



WEDNESDAY, 24 DECEMBER 2025

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"We would see Jesus and be transformed into His Likeness"

Dear Friends,

As Christmas and the end of the year draw near, this will be the final letter sent to you in 2025.

If you were to watch a "newsreel" of your year, what would you see? Were there moments of joy and gratitude, or are you among those who say, "I am glad to see the back of 2025"? For most of us, the year has held both light and shadow, and this is part of the normal rhythm of life in a broken world. Scripture never promises us endless ease or happiness in this life, but it does speak honestly of trials and suffering.

What Scripture does promise is that we are never alone. We have One who is with us in every circumstance, One who has entered fully into the trials and tribulations of this world, and One who meets us where we are, yet does not leave us there. Christmas is about this One.

Jesus Christ is the One who left the glory of heaven for the humility of a manger. He came in complete vulnerability, for the sake of you, of me, and of all people. Christmas proclaims that Jesus is present with us in both the good and the hard places, helping us to persevere, and working through all things for the good of those who love God and are called according to God's purpose.

As we reflect on the year that has been and look toward the year that is coming, may we remember Emmanuel, God with us. May we experience God's presence afresh and know that we are not abandoned or forgotten. As we receive, give, and open gifts this Christmas, may we remember and encounter the true gift of grace in Jesus Christ. And as we step into a new year, may we do so trusting that, with Christ, there are always new beginnings.

I wish you and your loved ones a wonderfully blessed Christmas and a grace-filled New Year in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(I commend to you Themba's 'TIMsights' in this letter below. He has been sharing some wonderful experiences and learnings from his time with the Training in Mission)

With love and awe-filled gratitude,

Iain

P.S. On Sunday morning, the 7th of November, in response to the church's monthly financial shortfall, a congregation member, Teresa, shared a creative and heartfelt initiative called #Coffee - a small way each of us can make a meaningful difference. Here is her testimony as she shared it:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/fz6t6nITurM?si=5WqgH6Oe0ZOg7yaP&t=3877> .

Here is her idea:

by giving up one small luxury each month — perhaps a cup of coffee, a snack outing, or another treat that costs around R200 — we can collectively help close the financial gap. For instance, skipping a weekly R50 coffee adds up to R200 a month, which can then be donated to the church.

You can participate by setting up an automatic monthly deposit or by bringing your contribution in an envelope marked #Coffee. This tag helps us track the initiative's progress.

It's about sharing joyfully to support our community. If 200 people give R200, we could raise R40,000 together! Let's invest in keeping our church strong, our ministries active, and our lights shining.

May God bless this effort and everyone who takes part in it.



(By Iain Kemp)

Last week I heard a spin on the Christmas Carol 'O come all you faithful'. It reminded me of Christ's words to the pharisees: "I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent." (Luke 5:32, NLT) May it draw you into a heart of worship as much as the traditional carol at this time of Christmas celebration.

"O come, all you Unfaithful" – by SovereignGraceMusic - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-QHbpYjulg>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/track/3daluoOTffsAhGgFoDdv4I?si=6c09ecb0a3a446d3>

Apple Music: <https://music.apple.com/us/song/o-come-all-you-unfaithful/1791144657>



REFLECTION ON THEOLOGY MODULE

Part of the Training In Mission (TIM) involved modules where we would have lectures on theology (study of God). The theological module really enriched me and invited me into a space that was both deeply unsettling and profoundly life-giving. It challenged my assumptions about God, humanity, power, and mission, and pushed me beyond comfortable or inherited understandings of faith. Rather than offering neat answers, it opened questions that demanded honesty, humility, and attentiveness to lived experience.

At the heart of this journey was the recognition that theology is never neutral. We never speak about God from nowhere; we always speak from somewhere. Our histories, cultures, bodies, social locations, and lived experiences shape how we encounter and interpret God. This idea of positionality was particularly formative for me. I realised that my own faith journey has always influenced how I imagine God, even when I believed my understanding to be universal. I have come to understand, that **theology is not something done from above, but something shaped from within life itself.**





One of the most powerful ideas we explored was that of transformative spaces. These are spaces where rigid boundaries are disrupted, where voices from the margins are centred, and where God is encountered not through domination, but through relationship. These spaces were often uncomfortable, yet that discomfort became holy ground. I began to see that transformation requires vulnerability and a willingness to let go of certainty. In these moments, faith became less about control and more about openness to God's movement.

This module significantly reshaped my

understanding of the nature and character of God. God is no longer confined to a singular, distant, or exclusive image. The idea of divine multiplicity expanded my imagination of God as relational, embodied, and deeply invested in the world. This understanding challenges patriarchal and hierarchical images of God and invites us to encounter a God who delights in relationship, diversity, and life. Understanding God as affectionate (being deeply relational, passionate, and life-affirming), helped me see God's love as something that longs for connection, justice, and the flourishing for all of humanity. My understanding from this is that it dismantles the image of a detached God and replaces it with a God who dwells among us, especially in wounded and forgotten spaces.

Jesus, as encountered in this module, is not merely a distant saviour figure, but the brother of humanity, the first among many. **The incarnation becomes an act of radical inclusion. God does not save from afar, but enters fully into human reality, including pain, oppression, and complexity.** Salvation, therefore, is not escape from the world, but God's deep commitment to it and to those who suffer within it.

During the theological module, we also journeyed with the CRAC framework—crying out, resisting, asserting, and celebrating—gave language to movements already present in Scripture and in lived experience. Crying out names suffering honestly and makes space for healing. Resisting confronts systems of domination, patriarchy, imperialism, and exclusion. Asserting claims dignity, identity, and agency in the face of dehumanisation. Celebrating affirms life, difference, joy, and survival. Through this framework, I began to see theology as active rather than passive. Faith is not only about what we believe, but about how we respond in ways in which uplift each other. I now expect the Spirit's presence not only in moments of worship, but also in acts of resistance, solidarity, compassion, and justice. The Spirit empowers people to speak, to challenge, to heal, and to imagine alternatives to the world as it is.

This module also pushed me to wrestle with foundational questions of faith. I now understand reality as both physical and spiritual. God is not separate from the material world, but present within it. **The sacred and the ordinary are deeply intertwined.** Human beings are embodied, created beings that are good, yet flawed. While we are shaped by history and culture, we are also capable of transformation. Sin is not only personal, but

structural, embedded in systems that privilege some while oppressing others. While I continue to hold hope in resurrection and eternal life, I was reminded that faith is not only about what happens after death. God's concern is also deeply rooted in the present—in dignity, liberation, and justice here and now. Morality, then, emerges from a dynamic relationship between God, conscience, community, and context, where justice, compassion, and human dignity become central ethical markers rather than rigid rules detached from lived realities.



Choosing my core values—justice, compassion, faith, equality, and honesty—became clearer through this module. Divine multiplicity affirms that God cannot be reduced to a single image or voice. This creates space to challenge patriarchy and exclusion, affirm diverse identities, and recognise that God's revelation often emerges from spaces that seem we cannot even think about. This understanding helped me embrace hybridity, the reality that identities and faith expressions are layered, complex, and often formed in-between cultures, traditions, and experiences. God also meets people in these spaces, not only in certain settings.

Reading John 4 through lenses of gender, power, and imperial context was especially transformative. While the text does not explicitly confront Roman imperialism, it subtly undermines systems of exclusion by centring a Samaritan woman—someone marginalised by ethnicity, gender, and moral judgement. Jesus does not dominate or silence her. Instead, he listens, speaks vulnerably, and affirms her agency. When read from the perspective of the colonised rather than the coloniser, the text becomes a site of resistance. The Samaritan woman emerges not as a passive recipient of grace, but as a theologian, witness, and agent of transformation. From this, I believe that **this invites the church to imagine relationships marked by mutuality rather than hierarchy, and mission shaped by dialogue rather than control.**

Ultimately, this module has reshaped how I understand mission. Mission is not about imposing truth, but about participating in God's ongoing work of liberation, healing, and relationship. I now expect the Spirit's power to show up in vulnerability, in honest dialogue across difference, and in courageous truth-telling. This theological journey has affirmed that God is already at work in the margins, in complexity, and in multiplicity. Our calling is not to control that movement, but we are called to join the movement with humility, faith, and hope. This led me to this thought, if God is already at work in vulnerability, difference, and the margins, what might the spirit be asking us to release, unlearn, or risk as we seek to join Gods mission rather than control it?



*Junior and Senior
Youth are in recess*

*Please contact ross for
more information*

0829208406

**Office closed during the
Festive Season**

**The office will be closed from Monday,
29 December and will re-open on
Monday, 5 January 2025**

Staff on leave

Please note the following:
Mxolisi will be on leave from
19 December 2025 to 6 January
Iain will be on leave from 27 December
to 4 January
Ross will be on leave from 2 to 6 January

Faith for Daily Living

The January / February issue is available in
the foyer or from the office.

Please remember to make your donation –
thank you.

Scan the QR code
with your phone
camera to go to
either our Facebook
or Instagram pages.



Giving

Please take note:

EFT Payments

We would like to ensure
that the payments made to
Trinity towards tithing,
retiring offerings, food bags
etc are allocated correctly.
In order to do this, please
would you ensure that the
reference shown on your
payment has the correct
beneficiary.

For Tithing, please use the
following methods:

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
STANDARD BANK
CURRENT ACCOUNT
NUMBER: 42 448 2088,
BRANCH: 016 342

Zapper QR Code

