

Christmas Greeting 2025

From the Rev. Stephanie Shepard

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” – the gospel of John 1:14

Long before a little wooden church was built in the wilds of what came to be New Westminster, God dwelt in this place. From the first breath of creation that shaped the hills and river, through the first peoples that gathered on its banks, and in the newcomers that come and find a home here, God’s Word has been active. We can sense it through the spoken beauty of the land. We can enjoy it in the abundant harvests of sea and field. And we can grow to understand it in the story of the child who came among us to show us what God is like.

From 1859, Christians have celebrated the good news made incarnate in a building we call Holy Trinity Cathedral. It is a beautiful, historic, sacred space. At this time of year, it glows with candles and flowers and the songs of the faithful. But we know that Jesus nearly didn’t have a safe and dry place to lay his head that first Christmas. If strangers hadn’t shown kindness in letting Mary and Joseph shelter in a stable, they would have been shivering on the street in the dark. Church buildings exist not as monuments to the past but because they provide a home to extend the love of God to all who seek belonging. When people are welcomed, accepted, and respected in the name of Christ, the Word has room to flourish.

Our community is meeting the challenge of helping the Word dwell among us. God’s love is proclaimed in conversation and action as we minister to the neighbourhood. Seekers and believers are nurtured in the faith, the needy are helped, and the community works for reconciliation, justice, and the stewardship of the earth. Every day brings opportunity to serve in the world while pointing towards the kingdom. Now we are at the time in our redevelopment process where we begin thinking beyond a building to hold space for the Word. The coming year is important. Our parish hall, built in 1950, has come to the end of its useful life. We are coaxing the roof and the furnace to hang on until our new development commences. Our cathedral needs restoration work too. Thank you to all who are helping now while foreseeing the new. When the hall comes down, the community will be moving off site. The restoration of the church and the construction of the visionary residential tower will begin. There will be new room for gathering and ministry.

But here is the mystery of Christmas: the Word cannot be contained in a building. It can, however, be held in our hearts! When we are open to Jesus coming among us, God works through the community to accomplish amazing things. I give thanks for all the wisdom and experience and compassion in our parish’s partners and parishioners. This Christmas, may God bless you with the assurance that love dwells with you and with this faith community no matter where we are.

Yours in Christ,
Stephanie