

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

(*Tidings* - August 2005) Rev. John Anderson

Well it happened! We've become a new congregation. We are no longer Zion or St. Andrew's or St. Paul's congregations, but Trillium United Church. But what does that mean? How are we still the same? How are we different? And what does it mean to have chosen a new name? And what can that new name of **Trillium United Church** tell us about who we are? How might the new name guide us in identifying our mission and purpose as a Christian community of faith?

1. The Symbolism of "Three" – The trillium is a flower composed of three petals framed by three sepals supported above a cluster of three leaves. What better symbol could there be for a congregation composed of three churches (Zion, St. Andrew's and St. Paul's), framed by three denominations, which came together to form The United Church of Canada (Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist), supported by a faith in the three-fold God (Father/Creator, Son/Redeemer and Holy Spirit/Sustainer).
2. Herald of Rebirth – The trillium is a sign of rebirth, of life's springtime resurrection from the dead of winter. In fact, the old name for the trillium was "wake Robin" because its appearance was a signal to the robins that the woods and meadows were once again waking to life. It was also called "birthroot" because tea made from its roots was used to ease the pain of mothers during labour. As the floral symbol of Ontario since 1937, its white blossom is understood as a symbol of peace and hope.

We are an Easter People, messengers of peace and hope founded on the resurrection of Jesus, and the Good News that "in life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone!" Like the trillium, we are called to affirm and celebrate God's love of life.

3. Needs Care – The trillium is a fragile and protected flower. It grows in shady, moist soil such as is found in wood lots and forest groves, but these are being gobbled up to make way for new suburbs and parking lots. It takes fifteen years for a trillium to develop from seed to blossom -producing maturity. When a plant is damaged it can take as many as seven years before it begins to bloom again.

Love and care for one another are the heart and soul of what makes a community of faith. "How these Christians love one another!" was what the earliest observers marveled about the first Christians, and it's what "Trillium United Church" should stand for with us.

We are called to be the church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.



A New Creed

May we bear our name proudly and display the symbol of the trillium as a reminder of who we are and what we stand for: **Trillium United Church – We Care!**