

Trinity United Church Annual Report 2020

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Giacomo Di Stefano

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Susan Gard

Eva Wasilewski (Mee Dmitryssn)

Mellie Collinson (Mee Root)

Morma Roberston (Mee Bradley)

George Jenkins

William Fred Van Howe Jr.

Diane Lassonde

Marjorie-Ann Erechuk (Mee Pitcher)

Joan Fuchs (Nee Michalszyn)

Glenna Mc Enroe (Nee Waldro)

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Minister's Message



Dear Friends:

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I wrote to you last year in March these words, and clearly it was "pre-COVID-19." "Despite the struggles 2019 presented us, and the questions of which way to go and how to get there, with God's help *you* pulled off an amazing year of dedication, creativity and fun that sets us up for full-speed ahead in 2020." Oh my - so much for my crystal ball!

Instead of "full-speed ahead," 2020 as of mid-March felt like hitting a brick wall. It felt like it - as suddenly we had to" lock down and stay safe" to abide by public health guidelines. It felt like it - because of the separation anxiety so many of us began to feel; we are a community that worships together, plays and prays together. It felt like it - having to put off our in-person implementation of what was then a brand-new governing structure. Instead we pivoted hard, asking God to help us learn quickly how to be church online. We did that (see my Lenten letter) in spectacular fashion! But the questions I wondered about for 2020 - which way to go and how to get there - remain.

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The questions we face are not new. How does a committed group of Englishspeaking and bilingual (and at least one dear francophone!) Christians harness our conviction that Christ calls us to ministry individually and collectively - in our East End context? How does owning and maintaining expensive large-meeting space buildings contribute to or distract from that mission? What innovation can we imagine to ensure a sustainable financial footing ideally one that is supported by our generous capacity to give each year rather than relying on reserves (which won't last forever). Right now online and in the coming post-pandemic world, how might we invite others "to come share and grow in God's love" with us?

The Good News? God *is* still with us. Still with us despite the questions and challenges we face. Despite the isolation and loneliness - the boredom - this pandemic has created for so many. Despite the grief of the loss of very dear loved ones. God is still with us - inseparable because that's how GOOD God is! The Apostle Paul knew it, despite sickness and uncertainty, despite being harassed, mocked, jailed; he knew God met in Jesus the Christ was never separated from him. He was never left alone.

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Paul knew that, and I know you know it too. That's the love we've seen online in this past year. On Zoom for Sunday worship, for the Friendship Group, for the Living Room, for Prayer Meeting. It's in the love and compassion we hold out to each other - in ways stronger and more resilient than perhaps before. Adversity will do that, eh? It's when the chips are down that we discover our strengths (and any weaknesses!). Tough times call us to reach out to others, to help even when we know we need help ourselves. God whose love is so high and deep and wide gives us the strength and courage we didn't know we possessed!

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Closed Caption Breakout Rooms Reactions

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Minister's Message (cont.)

2020 challenged us, yet here we are, poised to make the most of 2021 even with the uncertainty the pandemic will continue to bring. Thanks to the hardworking members of Council who met *weekly* on Zoom to ensure a continuity of care and accountability during this unprecedented period:

Sabz Heffernan's calm, smiling presence as Chair, helping us stay on track in navigating these challenging times.

Beverly Bridgman, and the indefatigable **Philip Massarelli**, working together to put our accounting onto computer (a huge task!) and see that the bills are paid.

Sheri Cameron acting as Council secretary, taking the lead with our COVID-19 task group to keep us all safe (a huge task!) on top of keeping our Sunday School program hopping (another huge task!).

Dave Ingham (filling in for **Claude Beaumont** whose work at the Jewish General made meeting attendance impossible) contributing so much above and beyond the M&P file.

Gary Tompkins working behind the scenes in so many ways to contribute in Council and out to the administration and functioning (and fun!) of the church (a huge task!).

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Council started its life together with the help of **Stephanie Coward-Yaskiw**, a United Church consultant on communication, organization and conflict management when she wasn't singing in the choir! Thank you to Steph (who's since moved to Ottawa with husband the Rev. Shaun and son Luka) for helping us surface and let go of some old baggage that could have impeded us in serving the church and caring for one another as leaders!

Summer 2020 at Trinity couldn't help but raise the spirits of all who attended our **Vacation Bible School**. Lead teacher **Sheri Cameron** and an amazing array of volunteers ensured the kids had a safe way to learn and play together when so much else was shut down in their lives. Amazing!!!

2020 could not stop the always-needed repair, maintenance and cleaning of our 7th and 8th avenue buildings. When emergency struck requiring us to repair/reenforce the plexiglass in our A-frame, **Ashley Verhaeghe** was ready with the right contractor at the best price. **Gordon Bailey** and **Garry Garland** provided much assistance and help in the building, along with **Norm Doré** (Buildings and Grounds Ministry Team chair). Brick repair also was needed. Along with the continuing work of **John Bridgman**, and security oversight of **John Brosseau**, the building remains ready when we are to welcome us back!

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Our worship moved seamlessly online, enriched by the addition of our friends from Anjou United, thanks to keynote know-how of **Aaron Miechkota**, the musical creativity and can-do of our music director **Julia Budd** and volunteer guitarist/singer **Gary Tompkins** and (back in the summer in the open air of Gary's backyard) **Philip Massarelli**. Speaking of creativity, our United Theological Students Aaron (who will graduate in 2021!), and **Erika Leung** each led us in worship to great reviews!

Trinity Secretary **Vera Studnicki** found herself unhappily needing to stay home more than not during the lock-down but kept me informed of telephone messages. Meanwhile, **Christine Tatarewicz** stepped in to help in the office for Advent/Christmas (and was named our new Secretary as of Vera's retirement in January after 20 years - Vera, thanks so much for your dedicated service and your caring, your smile and laughter, and your friendship!

Thanks as well to **Shirley Cartmill** for her continuing hard work as our Envelope Secretary - a behind-the-scenes but exacting job (especially around tax time!) that she does "to a T."

Closed Caption Breakout Rooms Reactions

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Minister's Message (cont.)

Thank you to all our Ministry Team leaders for doing your best under tough circumstances in Fund Development (**Kim Doré**!), Membership/Pastoral Care (**Judy Ciciola**!), Mission & Outreach (**Stacey Ciciola**!), Christian Development (**Jenn Carroll**!), Worship (**Heather Purcell**!), and Congregational Life (**David Garland**!).

For me the church is always about seeking to glimpse God's love and light in the midst of God's people. We sadly lost a number of those points of God's love and light in 2020 - including two due to COVID-19: Norma Robertson and George Jenkins. Also lost to us were long time members Marjorie-Ann Erechuk, Susan Gard, Ron Lajoie and Glenna McEnroe, as well as those dear to our members and friends - William Van Howe, Diane Lassonde and Eva Dmitryssn (Wasilewski). We also lost Eileen Daly, an Anjou United friend who sang in our choir and helped in the kitchen with the Silver Chains - a friend to so many of us! May the memory of each one long remain alive in our hearts and the hearts of all who knew and loved them.

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Yes, 2020 was guite the year! Making the pivot from in-person to Zoom proved a creative challenge made enjoyable by the help of so many mentioned above. Public health restrictions seriously cramped by love of home and hospital visits (seriously, I miss visiting with so many of you!). I continued to serve the wider church through the East Ontario & Quebec Candidacy Board; the national church Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation Granting Committee; and the Nakonha:ka Region's Living into Right Relations Committee. I also completed (as of January 2021) my term as President of the Board of the Almage Senior Community Centre. As I indicated last year, I had been finding my volunteer plate a little too full and am happy to see 2021 as a time for rebalancing my commitments, especially to continue to serve you better.

For all your support I thank you and I'm blessed to be among you as we explore the opportunities and challenges ahead. We do so knowing the love of God in Christ for each one and for this, our beloved, imperfect, yet faith-full community. We made it through 2020, and 2021 - ready or not - here we come!

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In the big love of Christ, and hugs!

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Chair's Message



As communities within communities, we are once again mandated to gather and lovingly assess where we've been, where we are and, where we want to be. Disclaimer: I did not think it possible for us to evolve as much as we have during my short time serving as chair!

Under different circumstances, community building and outreach goals set by our Council and Ministry leaders would have mostly been face-to dace. That wasn't possible but, that does not mean our leaders stayed idle! In fact, many took initiative and found innovative ways to network and reshape how fellowship is fostered. Not only did the vital functions of our church continue, we increased our online presence in ways that have allowed us to reach out over greater distances then our building ever could.

That being said, there is always room for improving the flow of ideas, responsibilities and opportunities. Everyone wanting to collaborate as an active part of our church governance is welcome. In a world full of uncertainty, there is one thing that has been proven to me time and time again; we are stronger together. The paths we've taken together give me hope and strength to continue evolving as we move forward together. As always, I am honored to walk alongside and within the loving and resilient family that we call a church.

Yours, Sabz



Governance



Theology Student Report





We are happy to report on our experience as theology students in 2020. The past year Erika Leung and Aaron Miechkota (both members of Trinity) continued studying toward their Masters of Divinity at the United Theological College and McGill University.

The pandemic had a big impact on our studies. As of March 2020, our college closed for in-person learning and all of our courses went online. As with many other people, the uncertainty of the pandemic made focusing on our studies a challenge. But with the support and encouragement of our church, family and friends we somehow made it through! It is a year we will never forget. This year we both had opportunities to lead worship online.

We thank God for Trinity United Church. You inspire and motivate us. Thank you for the prayers and encouragement you offer us as your theology students.

From, Erika and Aaron



Spiritual Affairs Director: Gary Tompkins



The Director of Spiritual Affairs oversees the spiritual interests of the Congregation, including: membership, the administration of the sacraments, Christian education, public worship, the use of the church building, pastoral care and visiting and outreach.

As such, the Director of Spiritual Affairs directs the following Ministries:

- Oristian Development (Jennifer Carroll, Ministry Leader)
- Congregational Life (David Garland, Ministry Leader)
- Membership & Pastoral Care (Judy Ciciola, Ministry Leader)
- Wission & Outreach (Stacey Ciciola, Ministry Leader)
- Worship (Heather Purcell, Ministry Leader)



There is only one way to describe our Christian Development program: resilient. Although, COVID-19 made connecting with our children and youth a challenge, we kept our spirits high and kept meeting and loving as a community. In fact, being on Zoom was actually a blessing in some ways: it allowed us to easily keep in touch with Ellie and Nora Van Howe who moved back to their native Davenport, Iowa home and to keep in touch with Peter, Susan, and Abigail Idowu who moved to Toronto

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in early autumn. COVID-19 didn't stop us from having a busy year!

FÊTE DES NEIGES: Early in February we went to Montreal's Fête des Neiges where we enjoyed an afternoon of tubing, playing on ice sculptures and toasting marshmallows.

WORSHIPLUDE: In February, we rented a mini van and headed out to stay in Ottawa for the annual gathering of United Church youth and young adults, known as Worshiplude. We had an amazing time! Thanks to Eric Garceau, our own mini van driver!

MT. SUTTON SKI DAY: During March break, we packed up another mini van and headed out to ski at Mont Sutton. It was the first time skiing for some of us! Thanks again to Eric Garceau, who drove us once again.

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CAMERON ACADEMY: As soon as school was cancelled indefinitely from March 2020, Sheri Cameron and Sabz Heffernan jumped into action to teach some of our kids online everyday from 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM.

FUN TIMES AT 4: Knowing our kids and youth would need a time to come together, Sheri Cameron organized a bi-weekly event of crafts, games, and story time (We read The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe). HUGE thanks to Anna, Katerina, Grace, and Alexandra Plaitis who often led the activities.

KNIGHTS OF NORTH CASTLE VBS: During the summer, we finally got to get together in a sociallydistanced, mask-wearing, outside VBS! Thanks to Sheri Cameron, Sabz Heffernan, Veronica Heffernan, Gary Tompkins, Meghan and Olivia Cameron, and Catalka for volunteering to run the camp.

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BACK TO SCHOOL BASH: We were lucky to be able to meet one last time in person before COVID-19 shut our church down again. This time we painted some pencils and crates to prepare for school, had out backpacks blessed, and enjoyed a BBQ in the yard.

QUARANTINE-O-WEEN HALLOWEEN PARTY: Although

COVID-19 cancelled trick-or-treating for the majority of Montreal kids, we held a joint Trinity-Anjou Halloween party on Zoom complete with costumes, games, crafts, and a movie. Big thanks to Veronica Heffernan, Sheri Cameron, Jennifer Carroll, and Natalya Sandy-Scott for preparing and delivering Halloween goodie bags.

LIVE FROM BETHLEHEM: For our Christmas pageant, we made use of the Zoom technology and presented a joint Trinity-Anjou newscast production of the miraculous event of Jesus' birth.

CHRISTMAS PJ PARTY: Still stuck at home, we held a Christmas PJ Party where we played Kahoot! and watched The Grinch together.

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ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL (in a breakout room):



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Congregational Life

You would expect that Congregational Life would have come to a halt during COVID-19, but you would be wrong. Our community continued to gather and flourish all throughout 2020. We found that our community became a lifeline for so many of our congregants, many of whom live alone.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP: The Friendship Group met every Tuesday and had hot lunches, organized by Gail Pallante, Claudette Petrauskas, and Christine Tatarewicz. For Valentine's Day, the group made cards which were mailed to veterans at St. Anne des Belveau. John Bridgman organized carpet bowling and other games. We had Pancake Tuesday and then had to stop meeting in-person. However, Gary Tompkins reignited the group virtually and we continued to play games online or through the phone every Tuesday throughout the pandemic.

LIVING ROOM: What started out as an experiment in informal gathering time became a Wednesday night tradition for many of us. Sometimes serious, sometimes hilarious, our Living Room became the place to be on Wednesday nights.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA: This year we held a BYOB - bring your own breakfast - Zoom event with Santa, who made a special appearance at Trinity while we ate our breakfast at home.

DOUGH HOLY NIGHT: In this online afternoon of cookiebaking, story-telling, and carol singing, a bunch of us gathered

together to make snickerdoodle cookies and learn a whole bunch of baking tips at the same time.



CHRISTMAS MOVIE: Missing our traditional gathering after the Christmas Eve service, many of us stayed online and watched a Christmas move together.



Membership & Pastoral Care

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

This year the pandemic brought unexpected challenges to our community and Trinity United Church responded. We quickly organized a Pastoral Care Team and an online messaging group to stay in touch as information about the unknown virus emerged.

A pool of 16 volunteers and our minister volunteered to take action and to reach out with care. First, our team leader organized a phone tree. Phone numbers were distributed amongst the 16 volunteers who called almost all the members, adherents and friends of Trinity. The organizer created a suggested script for the volunteers that included asking how the household was coping, asking if they needed assistance with food or medicine, and letting people know that our worship and community gatherings had gone online. Volunteers also offered to call back in a few weeks to check up on people and to add people to our mailing list. But most of all, the phone calls were about

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extending the love of God into our community in a time of need. Many volunteers remarked how they reconnected with friends and made new meaningful connections by phone. Many shared how their callers thanked them and noted that the outreach was a blessing from God.

To help people who needed groceries, medicine or other essential items, the Pastoral Care Team also assembled a delivery team. This team was at-the-ready with vehicles to pick up and deliver supplies (that were then paid for by the recipients). It was an amazing service to those who couldn't get out.

One member of the team reflected, "It was pretty impressive that we didn't miss a beat. Two days after the pandemic got real, we were already worshiping on Zoom. Friendship Group quickly became online too. We invented the Wednesday night Living Room gathering, mostly because a lot of us were used to meeting Wednesday evenings for choir, and that took on a life of its own."

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Membership & Pastoral Care

Our Prayer Group also went online. This offered four opportunities for people to gather during the week by phone and by internet.

The Pastoral Care Online Messenger Group also became a vital source of fellowship and prayer. Throughout the continuing pandemic, every day the Pastoral Care Team exchanges uplifting messages of care and support for each other and for the world. It has been a blessing for the team. Another member said, "There is so much that goes on quietly in the background, some of which we don't hear about. People who are calling others every day without being asked, people cooking for others all the time." In fact, at Christmas, members of the Team cooked and delivered Christmas dinners to isolated members of our community.

One member said, "I feel so lucky. I don't know what I would have done without my church community. You've all really kept me going during this pandemic." Another member said, "The pandemic has brought us closer than ever. We are getting to know each other, really know each other. And we care for each other."

Yet another member said, "Trinity is my dream church. I never knew how much my church meant to me until the pandemic. Now, Trinity is the central part of my life and I love gathering with these amazing brothers and sisters in Christ. Trinity has changed my life!"

- Aaron Miechkota



Membership & Pastoral Care

Baptisms

Lola Kutilda Testa

Deaths

Giacomo Di Stefano Ron Lajoie Susan Gard Eva Wasilewski (Nee Dmitryssn) Nellie Collinson (Nee Root) Norma Roberston (Nee Bradley) George Jenkins William Fred Van Howe Jr. Diane Lassonde Marjorie-Ann Erechuk (Nee Pitcher) Joan Fuchs (Nee Michalszyn)

<u>Membership</u>

Received By Profession Of Faith:

Mikayla-Aimee Kinoshameg

Baptized: Oct. 18, 2020

Died: Feb. 15, 2020 Died: Feb. 28, 2020 Died: March 12, 2020 Died: March 20, 2020 Died: March 26, 2020 Died: April 2, 2020 Died: April 9, 2020 Died: May 13, 2020 Died: September 8, 2020 Died: October 12, 2020 Memorial: February 19, 2020 Memorial: TBA

Memorial: October 8, 2020 Memorial: TBA Memorial: September 19, 2020 Memorial: TBA Memorial: June 13, 2020 Memorial: September 17, 2020 Memorial: October 16, 2020 Memorial: December 2, 2020

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Date Received: May 17, 2020

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Removed From Active Roll

By Death: Ron Lajoie Susan Gard Norma Robertson George Jenkins Marjorie-Ann Erechuk

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Respectfully Submitted By: Gary Tompkins, Director Of Spiritual Affairs

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Mission & Outreach

PASTORAL CARE TEAM: Admittedly Mission & Outreach became a secondary focus for our congregation as we focused our attention in ensuring our members and adherents were taken care of throughout the pandemic. However, we created a new Pastoral Care Team which served our members.

KNIGHTS OF NORTH CASTLE VBS: We did manage some outreach to children and their families through our Knights of North Castle VBS. An astonishing 60% of our participants are not part of Trinity's Sunday School. These families walked away from camp with a positive feeling of our church and with the message that God is love.

BEST GIFT FUND & FOOD DRIVE: Just before Christmas we managed to pull together a simple Best Gift Fund which was used to help some families in need during Christmas. We also raised money and food for the St. Brendan's Food Drive. The Garland-Best family also organized their annual Christmas ornament memorial fund-raising event.

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Worship

Rev. Read Sherman certainly deserves our praise for how fast and how adaptable he was (and is) in using Zoom! The Sunday right after the pandemic hit Quebec hard, Rev. Read was already leading worship on Zoom. As a congregation, our ability to adapt has been absolutely astounding! Some of us worship online and some of us phone in every Sunday. It has been wonderful to connect with family and friends either across the world or shut-in, who otherwise would not be able to come to Trinity.

Throughout the weeks, Rev. Read and his team learned more and more about putting together a polished worship presentation. Many thanks to everyone who works behind the Zoom screen to make it happen: Rev. Read Sherman, Julia Budd for her musical creativity and talent, Aaron Miechkota for her impressive PowerPoint presentations each Sunday, Gary Tompkins for trouble-shooting and organization, and Sheri Cameron for her work behind the scenes.

PRAYER GROUP: The prayer group met online every Saturday morning to pray for the people on our prayer list.

EASTER: We experienced our first ever Holy Week and Easter online.

CONNECT CURRICULUM: In the fall of 2020, we launched our whole-church curriculum, entitled CONNECT.

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BAPTISM: We had our first ever Zoom baptism!

MEMBERS: We welcomed two new members.

CHRISTMAS: We challenged each family to make their own advent wreath which we lit every week. We held our Blue Christmas Service and Christmas Eve services online. Rev. Read had an informal Christmas Day gathering on Zoom.

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Closed Caption Breakout Rooms Reactions

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Communications Director: Sheri Cameron



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The Director of Communications works as the secretary for Council, publishes and edits the Congregations newsletters, develops the Congregation's communications strategies, coordinates the social media activities for the Congregation, maintains the website, oversees Internet access.

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Communication

With everything moving online, the job of the Communications Director got a whole lot bigger in 2020!

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WEBSITE: Sheri Cameron designed and built our new website, using skills she learned during the spring quarantine.

WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER: We started a weekly enewsletter, which goes out every Saturday morning and includes the worship link, announcements, and many opportunities for our congregants to connect.

COVID-19 TASK FORCE: Sheri Cameron established and led a COVID-19 Task Force including members of Trinity, Anjou, and Scouting and Guiding. The COVID-19 Task Force developed the procedures for our re-entry into out building and is the liaison to Regional Council on COVID-19 matters. Thanks to everyone who was part of the team!

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Finance Director: Philip Massarelli



The Director of Finance is responsible for performing short and long term financial planning and analysis, preparing a draft financial and capital annual budget for the Congregation, to oversee fundraising, to ensure that funds are disbursed as set out in the budget, and to direct the Trustees.

As such, the Director of Finance directs the following:

- Suildings & Grounds Ministry (Norman Doré, Ministry Leader)
- **W** Fund Development Ministry (Kim Wildenman-Doré, Ministry Leader)



Fund Development

Unfortunately the pandemic forced us to cancel the Italian dinner which we had planned for in late March. However, we still managed to pull together a few fundraisers for our church.

RAFFLE: We did an online raffle for anyone donating to the church.

2021 CALENDAR: We sold Trinity calendars.

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ADIRONDACK CHAIRS: Many of our congregants donated money to buy Adirondack chairs for our VBS, as the children and staff spent their days outside and needed places to sit.

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Buildings & Grounds

Even though we were not allowed into our building for much of 2020, our building and grounds still needed to be maintained.

BRICK REPAIR: Ashley Verhaeghe got contractors to repair the bricks from the back lane.

A-FRAME: Thanks to the coordinator between Norman Doré, Ashley Verhaeghe, and Gordon Bailey, the A-frame plexiglass was repaired in October.

MEMORIAL HALL: The Memorial Hall continues to be decorated, thanks to the talents of Veronica Heffernan and Sheri Cameron.

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Closed Caption Breakout Rooms Reactions

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