

TRINITY TOPICS

AUTUMN
2026

We are an affirming congregation.

We welcome and nurture diversity. We especially embrace those who have been marginalized, and we actively affirm variations in gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, physical and mental well-being, racial and cultural identities, economic status and family structure. We rejoice in creating sanctuary for all of God's people and welcome them into full participation in our church.



What do the newcomers see?

By Rev. Dr. Wayne Menard

The United Church of Canada describes the church as a welcoming congregation: one that is joyful and accepting, listens as well as speaks, welcomes full participation, values different experiences and points of view, and—very importantly—allows itself to be changed by the people it welcomes.

There is a particular kind of courage required to walk into a church for the first time. Those of us who have been here for many years know where to park. We know which door is actually unlocked. We know where the sanctuary is, when to stand, when to sit, and what everyone means when they say, “Our Father, who art in heaven...” We even know most of the pie jokes.

A newcomer knows none of these things.

For the person arriving for the first time, everything is new. Before the first hymn is sung or the first prayer offered, they are already asking questions. Where do I go? Am I dressed properly? Is someone going to notice that I don’t know what I’m doing? Will anyone speak to me? Perhaps more importantly: will anyone actually see me?

First impressions in a church are rarely made by the crushing brilliance of the minister’s scriptural exegesis. They happen much earlier. They happen in the parking lot, or at the front door, or during those few uncertain moments when the stranger among us looks around trying to figure out where, or even if, they belong.

What do they see? Do they see people genuinely pleased that they have come? Are they disappointed as folks greet others but not them? Do they hear laughter and a conversation in which there is room for one more, or do they encounter the invisible walls that can form around long-established friendships?

This question has been with me my entire career: When someone enters our church, are they encountering a congregation as an independent but constituent part of the United Church of Canada, or are they walking into the midst of a Jesus community that is waiting to welcome and embrace the newcomer among us? There is a difference!

We are not welcoming people because we need another name on the membership roll, another volunteer for a committee, or even another person contributing to the offering, although all those things are important. We welcome people because hospitality lies close to the heart of the Christian life. Again and again, Jesus notices people. The Gospels tell us how he notices the person standing at the edge of the crowd or how he never misses the one others have overlooked. We are reminded many times how he sits at table with people who might never otherwise have been invited.

Dare we say that perhaps he is who we are meant to represent. God doesn’t call us to represent ourselves or the institution—not even the particular way we have learned to do church. We represent Christ. Radical? Perhaps, if we mean that Christ is at the root of who we are and why we do the things we do.

We’ve said repeatedly that this does not mean we all believe exactly the same things. In most healthy churches, people do not. People come with different experiences, questions, convictions, doubts, histories, and hopes. Christian community is not created by making everyone think alike. It is created when people who are different from one another decide to practice a common way of living. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s conviction of Jesus’s way of living together had

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him write, “The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede.”

Perhaps kindness is at the centre of that way. By that I don't mean spectacular kindness. It is ordinary kindness that Bonhoeffer imagines Jesus to be modelling. It could be something simple like remembering someone's name or moving over so that a stranger does not have to sit alone. I remember being greeted by the friendliest person and, when I returned the next week, he remembered my name. Simple but powerfully engaging. My favourite example of simple kindness is noticing the person standing by themselves during coffee time, going to them and saying “Hello.”

The goal is not to become besties, although there is nothing wrong with that! The goal is something simpler: to become a community in which kindness has become habitual. Eventually we will not need to remind ourselves to be welcoming any more than we remind ourselves to breathe. Hospitality becomes part of the character

of the congregation, woven into the language we use, the assumptions we make, the way we arrange our spaces, and the way we treat one another.

We might even rethink our starting point. Rather than ask how we get newcomers to connect with us, we ask how do we connect with them?

Our visitors are not new to this world. They are people whose stories, questions, wisdom, wounds, humour, faith, and uncertainty may enrich our life together. So, when someone walks through the door for the first time, perhaps our task is wonderfully uncomplicated.

See them. Really see them!

Welcome them. For heaven's sake, say hello. Don't assume someone else will do it. Make room for them. Give them some space to be a part of the good thing we have going at Trinity.

And in doing so, allow them to glimpse something of the Christ we are trying, however imperfectly, to follow.

Wayne



Wayne and Laurie were at Bel-Air Summerfest letting people know how fantastic we are.



Our Sunday school crafters know how to welcome newcomers to Trinity!

Our service celebrations

By Rosemary Gibb and John Comfort

Welcome Wayne!

The worship committee was delighted to learn that the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council (EOORC) approved Rev. Dr. Wayne Menard as our permanent minister. The region will hold a covenanting service in October—date to be confirmed.

Friendly greetings

The theme for the coming weeks will be the importance of welcoming everyone, particularly new visitors. A friendly greeting and a show of interest in someone new can make that person feel truly accepted, and more likely to return.

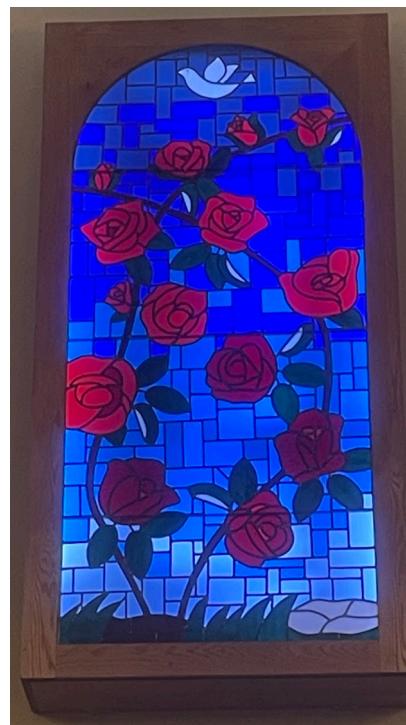
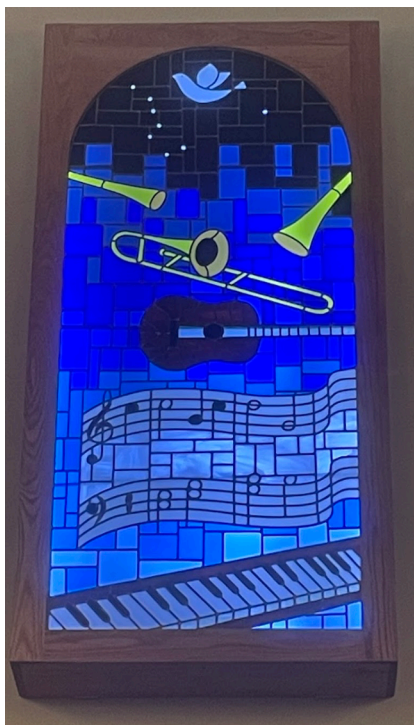
We have greeters at the door and in the Gallery. Wayne is also in the Gallery just before the services to meet and chat with new people. Watch for handwritten name tags on folks and make sure to say hello if they're new. If you would like to be a greeter, please contact John Comfort.

Our children

Correna has some great resources and ideas for our children's programming this year. Even though she is studying at Queen's in Kingston, she is hard at work making things meaningful and fun for kids. As always, we need some volunteers to assist for the Sundays when she is away at school. Let us know if you can help. We are quite optimistic that more children may be coming over the coming months.

So much to be thankful for

The Thanksgiving service on October 11 will be a special one. Chris Humphrey will be talking about the two beautiful new stained glass pieces that are now mounted in the Sanctuary, a much-loved guest soloist will visit, and the Food Train will chug through to collect nonperishable food items for Caldwell. We have much to be thankful for at Trinity!



If you need proof that Trinity is a sanctuary ...

By Rosemary Gibb

Our daughter, Adrienne, and her family were going on a two-week vacation from August 7 to 21. David and I agreed to dogsit their dog, Waffles, and the dwarf hamster, Spaghetti. (Their previous dwarf hamster was named Meatball by the kids, but he died. So the kids decided it only made sense to call this one Spaghetti. Good grief!) Anyway, David and I settled in well with the pets and things went fine, until three days before Adrienne's family were due to return.

On August 18, at 10:00 p.m. about an hour after I put Waffles to bed in his crate, there was a loud banging on our front door. I opened it up to see a police officer standing there. He informed me that a propane truck had overturned nearby and was leaking propane. They were evacuating all the homes within an 800-metre radius. He told me he couldn't force us to go, but he strongly recommended that we leave as soon as possible, as an explosion would do severe damage to the neighbourhood. He asked if we had friends or family we could stay with. Right, I'm thinking, with a large Golden Labrador in tow? I asked him how long we'd have to stay away. He said he didn't know, maybe a day or so. What????!!

So David got Waffles out of the crate and tried to dismantle it. But there wasn't enough time to figure it out. We ended up just pulling out the mattress and blanket. David carted those to the car along with Waffles, some dog food and a couple of bags of clothes. I said, "Don't forget Spaghetti." He looked at me like I was nuts. I told him for heaven's sake we couldn't leave our

daughter's hamster in a house that might blow up! So Spaghetti's cage went into the back with Waffles. Meanwhile, I tried phoning a friend (no answer) and our son, Andrew, to see if they could take us. There was no room at Andrew's but he called fifteen hotels that were pet friendly. All were full.

By this time we were on the road and out of the danger zone. But where could we go? David said, "Let's go to the church." He had suggested that earlier on but I thought that would not be, um, appropriate. However, by this time it was 10:30 at night, and at that hour we had no other options. We had keys to the church so off we headed.

We got into the church no problem. David went downstairs and slept on the couch in the Carson Room. Waffles, Spaghetti and I went to the Friendship Room. Spaghetti, being nocturnal, probably thought this was a very cool adventure. However, Waffles and I got very little, if any sleep. He kept wandering around to find different spots to lie down. I was lying on the couch worrying about my house exploding. David slept like a log.

At 6:30 a.m. Andrew phoned to say the evacuation order had been lifted and we could go home. What a welcome relief! It wouldn't be necessary to scrounge for Friendship Room cookies for breakfast.

So, David and I just wanted to share this weird story with you, about Trinity being a most welcome sanctuary for us at a very stressful time. Trinity, thank you for being there!



Family Community Circle

Our up-and-coming **Family Community Circle** is meeting on Thursdays starting

October 1, 2026

4:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

in Tait Hall and Carson Room.

All are welcome!

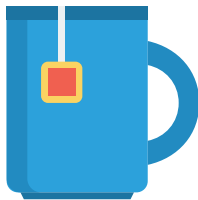
Snacks and beverages will be served, and child care offered.

Let's Connect

Coffee and Conversation

Tuesday mornings
10:30 a.m.
in the Carson Room

Join us for connection,
conversation
and ... coffee



Men's Breakfast

The second and fourth
Thursdays every month
8:00 a.m.
Summerhays Grill

October 8 and 22
November 12 and 26
December 10





Saturday, November 14

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Books, toys and jigsaw puzzles in the
Friendship Room and Lobby.

The Ark Café, baked goods, jams and jellies,
handmade crafts, jewellery
and the Boutique in Tait Hall.

A great opportunity for Christmas shopping!

Read along with Arlene?

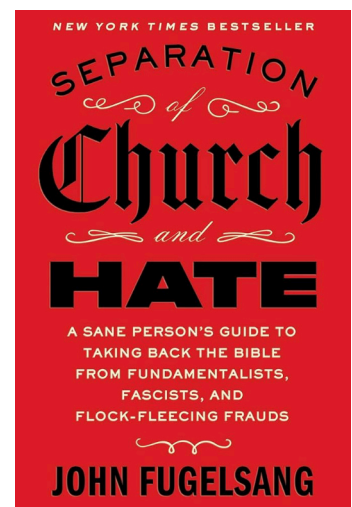
This summer I read this book by John Fugelsang. He is a comedian and the son of a former nun and a former Franciscan brother, which means he is both entertaining and highly knowledgeable about the Bible. In this book he challenges those who misquote the Bible or use verses out of context. He writes about biblical literalism, misogyny, homophobia, abortion, and racism, and much more.

In future I'd like to pull together a book study session to discuss, but I'm waiting for paperback copies to become available. Right now it's an expensive book.

In the meantime, if you can get a library copy or don't mind paying \$39.99, give it a read and let me know what you think!

(Editorial comment: Support independent book stores. Don't buy from Amazon!

[Perfect Books](#) on Elgin is highly recommended.)



Outreach

By Jean Meldrum

Three new programs are starting this fall in the Caldwell neighbourhood, and all of them could use some help with supplies.

- **Sewing/Knitting:** fabric, patterns, thread, wool, crocheting and knitting needles
- **Parents and kids arts and crafts:** colouring books, crayons, construction paper, safety glue, paint, paint brushes and other activity books
- **Learn-to-draw:** sketchpads and coloured pencils.

Snacks would be great too—juice packs, snack bars, muffins— and we are always collecting **hygiene supplies** for men, women and children, and **diapers**.

Leave any donations in the bin under the table by the Outreach bulletin board. Don't be restricted to this list. Be creative!

Harvest of Hope Gala

Thursday, October 1

An unforgettable evening to raise funds for the Caldwell Family Centre.

It's more than just a night out. It's an opportunity to come together, celebrate the community, and make a meaningful difference to the individuals and families who rely on their programs and services.

Guests can look forward to amazing food, great entertainment, exciting auction items, and an evening filled with community spirit.

[Tickets and information](#)

Caldwell Family Centre receives new commercial stove

Thanks to a generous donation, Caldwell was the happy recipient of a brand-new commercial kitchen stove, which will help strengthen and support hot meal operations for thousands of people every month.



A brief history of Trinity's work in Carlington

By Pam Sheehan

(Long) past Chair, Carlington Social Action Committee, Community Health Centre, Caldwell Family Centre

Beginning forty years ago in 1986, Trinity entered our “golden years” of community volunteerism. That year Trinity was instrumental in hiring the first Carlington chaplain, Sue Taylor. At that time, the community housed the largest concentration of people living in poverty in our region.

The **Carlington Social Action Committee**, made up of approximately eleven churches in the region, was the fundraising and governing body of this “ministry of presence” which Sue provided to so many individuals and families. Sue was beloved in the community over many years, and she was a steadfast member of our congregation until she later began ministry at First United. Her calm, caring, and dedicated ministry re-shaped my life.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a time when we realized that a person's health and well-being was closely tied to poverty, community supports grew in Carlington.

- The Carlington Resource Centre moved from meeting in the basement of the Quickie on Merivale road to the restored school at 900 Merivale road. (I was chair of the board at that time, going to meetings in a hard hat.)
- Around the corner, Sister Thelma Marion and her order, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, opened the Caldwell Family Centre in a townhouse on Medford Ave. Before that, the Sisters had been providing community care, including food, out of their home on Edgecliffe.

Sister Thelma was a remarkable woman, another source of inspiration to all those who knew her.

Sue Taylor worked with the nuns out of the Caldwell Family Centre until she was provided a ground floor apartment by Ottawa Housing on Caldwell, where the chaplaincy remains today. Sue also “cajoled” the local counsellor to provide a trailer for the Boutique. The Boutique continues to operate on a back lawn to this day, providing clothing and household items at minimal cost.

The list of initiatives by the early Chaplaincy, with strong support from our church, are too numerous to mention. Sue developed a pastoral care team of about twenty-five people, many from Trinity. Men from the team met one-on-one with men in the community. There was a Mum and baby program, and we supported the morning drop-in, which our Trinity Outreach Committee continues to do with Jean's weekly muffins. Sue developed a children's music program. She was especially excited to acquire some African drums. Many of our women visited Lepage Manor, which housed a concentration of seniors and others struggling with physical and mental health challenges. At the time this “hands-on ministry” encouraged churches of varying denominations to work together with a common vision of God's community, one of kindness and compassion.

Sue Taylor finally moved on to another calling. Shortly after that, for a number of reasons, Trinity stopped funding the Chaplaincy. (The Caldwell Family Centre and the Carlington Community Connection or Chaplaincy, are two separate entities with their own governance and charitable numbers. Trinity continues to fund the Caldwell Family Centre, mainly through the food program at Cityview United.)

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Other churches have continued their support for chaplain Steve Zytveld and a dedicated part-time program and volunteer coordinator, Jeff Johnson.

Sadly, but as life works, Sue Taylor and Sister Thelma are both gone. They were women of deep spirituality and a commitment to care for those on the margins of our society. I was invited to be present in the hospital when Sister Thelma was in her last days. The nuns formed a ring around her bed, singing softly in French. It was a beautiful experience I will never forget.

Trinity was built by dedicated, compassionate believers. Right now our membership numbers and our volunteer energy has decreased, but as a smaller church it is important to remember all the good works we have done over the years and the work we will continue to do. Our future is steadfast. Let's carry on together.



We always appreciate the talents of Donna Hawkes and Paula Conlon.

Our Community

We remember and cherish

Carolyn Johns
August 30, 2026

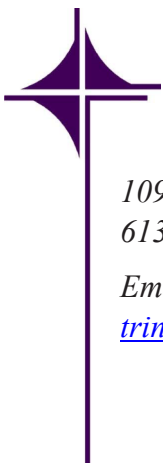
Eldon MacCara
July 25, 2026

Articles for Trinity Topics are gratefully accepted. The editors reserve the right to edit all material.

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