

An open letter to the members of the Trinity Council

March 22, 2010

For the first time since I started at Trinity, we finally have a climate where the issues preventing the full potential T@9 are gone (onsite/offsite, personalities, upstairs/downstairs, etc). Given the proper resources and support, the service is finally free to develop into something which would serve not only as a method of growth from Trinity, but as a model for other Churches. My personal belief is that T@9 is the only hope Trinity has of lasting beyond 10 years. I believe passionately in the potential of this service and I take its failure, as well as that of 10:30 very personally. I appreciate that the vast majority of council members attend 10:30, and it appears that canceling T@9, or bringing the two services together *seems* like the obvious way to save money. I believe the opposite to be true – that such a decision would sound the death of Trinity United Church.

Many people have spoken to me about the future and I firmly believe that a blended service will result in massive departures from T@9, as well as at least 20 members from 10:30. Given that both services have been steadily declining at a rate of 20 people per year, this only postpones the inevitable. How well did cutting services work for Nortel in terms of sustainability?

There seems to be a perception that I am interested in the survival of T@9 only as a basis for ensuring that my hours are not cut. This could not be further from the truth. The maintenance of my salary is of little concern to me. In fact, I would have happily entered into a discussion of changes to my hours as a means of continuing a service which would ensure the sustainability of Trinity. Although my personal preference is a traditional worship, I am convinced that T@9 is a format of outreach which has the potential to speak to the needs of people who do not attend Church, but are looking for a way to explore their Spirituality, and I believe it to be the only way that Trinity will grow.

Council has stated that there is a desire for 'Awesome music'. I do not feel that I will be able to produce music which is anything close to the current standard in a blended atmosphere. I have seen the program suffer as a result of the changes we have already implemented, and the current climate of fear for the future. To be honest, the music program at Trinity falls short of its full potential now. The blended model will water down what we have further, seriously compromising the integrity of the music.

I would urge the members of council to consider carefully the decision to move to a blended worship option. Having worked in congregations which have adopted this model, I have little doubt that it will fail. Studies have shown conclusively that blended services are unsuccessful (I have provided some documentation of this to the JNAC). I believe that the congregation has been quite explicit that they do not want a combined service model (they have certainly been quite vocal to me about this) and I have no interest in forcing a mish-mash of poor music, poorly performed, on the members of Trinity. I do not believe that this will provide enough substance to satisfy either of our current worshipping communities.

Sincerely,



Scott Auchinleck