



Be  
*patient*, therefore,  
beloved, until the coming  
of the  
*Lord*

**TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
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The Rev. Dr. Christopher M. Rankin, Pastor

The Rev. Harry G. Royer, Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Carolynne Call, Covenanted Minister of Mission

Mr. Michael Slechta, Director of Music/ Sounds of Trinity Choir Director

Mrs. Christine Oetama, Organist

Mrs. Carmen Richards, Pianist

Mrs. Carol Kratz, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Sean McKelvey, Preschool Director

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**THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT**  
**7:45 A.M. SERVICE**

**Today's Theme:** A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

**Welcome all visitors!** We welcome all who worship with us. May the joy of Christ's presence and the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with peace and hope! We are honored by your presence and trust that you will join us in the praise and worship of God. **Activity bags for children can be found in the narthex.** Please sign our guest book in the narthex.

**Welcome to the Eucharist!** All who seek to follow Jesus and who seek the gifts Jesus offers us are invited to share in this sacrament of Holy Communion. *Children are invited to receive communion at the discretion of their parents/guardians. If a child wants to receive a blessing, they are asked to fold their hands.*

**Prayer As You Enter:** *Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord, God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

#### AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM AND INVITATION TO THE TABLE

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

In the midst of the barren land, flowers burst into bloom.

**In the midst of the dry desert, streams of water gush forth.**

In the midst of sorrow and sighing, joy and gladness dance together.

**We shall see the glory of God!**

Come now with joy to Emmanuel's table. Feast at the banquet of hope and love.

### CONFESSION OF SINS

#### CALL TO CONFESSION

John the Baptist calls us to repent, to prepare for the coming of God's reign.

**Let us heed John's call and confess our sins in silent prayer.**

*(SEATED OR KNEELING)*

#### SILENT CONFESSION OF SINS

#### CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

**God of new beginnings, we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign. We have strayed from your paths. We prepare for war instead of peace. We dishonor one another and your creation. Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of love, that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome your coming among us. Amen.**

## **KYRIE**

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

### **ACT OF PRAISE**

O God, open my lips.

**And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.**

**Amen.**

*(PLEASE BE SEATED)*

### **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE/TIME WITH THE CHILDREN**

Soon we will celebrate the birth of Jesus. We worship God with joy in our hearts as we are reminded of the words the angels said on that first Christmas Day:

**“Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to the people.”**

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is joy, joy that is ours not only at Christmas but always.

Let us pray together.

**Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand. Amen.**

# THE WORD OF GOD

## THE FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 35:1-10

*The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.*

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

## THE PSALTER

Luke 1:46-55 Mary's Magnificat

My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
**Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid; For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; Because He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name;**

And His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him. He has shown might with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

**He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly.**

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

**He has given help to Israel, his servant, mindful of His mercy even as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever.**

## THE SECOND LESSON

James 5:7-10

*In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.*

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

St. Matthew 11:2-11

*John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.*

*Glory be to You, O Lord.*

## THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD

*Praise be to You, O Christ.*

*(PLEASE BE SEATED)*

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

## NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, and has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*(PLEASE BE SEATED)*

## THE ORDER OF HEALING

Sentences of Scripture

Blessing of Oil

**Act of Anointing** *(You are invited to come forward to be anointed with oil as a way of receiving God's healing during the holiday season. If you choose not to come forward, then remain seated in a time of prayer and reflection. )*

## **THE UNISON PRAYER**

We give praise and thanks to you, O God! In Jesus Christ, you have given us life; brought ministry, forgiveness, healing, and peace; commanded the disciples to heal the sick; and continued the healing ministry among us to this day. Keep us mindful of your love and mercy that we may be faithful throughout all our days, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **PEOPLE'S OFFERING**

MISSION MOMENT-U.C.C. CHRISTMAS FUND Rev. Jack Esbenshade

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

### **OFFERING DEDICATION**

Generous God, you have given us all that we have and all that we are. We thank you for the opportunity to respond to your love and generosity by sharing our gifts with others. Our hearts sing with joy as we work with you to bring true peace and justice to our world. As we prepare for the coming of your Son, may our lives proclaim your good news for all throughout the earth. Amen.

### **THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord!**

Let us give thanks to God Most High.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is very right and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Holy God, our loving Creator, close to us as breathing and distant as the farthest star. We thank you for your constant love and for all you have made. We thank you for all that sustains life, for all people of faith in every generation who have given themselves to your will and especially for Jesus Christ, whom you have sent from your own being as our Savior. Born of your servant Mary, Jesus shared the joys and sorrows of life as we know it. As we now await the birth of the Christ child, we offer you our hymn of praise.

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God, Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**



(PLEASE BE SEATED)

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

### THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

### COMMUNICATION

As this grain was once scattered in the fields, and has come together in one bread, so we, with different needs and hopes, come together as one, for we share one bread.

**The Bread of Life, broken for us.**

The cup which we share is the cup of the New Covenant written in our hearts and witnessed by Jesus.

**The Cup of Blessing, poured out for us and for the many.**

*(Those who wish to come forward will be invited by the pastor. The pastor will serve you the host, saying, "The Body of Christ." You reply, "Amen!" The assistant will present you with the cup, saying, "The Blood of Christ." You reply, "Amen." Grape juice is in the chalice with the cross and wine is in the other chalice. If you need the pastor and assistant to come to you, please indicate that to someone near you or the pastor. If you do not wish to come forward, you are invited to use the packaged elements in the narthex and commune in your pew. The pastor will offer a blessing everyone has communed. Children are invited to receive communion at the discretion of their parents/guardians. If a child wants to receive a blessing, they are asked to fold their hands.)*

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

### POST COMMUNION PRAYERS

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.



Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your spirit. Equip the global church to magnify your love and peace in every land. We pray for the work of the U.C.C. Global Ministries. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands we have squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Righteous God, we rejoice in your justice. End racism and oppression. Deliver all who are unjustly imprisoned or persecuted. Reconcile nations and people in conflict. Help us pray for our enemies. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Healing God, we rejoice in your compassion. Comfort any in distress because of worry, illness, or loss. Strengthen and protect health care workers, rescue teams, crisis counselors, and all who risk themselves to keep others safe. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Abiding God, we rejoice in your company. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. Console the grieving and surround them with loving support. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

### **SILENT PRAYER**

Let us pray together.

**Faithful God, in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## **CLOSE OF WORSHIP**

### **BENEDICTION**



**CATCH THE VISION & SHARE THE JOY**



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Chancel Flowers** are given by **Joan Cash** in memory of Mrs. C. L. Fountain.

**The Worship Aids** are given by **Rev. Jack Esbenshade**.

**Money Counters:** Nevin Cooley, John Bailey, Pat Sensenig, Cherie Cataldi

**Building Trustee:** Nevin Cooley

**Lector:** Rev. Sandy Morris

**Altar Guild:** Nancy Enders

**Koinonia:** Paula Dennes

**Attendance for Sun., Dec. 4**  
**Sunday School Attendance**

7:45–15    9:30–76    **TOTAL – 91**  
**20**

**Happy Birthday!**

Monday – Megan Harley

Wednesday – Charlene Cristy

Friday – Debbie Wible

Saturday – Lainie Christensen

**This Week at Trinity Church**

**(Church Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-2 p.m.)**

Today            12:00 Noon – Pizza lunch followed by Caroling

Monday           7:00 PM – SOT Choir/8:15 PM – Bells

No Preschool

Wednesday      7:00 PM – Finance Committee

NO Enrichment

Thursday          Preschool 2 Day Christmas Party

Friday            Preschool 3 & 4 Day Christmas Program

7:00 PM - Pinochle

Saturday          7:00 PM – Alanon/8:00 PM - AA

Sunday            7:45 AM – Eucharist

9:00 AM – Sunday School

10:00 AM - Koinonia

10:30 AM – Worship

**THE CHRISTMAS TREE IN THE NORTH WINDOW** is given in memory of Leon L. & Ethel Gruber by son Greg, daughter Sharon Armstrong, and granddaughter Jessica.

**THE CHRISMON TREE:** The Chrismons on the small tree in the stairwell were made by the late Edythe Geib. Several people have asked about the Chrismon tree. The term “Chrismon” comes from the Latin “Christi monnogramma” which simply means “monogram of Christ”. Therefore, a Chrismon is a Christian symbol that represents Christ. There is a descriptive list of the various Chrismons next to the tree.

**THE ADVENT CANDLES AND CHRIST CANDLE** are dedicated to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Grace M. Dodson (mother) and Dolores A. Dodson (aunt) of Donna Wolf, given by the family and friends. The candle stand and wreath are in memory of S. Leona Wolf, mother of the late John Wolf.

**THE PEW CANDLE HOLDERS,** made by John Barr, were given by John and Dolly Barr.

**THE NATIVITY SCENE ON THE FRONT LAWN** was made by Mike Wagner.

**THE CRECHE ON THE LOWER LEVEL BY THE ELEVATOR** was made by Mike Wagner.

**ADVENT DEVOTIONALS & CALENDARS:** There are devotionals available for adults & children and Advent calendars for children on the table across from the church office.

**CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS CARD:** Don't forget to sign the congregational Christmas card on the table across from the church office. There is a box for you to put a monetary donation for Milagro House. **Thank you to Betty Tyndall for making the card again this year!**

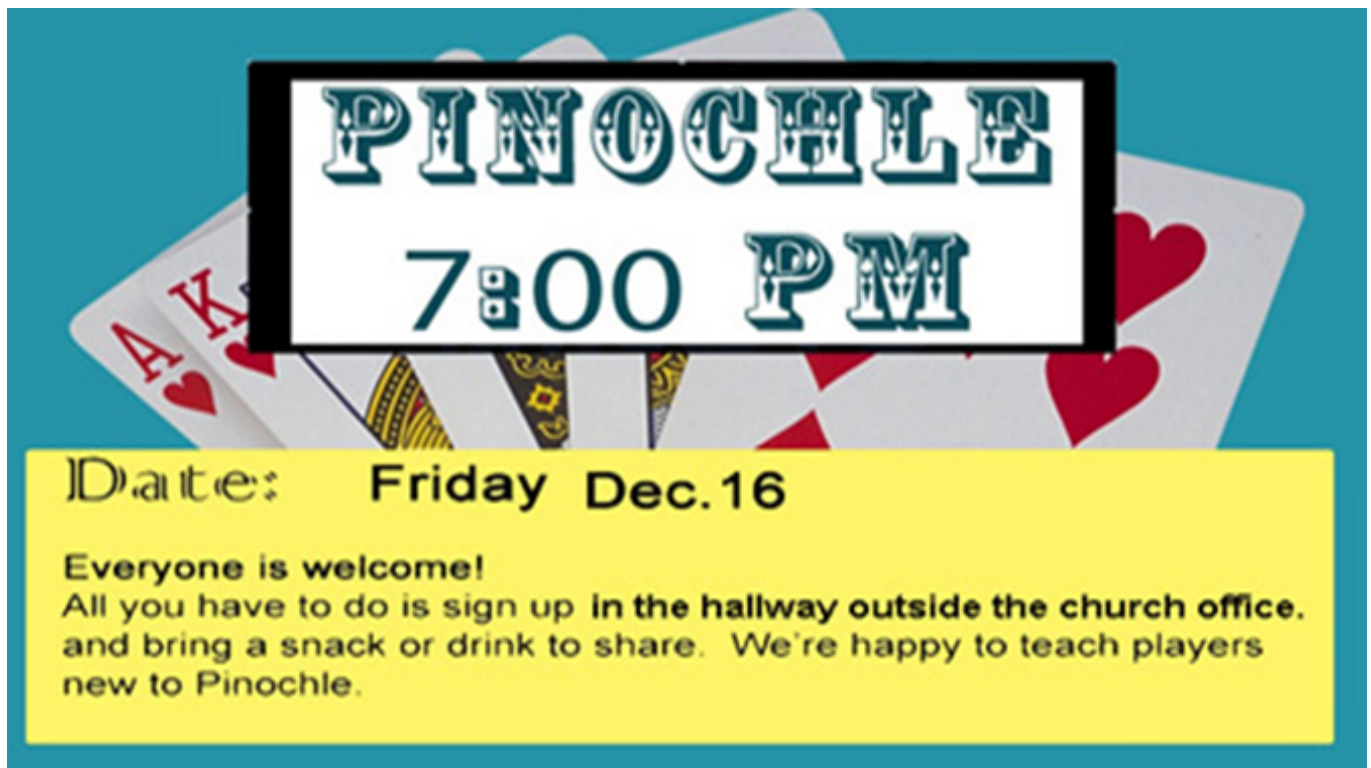
**THE DECEMBER PARISH POST** is available on both floors of the church building. **The deadline for the January Parish Post is December 19!**

**PRAYER CONCERNS:** The family of Marlin “Moe” Weaver (brother of Dottie Schadt/uncle of Cherie Cataldi), the family of Rev. John Smeltzer (seminary classmate of Rev. Bob Hunsicker), Jodi Keller, George DeLong, Dave Trostle, Summerlyn Burger (granddaughter of Marge Burger), Danielle Huggins Holbein, Janet Owens (sister-in-law of Scott & Jane Owens), Joann Peck, Mary Lou Shaab, Stan & Pat Seachrist, Rev. Dave & Mid Gockley, Hilma Slechta (mother of Mike Slechta), Donna Nesbitt (neighbor of John & Sarah Paulukow), Chad Zirkel (son of Donna Zirkel), Jane Portser, Tom Wolf (son of Donna Wolf), Judie Bistline, Jordan Sensenig (grandson of Pat & Joan Sensenig), Laura Jean Watson (sister of Carol Kratz), David and Brenda Haverstick (friends of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Jeannie & Bill Toy (sister & brother-in-law of Lainie Christensen) Carmen Richards, Donna Zirkel, Don & Pat Miller, Sam Minder III, Rev. Bob & Nancy Musser, Dick & Tillie King (friends of Stan & Pat Seachrist), Robin McComsey (neighbor of Himelwrights), Rylan Brent (relative of Chuck & Sue Husted), Hank Fox, Rev. Jere & Judy Chapman, Tom & Elaine Lichtenwalner (parents of Mike Lichtenwalner), Don Pfeifer (husband of Denise Pfeifer), Bob Kilgore, the Lehman family, Judy Barr (friend of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Joann Garvin, Rev. Phyllis Baum, Jake & Jean Otthofer (parents of Dan Otthofer), Rev. Paul Eyer (former pastor of St. Luke’s), Mary Witmer, the Martin family, Robert Richards (brother of Jerry Richards), Monica Williams (friend of Sandy DeLong), Ronald Himelwright (grandson of Brenda & Harry Himelwright), Barry Richards (son of Jerry & Carmen Richards), Tyler Miller (grandson of Iris DeMaio), Joan Kalbach (mother of Dr. Cathy Hoshauer), Nancy Patton, Mike & Judy Barr (friends of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Phyllis Zimmerman, Jim & Kathy Long (friends of Jerry & Carmen Richards), John Siebern (Bob Siever’s brother-in-law), Carl Roth (Gretchen Leinbach’s brother), Rev. Frank Lantz, Lainie Christensen, Sandra Englert (niece of Betty Tyndall), Charles & Betty Booraem, Betty Tyndall and family, Dorothy Fasnacht, Jo Jo Richards & family (Carmen & Jerry’s granddaughter-in-law), Bob & Marlyn Wible, Barry Moore (Donna & Ron Denlinger’s brother-in-law), Judy Wisniewski (sister of Chuck Husted), and the Bonilla-Rodriguez family (friends of Trinity Church)

**DEVOTIONALS:** The October-December edition of *These Days* are available on the table across from the church office or on the lower level by the portico entrance.

**CHRISTMAS CAROLING:** The Parish Life Committee is planning to go Christmas caroling TODAY to some of our members and around the East Petersburg community. We will enjoy a pizza lunch together after the 10:30 service in Isenberg Hall and then go caroling (by car) from 1-3 p.m. Please sign-up on the table across from the church office so that we can order enough pizzas! This is open to all members and friends of Trinity Church!!!

**ADVENT ENVELOPES:** The Board of Deacons decided to give funds from the Advent offering envelope to the U.C.C. Christmas Fund for retired clergy, widows/widowers of U.C.C. clergy, and ministerial assistance. We will hear more about the U.C.C. Christmas Fund offering in December.



**PINOCHLE**  
**7:00 PM**

**Date: Friday Dec. 16**

**Everyone is welcome!**  
All you have to do is sign up **in the hallway outside the church office.** and bring a snack or drink to share. We're happy to teach players new to Pinochle.

**PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY:** The Prayer Shawl will meet Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> in the Choir Room from 1:00-3:00 PM. They will continue to meet on the third Tuesday of each month! Come and bring a friend. Hope to see many of you there! Contact Betty Tyndall for more information.

### **NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Everyone is invited to a special Advent/Christmas celebration on December 18 at 9 a.m. in Isenberg Hall! There will be singing, a special story, and a time for people to share their favorite Christmas Eve/Christmas Day memories. The celebration will end with a special koinonia! We hope to see you there!

**Special note: Sunday School classes will not be held on December 25 and January 1.**

**KOINONIA:** We have resumed koinonia (community fellowship) every Sunday at 10 a.m. in Isenberg Hall. Volunteers are asked to provide light refreshments and drinks/coffee. The sign-up sheet is on the kitchen coordinator. If you have any questions, contact Paula Dennes.

**MEN OF TRINITY BREAKFAST:** The monthly breakfast will be held at the Family Fare Restaurant on January 14 at 8:00 a.m. Look for the sign-up sheet on the table across from the church office.

**NEW MEMBERS:** Are you interested in joining Trinity U.C.C.? Do you know of someone looking for a church home? Please speak to Pastor Chris about joining our congregation.

**2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES** are available on the table across from the church office. Please help us by delivering envelopes to some of our homebound members!

**NEW NURSERY COORDINATOR:** Betty Fogle has agreed to serve as our nursery coordinator. If you are interested in providing nursery care for children during worship, please contact Betty.

**PASTOR'S CHRISTMAS GIFT:** You will again find a pink envelope in your box of offering envelopes. This is a way for you to give a Christmas gift to Pastor Rankin. If you want the pastor to receive the full amount of your gift, then you should give it directly to him. This means that the money will not go through the church treasury and you will not receive a tax deduction for your gift. All checks should be made payable to the pastor if you choose to give it to him directly.

If you choose to make your check payable to Trinity UCC, you will receive credit on your 2022 contribution statement. A gift sent through the church treasury is considered taxable income for the pastor.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

*Scott Owens, Church Treasurer*

**ONLINE GIVING INFORMATION:** Contributing your donation using our website....[trinityeastpete.org](http://trinityeastpete.org)....**RESOURCES, PAY ON LINE**

For several years, members have been able to make weekly/recurring donations on-line in lieu of paying cash/checks or by mail. On-line donations save the cost of a check and envelope and if using the recurring feature, remembering weekly to prepare your envelope. Presently we have several individuals/families using on-line donations either weekly or recurring.

*We believe that financial transparency builds trust and is a mark of stewardship so we want to take a moment to remind you that there is a small cost for this convenience. You'll have the opportunity to help cover the cost of processing when you give. Please know that this is **100% optional**, but we appreciate your partnership in making your gift go as far as possible to impact our mission.*

We have never asked our members to cover these costs especially since 2020 at the start of the pandemic. The costs are 1.05% when paying by check, 3.05% when paying by credit/debit card.

Beginning July 1, 2022, we added a feature to our on-line giving whereby you can help to cover the costs of paying online by debit/credit card or checking account. This is entirely **OPTIONAL**. There will be a check-off block to use if you wish to cover your transaction cost in addition to your contribution.



**Community Grab 'N Go Meal: Tuesday, December 27 at First Reformed U.C.C. (40 E. Orange St., Lancaster)**

Trinity has another opportunity to feed the underserved on December 27. A few volunteers will be needed to pack and distribute 120 to-go dinner bags. The sign-up sheet for volunteers and food donations is on the table in across from the church office. The food items needed for this meal are: fruit cups, hamburger rolls, water, individually wrapped desserts and baby carrots. Donations can be placed in the basket on the table.

Contact Kathy Cooley for more information! Thanks for your continuing support!

**2023 CHANCEL FLOWERS AND WORSHIP AID SPONSORS:**

Upcoming dates for chancel flowers are: January 15 & 22.

Upcoming dates for worship aids are: January 1, 8, 15 & 22. The price for flowers is \$60. The price for worship aids is \$26. Contact Carol and look for charts for 2023 dates.

**THE 2023 APPROVED BUDGET** is available on the table across from the church office or in the information racks on both levels of the church building.

**CROP WALK UPDATE** Trinity has raised \$12,740 for the 2022 CROP Walk. The Lancaster CROP Walk has raised \$47,917 so far towards our goal of \$50,000!

There's still time to support our walkers by giving them money or going online at <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/team/trinity-east-pete>



**CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE:** We will then have a service of lessons and carols with Holy Communion on Sunday, December 25 at 10:00 a.m. There will be no Sunday School or koinonia on December 25!

**WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS:** We are looking for worship volunteers on Sunday mornings. Contact the church office to sign-up!

**Greeters:** To welcome worshippers at the door for the second service.

**Ushers:** We have returned to passing the offering plate during the second service. We especially need ushers because some people have stepped down!

**Lectors:** Assist with the worship service or to just read the scripture lessons at the 7:45 a.m. and/or 10:30 a.m. services.

**Special Note:** We are in need of ushers & greeters for Christmas Eve services and our Christmas Day Service (10 a.m.). We also need readers for Christmas Eve (6:30 p.m.) and the Christmas Day Service. Speak with Pastor Chris if interested.

## Holiday Wishes for Jordan Sensenig



Since Jordan is deployed overseas, this will be his third Christmas away from home. Christmas will be a difficult time for him, and we hope you will help to boost his spirits. Whether you share a note, a Christmas card, or a memory, we hope you will help by sending him words of encouragement.

You surprised him with your wonderful greetings last year, and we hope we can surprise him again. He couldn't believe how many greetings he received. You were great!

Jordan appreciates his Trinity family, and we hope this will be a great reminder of all the times he spent at Trinity. He's far from home, and this will help him feel all the caring that surrounds him.

With the issues surrounding mail delivery, we will collect your encouraging correspondences and will send all as a single mailing. We will send one mailing in early December, and then another a few weeks later.

Many Thanks!  
Pat and Joan

To our Trinity Family.....

A huge **THANK YOU** for the special recognition you gave me on Sunday, December 4. When said verbally, as I did on Sunday, it is said with feeling and emotion.

I accept the accolades that were said but I could not have done them without the support of the Finance Committee, Deacons, Consistory, Pastor Chris and the congregation. The Treasurer relies on many who question, recommend and support and then help implement ideas and improvements. The support and assistance of Phyllis is a major factor also.

A special **THANK YOU** for the understanding and support given by the folks at Hollinger's, our accountants.

I found pride in my work as I was doing it for the Lord and our church and for helping others to understand what it takes to keep a church going.....the giving of the congregation and the support paid to other non-profits to meet our commitment of being a mission giving church.

Phyllis and I also want to **THANK YOU** for the gift cards....they are greatly appreciated.

*Ken Zimmerman*



## Understanding, Compassion, and Financial Relief

**E**ach year, the Pension Boards receives cards, calls, and letters of thanks from grateful recipients of financial assistance from the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross—a UCC offering received each year by congregations across the country in recognition and love for retired servants of the church, their families, and survivors. Here are some excerpts from just a few of these expressions of gratitude:

*“The Pension Boards is really helping me with a monthly annuity supplementation. It is so wonderful to know that I can now buy healthy food and not have to go to food banks—and will be able to buy Christmas presents for my grandchildren. There were many years when in order to buy Christmas presents, I cut back on food spending.”*

*“I loved working in small churches. I remember a day in seminary when I overheard a couple of students talking, saying that the thing to do was get a small church to start and then that’s your stepping-stone to a bigger church. That’s when I decided I would always serve small churches. They deserve people with experience. But I didn’t stop to think about the tiny annuity I would have at the time I made the decision to work with small congregations. Help from donations to the Christmas Fund has been a Godsend. Thank you!”*

*“I’ve always been proud of the UCC that we’re open about all kinds of difficult things people face in life. I’m even more grateful for our wider church that expresses that openness by providing understanding, compassion, and financial relief when people really need it.”*

### In 2021, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 231 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,104,479)
- Health benefits supplementation for 87 retired clergy and lay employees (\$177,600)
- Emergency grants for 53 individuals and families (\$150,338)
- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 509 retired clergy and lay employees (\$254,000)

## The Christmas Fund

For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund



**DECEMBER 11, 2022**

**(A)**

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**FIRST LESSON. Isaiah 35:1-10**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**SECOND LESSON. James 5:7-10**

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

**GOSPEL. Matthew 11:2-11**

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

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