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Trinity Musings #61
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Best compliment I've frequently heard throughout my 28 years of ordained ministry... "I can't believe you're a minister!"

It is sweet-news for me to not be seen as pious, righteous, holier-than-thou or overtly religious. I believe that Jesus was really attempting to change the world rather than trying to create a new church. He was non-conformist and rebellious from his scandalous birth until his death. I have always kept this in mind and heart, even though I often follow him at a safe distance. His courage is very rare.

I have served the United Church of Canada for almost 28 years and, except for a few hiccups, I have loved doing so. There probably aren't many other churches in Canada that would have me as a minister (especially those with Bishops). I am a child of this tradition and love it, even for its foibles. I believe it is the rarest of its kind, maybe in the world.

If there is any single message that has come to me through these 61 Musings, it is that Trinity United Church is an exceptional and loving community that supports and celebrates free speech. Whole-hearted exploration of faith is strongly encouraged. Debate and questions about everything, are welcomed.

My intention, in writing these Musings, was to keep in touch during the long months of the pandemic. They were always intended to raise serious topics of faith and life with humour and to provoke thinking and conversation.

I managed to achieve these goals with a few of these, but others were just "air-balls" that missed everything. Thankfully, I did receive many emails of support and encouragement so, I kept writing.

I also managed to provoke a lot of people and got a number of rather testy emails in response. Who knew so many people cut wild lilac

flowers on the Georgian Trail? Who knew so many people think favourably about “The Donald”? Who knew this was a Plandemic?

There are people among us who think-stuff I don't. To be fair, as one of my debate-partners told me, they thought I was “Woke”, but apparently I'm not. Glad to hear it. That's a new kind of nuttiness.

All I've ever hoped for, during my entire ministry, is that I stir people from living with fuzzy and/or ill-defined beliefs. Lazy and unexamined spirituality is really not worth having. If what I say or write creates an occasion demanding clarification of one's personal beliefs- mission accomplished.

I do know that these Musings and my sermons have cost me some friendships and acquaintances but being in the public eye is always tricky and not without cost. As one writer said “The Jesus-voice is the one that tells the costly-truth so completely and honestly, that others want to silence it by killing it.”

Two or three people have told me they don't like me or my ideas and I guess it goes with the territory. I hope they return to Trinity when I've vamoosed. This really is a good community that will tolerate them too.

Even when I have been downright sacrilegious and heretical in my Musings or sermons, I have not received one single cease and desist order from any of our leaders. The opposite is actually true- I was strongly encouraged to continue with these provocative Musings.

I have likely caused even our good and most tolerant church folk to wince more than a few times over the last ten years, but this is a “big enough tent” and there's lots of room for differing ideas to co-exist. Thanks be to God for this church and community!

Trinity has survived this time of Covid quite well and it looks like life might be returning to normal in the fall. We intend to return to the church building on Sunday September 12th for a grand celebration.

This could be the last Musing because it might be best to put this series to bed, along with the pandemic. It's been quite a run and I retire on Thanksgiving Sunday. See you (literally) in the fall. AMEN

