near future.

As I've mentioned all along, I continue to enjoy the terrific support of Pastors Nadine and Syd together with the generous and helpful attention of our Mutual Ministry people, Congregational Council and staff. In the extended parish community, people have been unceasingly generous with cards, food, flowers and various gifts of time and assistance. For all of these, we are very, very grateful.

Lynne Murphy —Kim's sister from Saint John, New Brunswick— flew in a couple of weeks ago. She will be staying with us. Lynne is an R.N. and she and Kim are very close. It's great to have her here. Ruth is back and forth to Toronto. She has a short week of classes (Monday through Thursday) and manages to be home in time for supper Thursday evening. She then catches an early bus back on Monday morning. John, for his part, is at KCI every day but is otherwise at home.

That's how things are for us; that's where we are now.

Thank you for your many kindnesses and good wishes. We are much loved, much blessed and very, very grateful.

Blessings to you and to those whom you hold dear.

André Lavergne,  
pastor in the Trinity community.

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Some Parish Stuff ~  
Coming Soon to Trinity in Adult Learning ...

Faith in the Media ~ A six-week Sunday morning series for Epiphany, 2004  
Ecological Footprints ~ A six-week Sunday morning series for Lent, 2004  
Faith in Hard Times ~ A six-week Tuesday evening series for Lent, 2004