

# Shelburne Primrose Pastoral Charge Christmas Newsletter 2019

## Special Sunday Services and Events for the Christmas Season and New Year

**Advent: December 1st - December 24th**

**Christmastide: December 25th - January 5th**

**Season of Epiphany: January 6th - February 22nd**

**Sunday December 1st**, 9:10, Primrose United Church, 11 am, Trinity United Church, First Sunday in Advent - Hope

**Sunday, December 8th**, 9:10am, Primrose United Church Baptism and Gathering of Poinsettias for gifting into the community, 11 am Trinity United Church, Second Sunday in Advent - Peace

**Wednesday December 11th**, 12:30pm, UCW Friendship Group downstairs, Trinity. All ladies welcome.

**Saturday December 14th**, 7:30pm, A Dickens of an Evening! Partera International Fundraiser, Primrose United Church

**Saturday, December 14th**, 6pm, Second Saturday Interfaith Dinner and Dialogue, You Belong Here Room, Trinity United Church

**Sunday December 15th**, 9:10, Primrose United Church, 11 am, Trinity United Church, Third Sunday in Advent - Joy

**Sunday December 22nd**, 9am, Primrose United Church Special Christmas Service - Singing and Cinnamon Buns. 11am, Trinity United Church, 4th Sunday in Advent - Love

**Tuesday, December 24th**, 7pm, Trinity Christmas Eve Service, Trinity United Church.

**Sunday, December 29th**, 11 am, Informal Carol and Coffee Service, Trinity United Church for both churches, no service at Primrose

\*\*\* NOTE: Primrose United Church will be meeting in various homes over the cold weather, so please watch the website for locations of gatherings beginning on January 5th.





**Minister's Christmas Message**  
**Rev. Dr. Candice Bist**

The Christian approach to Christmas is a joyous one, not because it ignores the push and shove of daily life, but because it offers a glimpse of another reality that transcends the one we claim is 'real.' Our ancient story tellers and our current dream weavers boldly face down our foolish assumptions that the way it has always been is the way it will always be. With their magic wands, these gifted artists conjure up the divine world, one not muddled with human fingerprints, or distorted by our avarice and preening self-confidence in things we have no business claiming to understand.

I wonder if this year, we might try and live within the beauty that is the Biblical fabulists' mystical telling of the Christmas story. I wonder if we might live within the grand, sweeping vision of the Israeli poets who stood so firmly grounded in obedience to God and called us all to the thrilling adventure of 'living the dream' - not our version of the dream but God's.

"For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth,

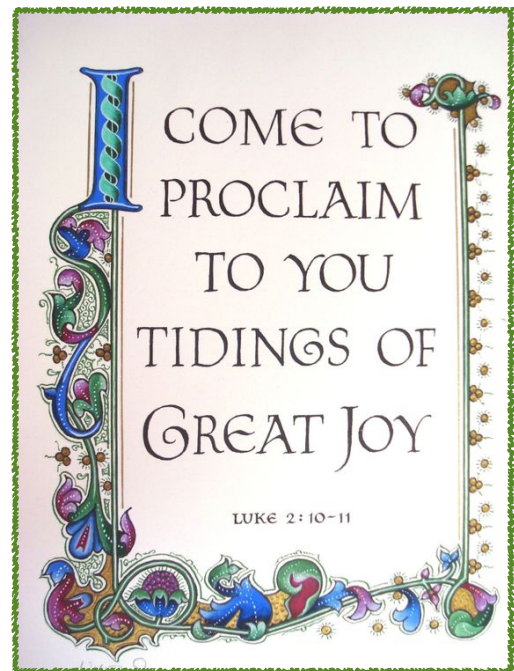
The former things shall not be remembered or come to mind,  
But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating....." Isaiah 65: 17,18

In order to allow something new to emerge, we need to make room for it. Advent is a time for making space, for emptying ourselves of all that we know, all that we are, that the spirit of Christ might be birthed in the sacred place of our hearts.

Christmas, in our own calendar, is not just a day, but twelve days, twelve days of rejoicing, being grateful, allowing ourselves to be amazed by the richness of life all around us.

We are 'people of the way.' And the way of the Advent season is contemplation and reflection. And the way of the Christmas Season is of joyfulness and open armed embrace of all this world has to offer.

Wishing you time for reflection, space for new thought, and time to wonder and be amazed.



**Christmas Message from Ann McAlpine,**  
**Clerk of Session, Trinity United Church**

A modern Christmas Lullaby (1999) that I love says,

"Tell me what best would help to ease your mind:  
someone to give direction for this unfamiliar road,

or someone who says, Follow Me and I will lead you home?"  
How beautiful, how precious the saviour of old, to love completely the loneliest soul.  
How gently, how tenderly He says to one and all, "Child, you can follow Me and I will lead you home."  
Trust me and follow Me and I will lead you home."

As we wait during Advent for Christmas, my Christmas wish is to ask you to prepare by being gentle and tender with one another and with all whom we meet. As we continue to develop our Community Hub we all need to hold our faith close in our hearts - together. Let us continue to serve God by serving our community, helping one another whether it is through worship, music, a



workshop, or sharing our building or food, while offering a few kind words. Let us welcome all who seek sanctuary and comfort in our midst.

May we provide hospitality and unconditional love and most importantly, let us

trust in God to lead us always at all times of the year. Merry Christmas!

### Christmas Message from Gail Brown, Clerk of Session, Primrose United Church

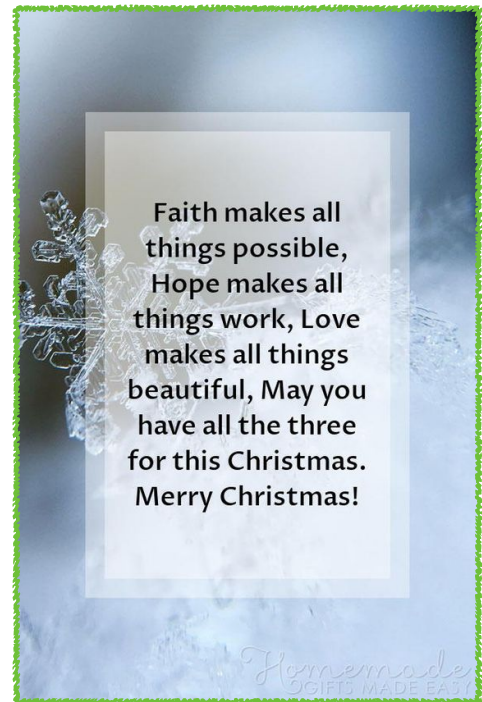
As Christmas quickly approaches, we, at Primrose, embrace its arrival with great anticipation of what is ahead. We need to balance the busy pace of the season, the catering and shopping, baking and Dickens shows, with the peaceful calmness of our Sunday gatherings and carol singing, the warmth of the fireplace and twinkling of Christmas lights. Take time to enjoy the calm moments, to embrace the joy of the season, and to share special time with family, friends and neighbours.

This is also a time to help those less fortunate, and to support the outreach programs that partner with

our pastoral charge—SoupHaus, First Line for Syria, and Partera. Support the work these groups are doing, and enjoy the events they are providing for us. Christmas is a time to show love for one another in subtle ways - drop by a neighbour to say hello, take a plate of cookies to someone who can't get out, give Dickens tickets to a couple who may not have a chance to enjoy the show. Every small thing you do brightens the life of another.

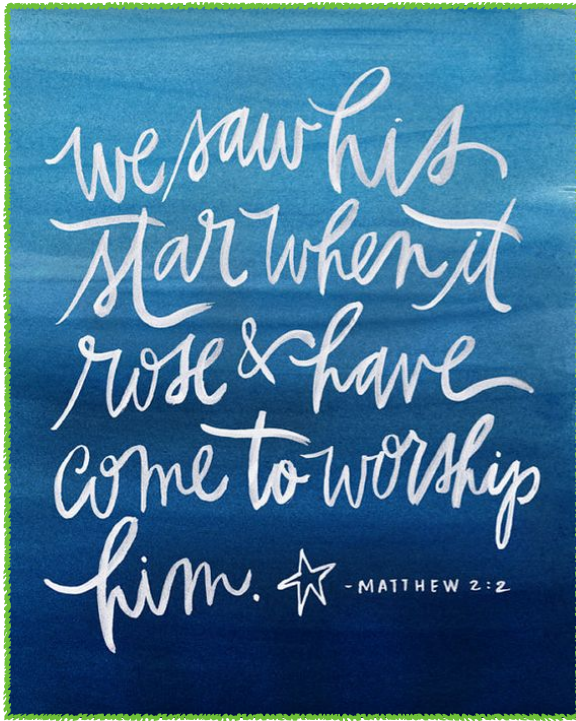
Enjoy the season with your family and friends. This is a special time to hold everyone around you close, to remember those having more difficult times, and to help each other enjoy the season.

Wishing each of you a peaceful Christmas, filled with joy, laughter and love.



### Advent Longing

O Wondrous One,  
Who rides the skies  
and consorts with the earth,  
haunting the heavens,  
hounding mere mortals  
with the expectation of ecstasy,  
come and rouse hungry hearts  
wandering this famined land  
with the aroma of your presence.



Come, angelic envoys,  
with renewed announcement  
of glory (*to God*) and  
peace (*for the earth*).  
Your people long for  
Messiah's rejoinder,  
through wombs made welcome  
to the news of reversal:  
the annulment of enmity  
and the Advent of promise.

From Jesse's ancient stump  
raise again a voice consonant  
with hope's manger-laid disclosure,  
of delight with wolf and lamb,  
and children marshalling the  
cavalcade astride the Lion of Judah.

O Majestic One,  
whose passion spills  
into flesh and blood,  
set our hearts on the edge of our seats,  
shivering in hope, longing,  
longing for the age  
when bitter memory  
dissolves into magnificat.

As with our ancient sister Mary,  
entreat us with the subversive promise  
of Only Begotten freedom, begat  
in the belly of holy submission.

May our lips echo  
the jubilant manifesto  
of creation's destiny  
with justice and with joy.

Holy One of heaven,  
mark these dark nights  
with the brilliance of your star  
to guide emissaries of exclaiming grace:  
of contradiction and scandal  
to the insolent innkeepers of this age;  
of blessing and bounty to the indigent,  
to all who find no lasting home  
save in the age to come.

By Ken Sehested

## ADVENT DEVOTIONS

To help you prepare for the  
Christmas season - and live  
well throughout it, there will  
be a weekly time of devotion,  
study and reflection each  
Thursday morning from 10 -  
11 am. December 5, 12, 19,  
January 2.

*For unto us a child is  
born, unto us a son  
is given: and the government  
shall be upon his shoulder:  
AND HIS NAME SHALL BE  
called Wonderful,  
COUNSELLOR,  
The mighty God,  
THE EVERLASTING FATHER,  
The Prince of Peace.*

# Visioning Our Way Forward, with UCC's EDGE and Embracing the Spirit

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" – Proverbs 29:18

Few people are fond of change - particularly within institutions. And yet, everything and everyone is constantly changing, and institutions must change too, or their time comes to an end.

The Visioning Groups at both churches have put much time and thought into how our churches might re-emerge in a form that allows them to continue to provide spiritual care on Sunday mornings, as well as throughout the week, while repositioning their focus to face outwards towards a neighbourliness that serves the needs of the community, which are many. This is the pathway that Jesus modelled for us. He worked from a place of internal devotion to God, but in his ministry he faced outwards, serving all those who needed care. And he did it always with compassion. This too, is our calling.

This shift in alignment for the churches is long overdue. There is no guarantee that we will be able to make the shift. But the visioning groups are doing all that they can to make success a real possibility. To help with clarity they have put all we do, or dream of doing, into four groups so we have a clearer vision of our purpose.

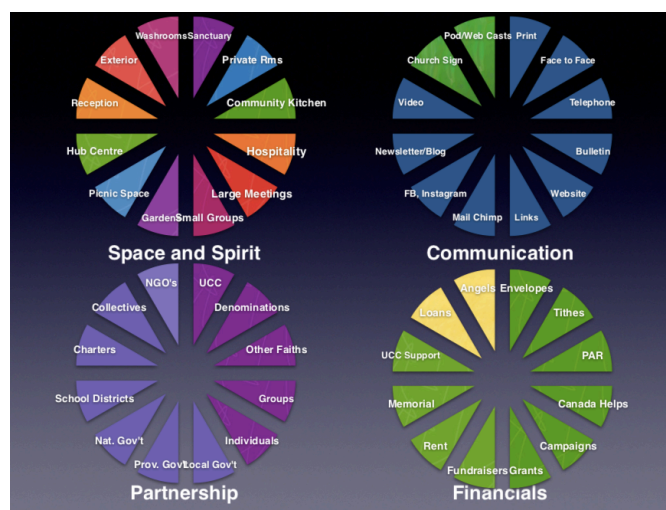
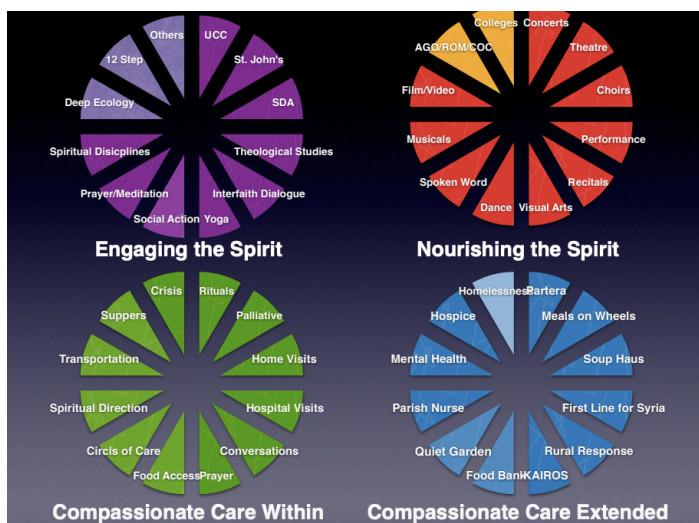
The visioning groups have set their sights on reimagining the pastoral charge as a fully implemented community hub providing compassionate care, spiritual nourishment and graced sanctuary. To do so, the church will need to partner with all those who, like ourselves, desire to serve the community in a spirit of radical, generous hospitality.



*Embracing the Spirit* and *EDGE* are the two entities within the United Church of Canada who are supporting churches that wish to develop and

explore this kind of spiritual, compassionate neighbourliness, grounded in the needs of the community where they serve. And they have been very supportive of all our efforts.

We have recently received a \$25,000 grant for the sole purpose of strengthening the core of our developing hub through skilled human resources and technology. The visioning groups will be meeting in December and early January to bring a plan of action to the Pastoral Charge Council. This money is specifically set aside to develop various aspects of the infrastructure, or framework which supports all the work the churches do, and can do.



## Visioning New Leadership

One of the big pieces in the puzzle of forward movement is new leadership. Rev. Bist will be finished her time with us at the end of 2020. Finding someone who is able to lead us forward in our emerging vision is important work. Two members of our Trinity visioning group and six other very capable women have taken on this role: Jennifer Crewson, Faye Ferguson, Beth Halstead, Whitney Hofman, Diane Irwin, Karin Klouman, LeeAnn McKenna, and Jennifer Shaver.

We have every confidence that our search team will harness their collective wisdom, creativity and tenacity to seek out the kind of leadership that serves the traditional way of the church at the same time they understand how to forge new pathways of serving.

In the meantime, the visioning groups at both churches realize the limits of our church buildings. Primrose United Church will be spending the first part of 2020 investigating all aspects of their current building and land. Trinity United Church, having already discerned the churches needs, will be investigating all grant opportunities that might help with church restoration.

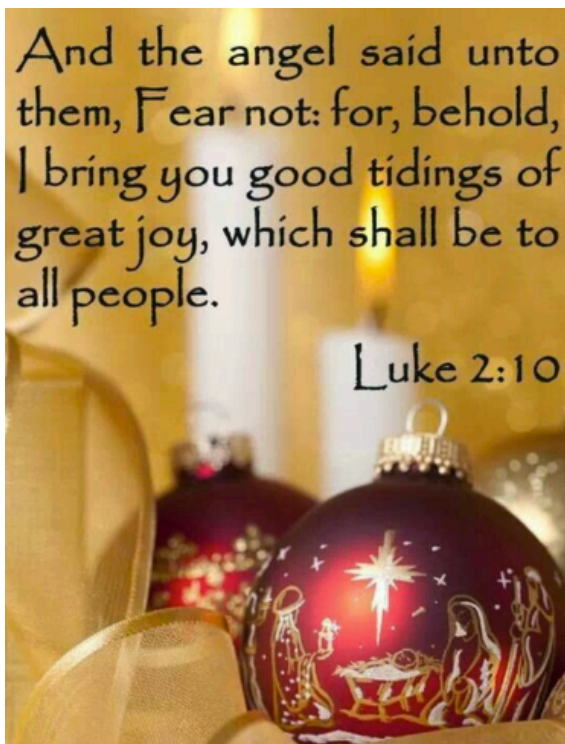
For a further look at all the work the visioning group has done, and continues to do, visit the members and adherents page on our website. <https://www.shelburneprimrose.com/membersadherents.html>

## And what are you asked to do?

While the visioning groups are doing their work, it is hoped that the rest of the congregations will do theirs. And that work consists of active participation wherever you feel you are called to serve, and doing so with compassion and inclusivity. It consists of the steady and much appreciated financial support of tithes and offerings. It consists of the on going pastoral visiting and care that is so needed this time of year.

Please remember that Sunday service is a gift to you, a time to strengthen your spirit for the work you do in the community and in your homes. Do not neglect Sunday Service attendance. It may not always be exactly the way you wish it to be. But the point of Sunday service is not to please you. It is for you to find yourself pleased and grateful that others have done considerable work in order to help you with your spiritual journey.

Sunday service is neither an entertainment nor a performance. Sunday service is not a spectator sport. The music, the teaching, and the prayers are all designed to offer you a time of personal reflection and renewal. That is your work, not the work of the minister or the worship group. Come to service with an open heart and a quiet mind, as best you can, and be ready to receive restoration, correction and instruction from the divine spirit.



# On Going Partnerships and Initiatives

## **Second Saturdays - Interfaith Dinner and Dialogue, Second Saturday of Every Month from 6 - 9, in the YBR, Trinity**

If you are interested in interfaith conversation, come out for dinner and meet and get to know others from various faith groups. This month we are sharing both the gifts and the challenges of our high holidays - whenever they may be. For more information and to rsvp for this gathering, contact Bella Carter [shailacarter@gmail.com](mailto:shailacarter@gmail.com)

## **Youth Gathering First and Third Thursday of Each Month, 3 - 5pm, with Jenny Hanley and Mellissa Gailbraith, Large Room Downstairs, Trinity, Beginning in January**

Jenny Hanley from The Hanley Institute out of Flesherton and local therapist Mellissa Galbraith are teaming up to offer a twice monthly youth drop in at Trinity from 3 - 5 on Thursdays. For further information, contact Rev. Bist

## **Music for Mom's and Tots with Noni Thomas, Thursdays, 5 - 8, YBH, Trinity**

Noni Thomas is offering music lessons for moms and tots every Thursday evening in the YBH room at Trinity. For further information for to Noni's website and contact her from here. <https://nonithomasmusic.ca/>

## **Soup Haus, Tuesdays 6 - 8, Downstairs, Trinity**

Soup Haus is a volunteer run, sponsor and donation funded community initiative, welcoming anyone and everyone for a complimentary supper every Tuesday evening from 6 pm - 8 pm at Trinity United Church. Delicious meals are offered to anyone who wishes one. For more information, and the weekly menu visit Soup Haus at <http://souphaus.ca/> Contact: Sohayla Smith or Josh Oatman.

## **UCW Friendship Group**

The UCW meets at Trinity United Church the second Monday of each month at 12:30 for lunch

and/or dessert to enjoy a time of conversation, with various visitors and outings. For more information visit <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/being-community/united-church-women-ucw> Local Contact: Mary Hawthorne

## **KAIROS, Community, Third Wednesday, Trinity, 9:30 - 11am**

KAIROS meets the third Wednesday of every month at 9:30 at Trinity United Church. KAIROS "unites Canadian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to "do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Informed by biblical teaching, KAIROS deliberates on issues of common concern, striving to be a prophetic voice in the public sphere." For more information visit <https://www.kairoscanada.org/> Local Contact: Ruth Cruikshank

## **First Line for Syria, Pastoral Charge**

The work of FLFS is on going, providing drives for ESL classes, shepherding refugees through paperwork and adjusting to living in Canada. Regular gatherings take place with our new Canadians to celebrate their various milestones. Follow them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/First-Line-for-Syria-1636412359958098/> Contact: Karin Klouman

## **Meditation Garden**

The Primrose Meditation Garden continues to provide a quiet place for contemplation and prayer even in the cold weather. The meditation garden is part of the international Quiet Garden Movement that "nurtures access to outdoor space for prayer, reflection and rest in a variety of settings. . creating opportunities for people to experience silence, restfulness and contemplative practices." <https://quietgarden.org/> Contact: Beverley Parker/Sharon Holmes

## Partera Peacemakers International

Rev. LeeAnn McKenna is the director of Partera and an adherent at Primrose United Church. She has been leading a series of workshops on conflict this fall for both churches. For more information about Partera speak to LeeAnn, or visit their website:

<http://partera.ca>

This Christmas, Primrose United Church is hosting a fundraiser for Partera. See Gail, Candice or LeeAnn for tickets for the marvellous one man show by Jeff Cottam.



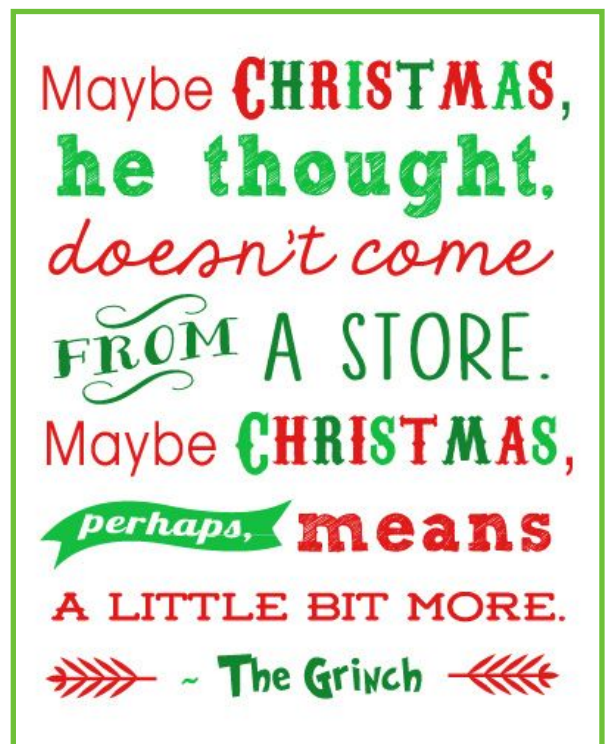
## Rural Response

Rural Response is an extension of the work done by Family Transition in Orangeville, but is available to women in the Shelburne and rural area. We have been working informally with Rural Response for several years, but will hope to do more active work with them this coming year. Samantha McCabe, who oversees this program passed this along: "Family Transition Place's Rural Response Program is available for residents of north Dufferin County. The program allows for up to 6 crisis counselling sessions to provide women with abuse education and support, assist with safety planning, and share appropriate community referrals. Rural Response

Counsellors are able to meet women where they feel most comfortable, whether in their home, in the community, or at FTP's counselling office located in the Mel Lloyd Centre, (Entrance 'C')." For further information contact Samantha McCabe at a 519 942 4122 or 519 278 4360.

## Pastoral Charge Choir

The choir continues to meet every Thursday at 7 pm in the Trinity sanctuary. When Bruce is away, Ann McAlpine often takes over practice. If you like to sing, and want to join, just show up and keep showing up, and the next thing you know you will be in the choir.







# A Closing Thought on Giving, and the Season of the Poet

The Advent and Christmas season belongs to the poet -  
the artist who can imagine a reality other than the brutal and harsh one we are faced with day to day.

It is the voice of the poet who gives us the picture of the lamb curled up with the lion,  
of the people of all races and creeds and religions  
streaming to God's holy mountain to learn  
to make peace, not war,  
to create, not destroy,  
to emerge, not to hide.

It is the storyteller who imagined for us the  
exquisitely beautiful Christmas story of Jesus' birth.  
No one can resist it. Its power sparkles with radiance.  
Even as the crowd claims not to believe in anything,  
still the story of a baby in a manger,  
somehow,  
touches them with the thought of new possibility.

It is the poets and the storytellers who take us by the hand and lead us  
through the season of waiting,  
through the season of rejoicing,  
through the season of wonder and anticipation.

Oh, so much better than the world of worry  
and stress and business that the worldly rulers offer us.

This Christmas remember the story of Easter.  
'Rise and Resist.'  
Rise in the morning and resist the rush and fuss and fury.  
Wait. Wonder. Imagine. Live in Possibilities.

And if you have some extra money this year,  
I'd gamble it on the poets and the storytellers and the visionaries and the dreamers.  
Because they are the ones that hold the divine reality.

The shopkeepers, they just have stuff.

As the Christmas season envelops us with all its glory, may we, as did the Wise Men, seek a bright, particular star to guide us in our celebration of the Savior's birth. May we all make the journey to Bethlehem in spirit, taking with us a tender, caring heart as our gift to the Savior.

President Thomas S. Monson- 2013 Christmas Devotional

### **Shelburne Primrose Pastoral Charge**

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<https://www.shelburneprimrose.com/>  
Minister: Rev. Dr. Candice Bist  
Home: 519 925 6466 Cell: 705 817 3408  
candicebist@gmail.com

### **Supporting Our Vision**

There are many ways to support the on going work of the churches and the visioning projects that will be developing into the New Year. You can donate on line here.

Or you can come into our offices if you wish to meet with Rev. Bist or mail a cheque at the address opposite. Or you can arrange with our office to set up a monthly donation through PAR.

To believe in the wisdom and the triumph of the Christmas Story, is to support its on going work in the world.