It’s a Wonderful Life

If Transparency Had Never Been Born

Christmas political parody

By Nicholas Bozza | Thorold Election Commentary

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6 satirical illustrations, including 2 Beatles car-tunes
No illustrations reused from earlier articles

All funny—according to the author, who also counted the words.

Estimated reading time: 11–12 minutes, excluding illustration viewing.
Estimated laughing time: 11–12 minutes, excluding recovery time.

Fictional political parody: all scenes and dialogue are invented. The full satire notice and reference notes appear at the end.

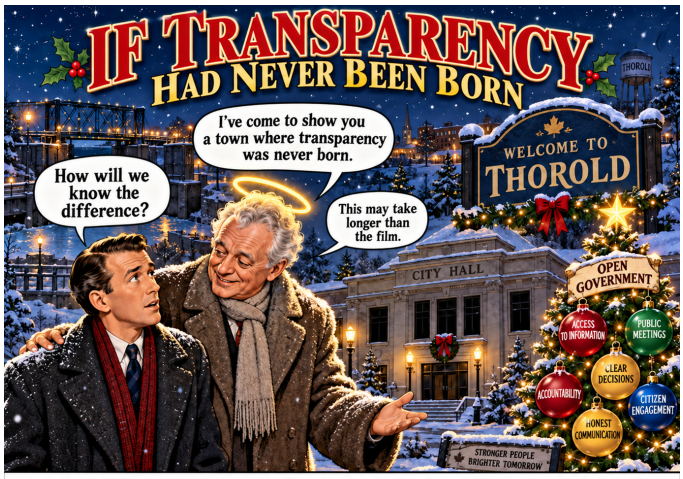
The story begins with: Clarence arrives in Thorold carrying a lantern, a notebook and an application for his wings.

“I’ve come to show you a town where transparency was never born.”

“How will we know the difference?” asks a resident.

Clarence checks his assignment.

“Oh dear. This may take longer than the film.”



CARTOON SATIRE NOTICE: Fictional Christmas political parody. All scenes and dialogue are invented. No actual statements or endorsement by performers, creators or rights holders are implied.

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At imaginary City Hall, the Christmas tree is magnificent. Every ornament says OPEN GOVERNMENT. Unfortunately, nobody can find the switch.

“Who approved the decorations?”

“It passed.”

“What did they cost?”

“Season’s greetings.”

“Who voted for them?”

Clarence opens his notebook.

“I normally show people an alternative reality. Here, I appear to need a recorded vote.”

They visit the Ghost of Decisions Past. He carries a mountain of reports.

“Are the answers in there?”

“Possibly. Bring a lawyer, an accountant and something to eat.”

Next comes the Ghost of Decisions Present.

He poses for a photograph.

“And Decisions Yet to Come?”

“Lovely campaign signs. No itemized forecast.”

A bell rings.

“Does that mean an angel got his wings?” asks a child.

“No,” says Clarence. “Someone finally answered a question.”

Everyone gathers around.

It turns out to be the Wi-Fi password.

By now, Clarence’s halo is flickering.

“Do you need divine intervention?” asks the resident.

“Fresh batteries. And minutes that explain the motion.”

Then a little girl steps forward with paper and a pencil.

“Couldn’t we just write down who voted, explain why and tell people what it means?”

Clarence stares at her.

“All this time, I’ve been applying for wings. You should be applying for the clerk’s job.”

Before dinner, the three ghosts take Tiny Tim on a tour.

The Ghost of Christmas Past offers a box marked YOUR COUNCIL RECORD.

“Care to explain what’s inside?”

The Ghost of Christmas Present points to residents beside a sign: QUESTIONS STILL OPEN.

“Answers before the election, please.”

Then comes Christmas Future: a dazzling tree covered in promises of OPENNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY and TRANSPARENCY.

Tiny Tim admires the lights.

“Beautiful promises,” says the ghost. “But future Christmas lights don’t illuminate your past record.”



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"Have we invited everyone for Christmas?" asks Clarence.

"Even Tiny Tim O'Hare."

"What should he bring?"

"An explanation of his council record. We've already got stuffing."

"And Scrooge?"

"He's checking the heating bill."

Tiny Tim arrives carrying a beautifully wrapped box.

“Are those the answers?”

“No. Season’s greetings.”

“Lovely. Put them beside the other things we can’t pay the bills with.”

“Are the ghosts coming to Christmas dinner too?” asks Tiny Tim O’Hare.

“Of course,” says Clarence. “They’re truly transparent. You can see right through them.”

“Then what are they bringing?”

“Clear answers.”

“Isn’t that a little unusual for a ghost?”

“Apparently, it’s the most supernatural thing on tonight’s menu.”

Everyone is welcome at the table. But a Christmas invitation doesn’t come with an exemption from answering questions.



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Tiny Tim returns with another box. This one is labelled EXPLANATIONS OF OUR COUNCIL RECORDS.

“Should I put it under the tree?”

“On the table, Tim. Open it before the election.”

The little girl asks, “Will everyone be back for the remake?”

“That’s up to the voters,” says Clarence. “Returning cast members aren’t guaranteed.”

The best early Christmas present the UN-FAB FOUR can give voters is a transparent explanation of their council records: past decisions, current positions, individual votes and the reasons behind them. Future promises shouldn’t become wrapping paper for unanswered questions.

If those explanations don’t arrive, voters can take that into account when choosing the cast for the next term. The election decides who returns.



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Two more ghosts arrive carrying guitars: John Lennon and George Harrison, in my entirely imaginary Christmas crossover.

“Can we see the record before the encore?” asks John.

“And hear each person’s own explanation?” asks George.

“Are you joining the UN-FAB FOUR?” asks the little girl.

“No,” says Clarence. “These two are guest musicians in a fictional sketch. Nobody is endorsing anybody. Even the afterlife has a disclaimer.”

John looks at the Christmas tree.

“Beautiful lights.”

“Indeed,” says the ghost. “But future Christmas lights don’t illuminate the past record of the UN-FAB FOUR—or anyone else asking for another term.”

George checks the programme.

“Five ghosts, an angel and still no running order?”

“Municipal Christmas,” says Clarence. “We’re waiting for the minutes.”



CAR-TUNE SATIRE NOTICE: Invented scene and dialogue. Lennon and Harrison appear as imaginary ghosts; any call to McCartney and Starr is fictional. No political views or endorsement are attributed to the musicians, estates or rights holders.

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John reaches for a telephone.

“Paul? Ringo? Help! We’ve got a council record with a missing track.”

“‘Yesterday’ needs explaining before ‘Tomorrow Never Knows’,” adds George.

Paul answers from a music room in this entirely imaginary call.

“‘We Can Work It Out’—start with the votes and reasons.”

Ringo taps a drumstick.

“I can keep time. Who’s keeping the record?”

“Should we ‘Let It Be’?” asks Clarence.

“Not the unanswered questions,” says the little girl.

“‘Come Together’ for the community,” I suggest. “Then think independently. A council vote shouldn’t require a backing track.”

This is a car-tune now. Even the paperwork has a musical arrangement.



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“And independent thinking?” asks the little girl.

“Essential,” says Clarence. “Each councillor should examine the evidence, reach their own judgment and explain their own vote—not simply follow a bloc.”

“Can they ever agree?”

“Of course. Agreement can follow independent thought. Matching votes alone don’t prove anyone skipped it.”

“So what should voters ask for?”

“Individual reasons. A council chamber should have more than one working brain—and Christmas dinner already has enough things stuffed.”

Independent judgment, clear explanations and accountability: those are the gifts I want from every candidate. No batteries required. No group answer accepted in place of an individual explanation.

The moral: A community shouldn’t need a guardian angel to obtain an explanation. Its elected representatives should provide one—and residents help keep that expectation alive by asking questions.

The Christmas lights come on. The records become readable. Someone answers without referring the matter to the North Pole.

“And please,” adds Clarence, “put the answers somewhere we can find them.”

“This could make the Santa Claus parade the best ever,” says the resident. “Imagine a float carrying clear answers!”

“Careful,” says Clarence. “If every candidate brings their own explanation, we may need a longer parade route.”

I believe God gave us the gifts of free will, independent thinking and transparency: the freedom to choose, the ability to question and the duty to be open with one another. In this Christmas parody, God also gives Thorold Clarence to help us remember to use those gifts.

He brings a halo, patience and a notebook. Apparently the heavenly budget would not stretch to a municipal consultant.

The little girl has a name for our Christmas crossover: Zuzu Bailey. And yes, those are Zuzu’s petals—not “Zoo Zoo Pedals.” This story has enough wheels turning without giving the child a bicycle.

“Everyone wants to see Clarence get his wings,” says Zuzu. “It will make this year’s Thorold Santa Claus parade the best ever!”

“Will he fly over the float?”

“Only after somebody explains who approved the landing permit.”

Zuzu looks at Clarence.

“Do you get your wings in the end?”

In this imaginary Christmas ending, the bell rings again. A pair of wings settles onto Clarence’s shoulders.

“Finally,” he says. “Something approved without a referral.”

But the real election ending belongs to Thorold voters. My wish is that they choose transparency, independent thinkers and councillors who assess each decision on its merits rather than follow a voting bloc. Every candidate should explain their own record and their own reasons.

The angel can earn his wings in a story. The councillors must earn their votes in real life.

But this is about more than Clarence's wings. We need a better future for Zuzu Bailey—our imaginary stand-in for Thorold's next generation—filled with independent thinking, full disclosure and transparency.

"Zoo Zoo Pedals?" asks Clarence.

"Zuzu," she says. "The petals are from a flower. Please don't refer me to the cycling committee."

"And what do you want for your future?"

"People who think for themselves, explain their decisions and don't need a ghost to remind them who pays the bills."

Clarence adjusts his new wings.

"Excellent. A wish list with no assembly required."

Just because Clarence gets his wings doesn't mean he will appear to us again—or even vote in Thorold. In this story, however, he will remain Thorold's guardian angel forever. Yes, remotely.

"No ward office?" asks Zuzu.

"Cloud-based."

"Any connection problems?"

"Only when somebody confuses being visible with being accountable."

From my review of the council recording, I understood Tiny Tim O'Hare to be questioning Jim Handley spending a couple of the colder winter months down south while serving as a councillor remotely. That is my account and interpretation of the recording, not a verbatim quotation; I have not independently verified the wording here.

In our fictional scene, Clarence raises an eyebrow.

"Well, I'm certainly not commuting from heaven every Tuesday."

"Can you really help from that far away?"

"With the right councillors doing their work here, and a community willing to ask questions, we can do anything," says Clarence. "I'll handle the heavenly encouragement. They can handle the motions, the explanations and returning the emails."

"And the miracles?"

"Let's start with a straight answer. I don't want to use the entire annual allowance before Christmas."

Zuzu points to the parade float.

"Then God bless Thorold!"

"Gladly," says Clarence. "But the blessing doesn't replace the paperwork."

"Will Clarence need to post selfies to prove he's watching over Thorold?" asks Zuzu.

"No," says Clarence. "If I get my wings, the work should speak for itself. No selfies required."

"Even remotely?"

"Heaven has excellent coverage. And the halo is not a ring light."

Clarence turns to our fictional Tiny Tim.

“If you speak for inclusion, Tim, how do you apply that principle when someone needs to spend the winter away for health reasons?”

“Shall we refer that upstairs?”

In this fictional Christmas review, Clarence sides with Handley on that point: remote service can work when the required work is done, residents can reach their councillor and accountability is maintained. After all, Clarence is planning to watch over Thorold remotely himself.

“So Handley has your endorsement on working remotely?” asks Zuzu.

“On that point, in this imaginary story,” says Clarence. “Even heaven is within remote reach with technology—we have the cloud everywhere! That includes wherever Handley goes for warmer weather. If the work gets done and residents are served, yes, it’s all good.”

HOLY SMOKES! Handley got an endorsement from an ANGEL! Does it get any better than this?

“Only if he returns the emails before I finish the Christmas pudding,” says Clarence.

Clarence’s endorsement is entirely fictional and limited to the remote-service joke. It is not a real endorsement or evidence about the council’s attendance rules.

“The questions were asked and answered,” says Clarence. “Upstairs has already reviewed the arrangements. It’s fine: the work gets done, residents can reach their representative and the accountability stays right here.”

“So being away doesn’t mean being absent from the job?” asks Zuzu.

“Exactly. My office is in the clouds. That doesn’t mean my head is.”

In this fictional review, Clarence is satisfied that the arrangements allow the required work to be done. His heavenly approval is part of the joke, not an actual ruling on council attendance.

My point is straightforward: a candidate’s record of solving major issues remotely should speak for itself. If the work is delivered, residents are served and accountability is maintained, I see no reason to dismiss that record simply because the work was done from a distance.

“The proof is in the pudding,” says Clarence.

“Christmas pudding?” asks Zuzu.

“Naturally. But we’re assessing the results—not where the spoon was sitting.”

“Does this mean no more photographs?” asks Zuzu.

“Photographs are fine,” says Clarence. “But a picture of someone working is not the same as an explanation of their work.”

No selfies required. Clear answers still requested.

For Thorold’s next generation: independent minds, clear records and answers we can understand. Wings optional. Accountability essential.

“God bless everyone,” says Zuzu.

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Share the laughter. Pass along the questions. Help keep Thorold thinking independently.

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Word count covers the parody body only; title, metadata, satire notice, signature, reference notes and illustration lettering are excluded. Satirical classification and laughing-time estimate are comic presentation, not a promise of continuous laughter.

Full satire notice

Satire notice: This fictional political parody combines It's a Wonderful Life, A Christmas Carol and imaginary Beatles scenes. All scenes, dialogue, gifts, supernatural events, the phone call and Clarence's wings are invented. UN-FAB FOUR expresses the author's opinion of a perceived alignment involving Tim O'Hare, Mike De Divitiis, Ken Sentance and Nella Dekker, not proof of coordination. Tiny Tim is a satirical nickname for adult councillor O'Hare, not Dickens's child; no claim about disability is made. Lennon and Harrison appear as imaginary ghosts; McCartney and Starr as living characters in a fictional call. No political views or endorsement are attributed to any musician, estate, performer, creator or rights holder. Statements about God's gifts express the author's faith; divine intervention and parade predictions are fictional. The account of O'Hare's remarks about Handley is the author's interpretation of a council recording; its wording has not been independently verified here. Clarence's endorsement of Handley on remote service is fictional; the discussion states an opinion, not council attendance rules. Voters determine election outcomes. Song titles are used for parody; no lyrics are reproduced.

Reference notes

It's a Wonderful Life: Frank Capra's 1946 film starring James Stewart. American Film Institute: https://catalog.afi.com/Film/27682-IT%27S-A-WONDERFUL-LIFE. Dickens's ghosts and Tiny Tim: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46/46-h/46-h.htm. Zuzu Bailey is George's daughter; "Zuzu's petals" refers to flower petals. The Christmas references are deliberately combined; the musical-ghost scenes and the little girl's closing blessing are invented.