

*I have
called you by name,*



you are mine

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
2340 State Street, East Petersburg, PA 17520
717-569-1632

Website: www.trinityeastpete.org E-Mail: secretary@trinityeastpete.org

The Rev. Dr. Christopher M. Rankin, Pastor

The Rev. Harry G. Royer, Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Carolyne 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

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD/FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
10:30 A.M. SERVICE

Today's Theme: Today's festival rejoices in God's blessings. We recall and celebrate our adoption as God's children, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the promised company of almighty God when we "pass through the waters...the rivers...fire." On this day the heavens open again for this congregation, and we receive the gift of God's Beloved, Jesus, in bread and wine.

Prayer: *Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

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. Please sign our guest book in the narthex. If you are interested in church membership, please give your name and telephone number to Pastor Rankin.

PRELUDE

How Brightly Shines the Morning Star

P. Nicolai

settings by F. Ritter and J. S. Bach

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

CALL TO WORSHIP

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM AND CALL TO WORSHIP

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

Amen. (sung)

Arise, shine; for your light has come; and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Lift up your eyes and look around; sons and daughters gather together, they come to you.

Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Let us worship God!

CONFESSION OF SINS

CALL TO CONFESSION

God has come to us in Christ, but we often live as if it made no difference.

Let us confess our sins before God in silent prayer.

(SEATED OR KNEELING)

SILENT CONFESSION OF SINS

CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

O God, we confess that we have sinned against you and your beloved children. We have turned our faces away from your glory when it did not appear as we expected. We have rejected your word when it made us confront ourselves. We have failed to show hospitality to those you called us to welcome. Accept our repentance for the things we have done and the things we have left undone. For the sake of Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us and lead us, that we may bathe in the glory of your Son born among us, and reflect your love for all creation. Amen.

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

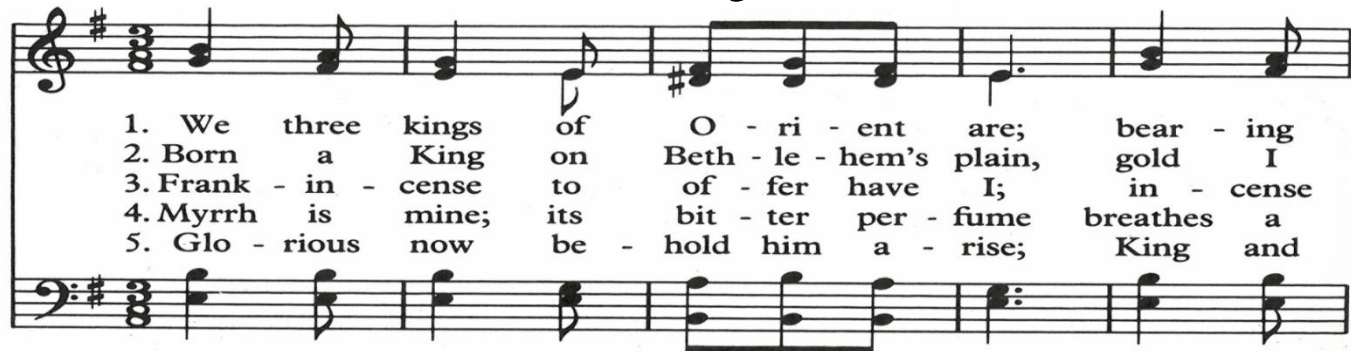
Lord, have mercy.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

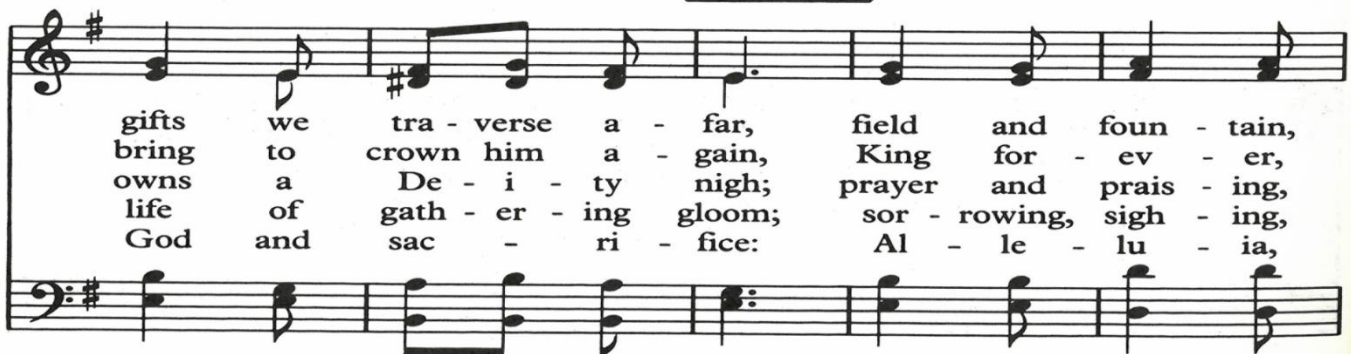
(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

HYMN

We Three Kings



1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing
2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I
3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense
4. Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a
5. Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise; King and

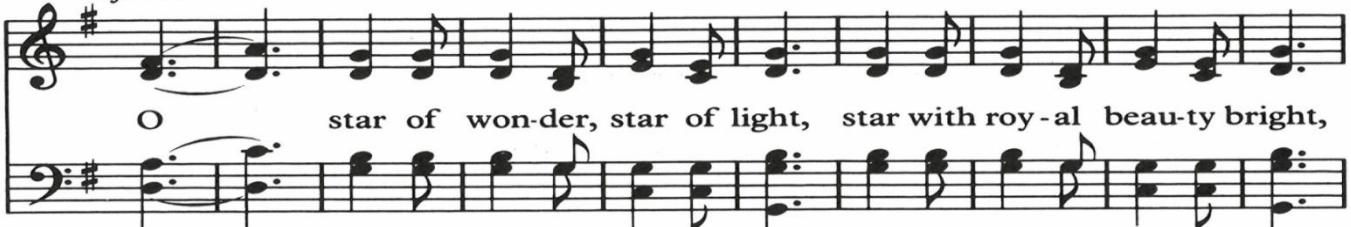


gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,
bring to crown him a - gain, King for - ev - er,
owns a De - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing,
life of gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing,
God and sac - ri - fice: Al - le - lu - ia,

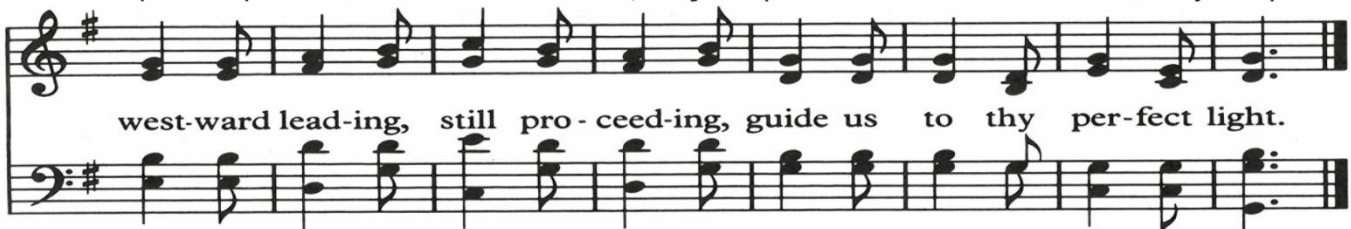


moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.
ceas - ing nev - er, o - ver us all to reign.
voic - es rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God on high.
bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
Al - le - lu - ia, sounds through the earth and skies.

Refrain



O star of won - der, star of light, star with roy - al beau - ty bright,



west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light.

(PLEASE BE SEATED)

LET THE CHILDREN COME-- The Story of the Wise Men

THE WORD OF GOD

THE FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 43:1-7

Near the end of Israel's exile in Babylon, God promises to bring them home. They need no longer be afraid, because the one who formed, created, and called them by name now redeems them from all their enemies. God declares them precious and honored, and God loves them.

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

THE PSALTER

Psalm 29

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendor.

The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king for ever. May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

THE SECOND LESSON

Acts 8:14-17

Peter and John are sent to support the new Christians in Samaria, a group that was recently baptized after hearing the good news of Christ through the preaching of Philip. Here the Samaritans receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in the laying on of hands.

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

THE HOLY GOSPEL

St. Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

The reading opens with questions about the identity of the Messiah. John the Baptist insists that he is not the Messiah; instead he points ahead to one who is coming. And whether the voice of God was heard by all or only by Jesus, God settles the matter: Jesus is God's beloved Son.

Glory be to You, O Lord.

THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD

Praise be to You, O Christ.

SERMON

“We Are the Lord’s”

Pastor Rankin

INSTALLATION OF CONSISTORY MEMBERS

WORDS OF INVITATION

Pastor: Today we install into the Offices of Elder and Deacon the following persons who have been called by God, in accordance with the faith and order of this church, to serve among us. They have accepted their call and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve.

Elder (2021-2024): Tim Geiger (1st term)

Deacon (2021-2024): John Shelsky (1st term), Steve Shenk (1st term)

My friends in Christ, it is an honor to be entrusted with responsibility for particular service in the ministry of the church.

Elders assist and support the Pastor in the general government of the church. With the Pastor they form a council for the spiritual supervision of the congregation. They serve as advisors and counselors of the Pastor, serving as the Pastor's hands and eyes, acting with and for and representing the presence of the Pastor throughout the congregation. They are to serve as an example, to

watch over and take a special interest in the congregation's spiritual welfare, to feel a responsibility for its condition, and to be at hand with spiritual aid for its necessities and wants.

Deacons assist and support the Pastor in regards to the stewardship and mission of the church. They aid in and oversee the securing of the funds necessary for the ministry of the church and the support of her charitable and benevolent institutions. They oversee the development of the annual budget, support and management of the endowment funds, and promote outreach through local and wider mission.

SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

THE COVENANT

Pastor: Brothers in Christ, having prayerfully considered the duties and responsibilities of your ministries are you prepared to serve with the help of God in Christ's name and for the glory of God?

Consistory Members: I am.

Pastor: Do you promise to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully, showing forth the love of Christ?

Consistory Members: I do, relying on God's grace.

Pastor: Members of this household of faith, you have heard the promises of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have answered God's call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them. Will those who are able rise and witness to the commitment we now make?

Congregation: We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and assist you that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

(We will be ordaining Cherie Cataldi, Denise Pfeifer, John Shelsky, and Steve Shenk as deacons.)

PRAYER AND DECLARATION OF INSTALLATION (all current Consistory members are invited to come forward for the prayer.)

PEOPLE'S OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

Arise, Shine

Pote

Pat Sensenig, soloist; Christine Oetama, pianist

THE VERSICLE AND RESPONSE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

(KNEELING OR SEATED)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance, so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

By the Holy Spirit, you gather your church and send it out in mission to share the good news of Jesus. Inspire your faithful people to be fervent in prayer and service, that all people know they are precious in God's sight. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Establish among the nations the blessings of peace. Raise up leaders who will protect vulnerable people in their care. Strengthen advocates who risk reputation or retaliation for the sake of mercy and justice. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You protect us through the fires and troubled waters of this life. Assure us that we will not be cut off from you by illness or despair, anxiety or pain, confusion or weakness. Comfort all who are in need. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We are joined in baptism to Christ and to one another. Bless those who are newly baptized and those who are preparing for baptism. Help us to be faithful in fellowship, worship, evangelism, service, and justice-seeking. God of grace, **hear our prayer**

SILENT PRAYER

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.

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

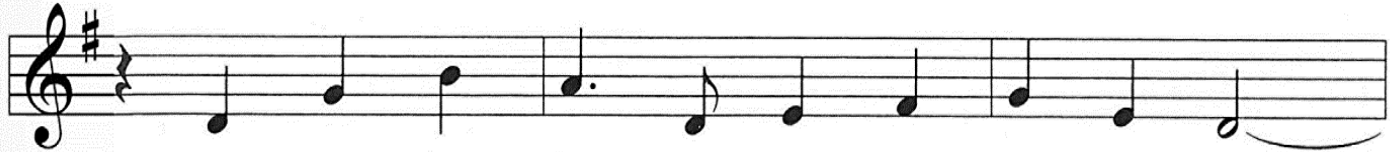
OFFERING DEDICATION

For the joy of giving, Holy God, we offer the products of our labor for the ministry of this church, in outreach to the world. With concern for those who are poor, oppressed, and needy, we rededicate ourselves as helpers and advocates. Out of devotion to Christ, we commit our best, that the church may bear witness among the principalities and powers of this world. Help us all, O God, to be faithful stewards. Amen.

CLOSE OF WORSHIP

HYMN

We Know That Christ is Raised



1 We know that Christ is raised and dies no more.
2 We share by wa - ter in his sav - ing death.
3 The Fa - ther's splen - dor clothes the Son with life.
4 A new cre - a - tion comes to life and grows



Em-braced by death, he broke its fear - ful hold,
Re-born, we share with him an Eas - ter life,
The Spir - it's fis - sion shakes the church of God.
as Christ's new bod - y takes on flesh and blood.



and our de - spair he turned to blaz - ing joy.
as liv - ing mem - bers of our Sav - ior Christ.
Bap - tized, we live with God the Three in One.
The u - ni - verse re - stored and whole will sing:



Hal - le - lu - jah!

"We Know That Christ is Raised" text by John Brownlow Geyer © 1982 Church Publishing, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted under One [License.net](https://www.license.net) #A-711879.

RESPONSIVE BENEDICTION

Arise, and go forth to shine for all the world to see.

We go to spread the good news of light and love, righteousness and justice.

May the blessing of the God of light rest upon you and fill you with light. Amen.

POSTLUDE *Go Tell It on the Mountain* African American Spiritual
settings by S. Scott and W. Held

CATCH THE VISION & SHARE THE JOY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chancel Flowers are given by **Christine and Boniface Oetama** to the Glory of God and in celebration of their 43rd wedding anniversary on January 4th.

The Worship Aids are given by **Scott & Jane Owens** in honor of Ken Zimmerman, Church Treasurer.

Greeters/Ushers: **Mike Wagner, Shelley Wagner, Charlene Cristy, Stan & Pat Seachrist**

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

Building Trustee: **Mike Wagner** **Lector:** **Diane Rice**

Thank you to Pat Sensenig and Christine Oetama for sharing their musical gifts with us today.

This Week at Trinity Church

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

Today	Undecorate the church after 10:30 a.m. service
Wednesday	7:00 PM – Finance
Thursday	10:00 AM – Mercersberg Study 6:30 PM – Cub Scouts
Friday	7:00 PM - Pinochle
Saturday	7:00 PM – Alanon 8:00 PM - AA
Sunday	8:00 AM – Eucharist 9:00 AM – Sunday School 10:30 AM – Service of Word/Sacrament of Baptism

Happy Birthday!

Tuesday – Samantha DeLong, Mark Eyer

Thursday – Brenda Himelwright, Walter Tyndall, Stacie Eberly

Friday – Rosemary Huber, Dawn Stauffer

Attendance for Sun., Jan 2	8:00–8	10:30–63	TOTAL – 71
Sunday School	9		

CHURCH UNDECORATING SCHEDULED: Please plan to stay after the 10:30a.m. service TODAY to help remove and pack up Christmas decorations from the exterior and interior of the church.

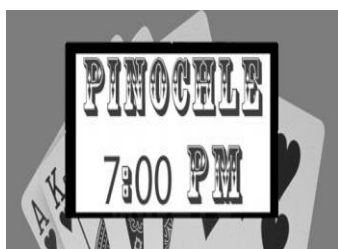
DEVOTIONALS: The January-March edition of *These Days* is available in the Narthex or on the lower level by the portico entrance.

THE JANUARY PARISH POST is available on both floors of the church building.

2022 CHANCEL FLOWERS AND WORSHIP AIDS SPONSORS

Contact Carol in the church office to sign-up for chancel flowers and worship aids for 2022. We recently changed florists and so the new price for flowers will be \$60. The price for worship aids will remain at \$26. Upcoming dates for chancel flowers are: **February 27**. Upcoming dates for worship aids are: **February 13, 20, and 27**.

PINOCHLE FELLOWSHIP: Mark your calendars now because the



Pinochle Fellowship will meet again on January 14th at 7:00 PM. Look for more information in the January Parish Post. You can respond using the electronic version that Carol already sent via e-mail or on the website under Ministries! Speak with Karen Olley for more information!

PRAYER CONCERNS: The family of Ken Geib, the family of Jerry Brown (relatives of George & Sandy DeLong), the family of Greg Wagner (brother of Mike Wagner), the family of Tim Landis (friends of Paula Dennes), Hilma Slechta, Danielle Huggins Holbein, Carole Connor, Carol Kratz, Donna Smoker (friend of Trinity), Sean McKelvey, Mary Witmer, Steve Owens (son of Scott & Jane Owens), Mark & Mary Anne Ritter (friends of the Paulukows), Patrick & Mel (nephew of Marianne Gible & his wife), the Martin family, Robert Richards (brother of Jerry Richards), Hillary Brennan (mother of John Brennan), Ann Wolf (neighbor of George & Sandy DeLong), Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, David & Ann Potts (friends of Brenda & Harry Himelwright), Pete & Nora Petrosky (friends of Dr. Cathy Hoshauer), Lynn Dull, Jill Otthofer, Paul Zirkel (son of Donna Zirkel), 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), Donna Denlinger, Cathy Hoshauer, Pat Miller, Nancy Patton, Gary Reynolds (friend of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Rev. Bob & Nancy Musser, Phyllis Zimmerman, Donna Zirkel, Chris Rice (nephew of Diane Rice & Karen Olley), Jaimie & Aurora Commero (friends of Sarah Paulukow), Mark Zody (friend of Denise Huggins), Jim & Kathy Long (friends of Jerry & Carmen Richards), John Siebern (Bob Siever's brother-in-law), Carl Roth (Gretchen Leinbach's brother), Scott Summers, 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, Lily Kilgore & family, Barry Moore (Donna & Ron Denlinger's brother-in-law), Jordan Sensenig (grandson of Pat & Joan Sensenig), Judy Wisniewski (sister of Chuck Husted), Elaine Sturgis (friend of Sue Husted), Rev. Jere & Judy Chapman, Doris Leaman, Kelsey (Minnich) and Tom Burgo, Judie Bistline, and the Bonilla-Rodriguez family (friends of Trinity Church).

MONEY BOXES: The children's Sunday School class has been learning about sharing God's gifts with others. They created boxes to collect coins to support a mission project or the work of our Christian Education ministry. Look for the boxes on the table across from the church office. Talk to Anne Rankin for more information.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CLASSES: Christian Education classes will be held for all ages at 9:00 a.m. Here are the locations for the classes:

1. **Children's Class** will meet in the classroom on the first floor.
2. **Middle School/High School Class** will meet in the classroom on the second floor.
3. **The Combined Adult Class** will meet in Isenberg Hall.

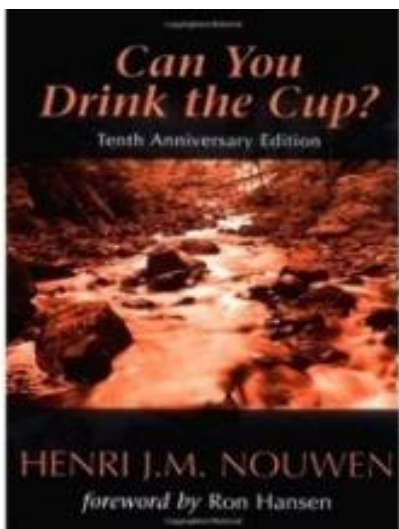
There will be no Koinonia at this time!

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS: We are looking for worship volunteers at the in-person worship services:

Greeters/Ushers: To welcome worshippers at the door and to seat them in the sanctuary (10:30 a.m. service only)

Lectors: Assist with the worship service or to just read the scripture lessons at the 8:00 a.m. and/or 10:30 a.m. services.

Please contact Pastor Chris or Carol Kratz if you are willing to volunteer.



JANUARY BOOK STUDY: Pastor Rankin will be leading a book study via Google Meet on January 17, 24, and 31 from 7-8 p.m. We will be reading Henri Nouwen's *Can You Drink the Cup?*

This question---one that Jesus asked his friends James and John---"has the power to crack open the hardened heart and lay bare the tendons of the spiritual life," explains world-renowned spiritual writer Henri Nouwen.

The cup, a powerful image in the human experience, a symbol used to celebrate a wide range of human endeavors, becomes for Nouwen a doorway opening on the spiritual horizon. "Drinking our cup to the bottom is seen as the expression of the full freedom of the sons and daughters of God," he writes. His goal is to make the question Jesus posed pierce our hearts so that a personal answer can emerge from it.

Please sign-up by contacting Carol in the church office. The deadline to order books through the church was December 27, so you will have to order the book on your own!

Come, Follow Me Retreat



Mark your calendars for a church retreat to be held at Trinity Church February 18-20, 2022. The retreat will be led by Pastor Rankin and Rev. Dr. Dave Bushnell, Pastor Emeritus of Hamilton Park U.C.C. and author of the retreat.

Here is what Dr. Bushnell says about the retreat:

The Come Follow Me retreat seeks to invite people to experience being the body of Christ in our own time and place. This corporate identity, this “we”, can open us up to others, even to all creation. It invites us to experience others as I/Thou relationships (to use the Jewish scholar Martin Buber’s language).

In order to experience being the body of Christ today, the Come Follow Me retreat uses worship as its basic paradigm. The retreat follows the essential elements of worship from being called, to confession, then moving on to a unique experience of Jesus Christ, exploring how Jesus’ spirituality can help shape our own. The retreat includes a time of sharing deeply with one another remembering the waters of baptism. Then, after seeing the church as a community of abundant Christian practices, we will work to envision what our incarnational ministry will be like. Finally, we are sent out into the world, into “the long emergency” with solid “next steps” to follow.

Contact the church office to register for this retreat!!!

Stewardship Mission Moment

The Stewardship Committee is organizing speakers to offer a mission moment each month during worship about one of our mission partners we support through Our Gifts to Others. We have scheduled speakers for January and February.

January 23: Jay Rairigh, Executive Director of Love INC will speak at both services. He will also share more about Love INC to the adult Sunday School class in Isenberg Hall at 9:00 a.m.


Community Meal at First Reformed U.C.C., Lancaster

The community meals at First Reformed U.C.C. are starting again in 2022. They will continue to serve a grab and go meal. The diners and servers must be masked at all times.

Meals (cold or hot) can be prepared in the church kitchen. They are telling us to prepare for 60-70 people.

We are looking for some people to coordinate these meals. If you are interested or have more questions, contact Paula Dennes, Nancy Enders, or Pastor Rankin.


Parish Resource Center
2160 Lincoln Highway East #18,
Lancaster, PA 17602
717-299-1113
info@parishresourcecenter.org
www.parishresourcecenter.org



**Parish
Resource
Center**


Solutions For Churches & Communities

**Feb 26,
10-11:30am**



**Annie Browning
M.Div., LCSW**

**Using
Intuition
in Your Work**



CHURCH COVENANT IN THE MIDST OF THE PANDEMIC

As an individual who attends Trinity United Church of Christ I covenant to work with my fellow church members, family and friends to keep our community safe and healthy.

I covenant to . . .

Wear a face mask as a symbol of love and care for others.

Maintain physical distancing when possible.

Clean up after myself in the spaces I use because germs are everywhere I go too!

Honor and respect the sacredness of each person in this space and to stay home if I don't feel well or have been around someone who is waiting the results of a COVID test, knowing God is with us wherever we are, whether inside or outside the walls of the church.

Work together with my church family in creating a safe and healthy space to gather for worship, fellowship, or church activities as one body, united in God's love.

Acknowledge the hard work ahead, and the commitment to care for one another.

Together, we as the church, covenant to care and love one another in new and different ways as we:

- Share God's love with our community
- Serve God's children
- Bring healing and wholeness to those in need
- Share the Gospel in liturgy, music and study

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY



The United Nations has designated the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz - Birkenau concentration camp as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.



The Lessons of the Holocaust

Join us on Thursday, January
27th, 2022, at 7:00 pm.

This is a hybrid event, and will be held
simultaneously in person and on Zoom.

The speakers will be:

Pastor Mark Ammerman - Grace Evangelical Congregational Church

Pastor Timothy Bistline - Church of God of Landisville, and Real-Life Church of God

Pastor Pamela Carnes - Evangelical Lutheran, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Pastor Doug Hinton - Hempfield Church of the Brethren

Pastor Christopher Rankin - Trinity United Church of Christ

Rabbis Daniela Szuster and Rami Pavolotzky - Temple Beth El Lancaster

[Register to attend in person and on Zoom here now.](#)

Temple Beth El Lancaster 1836 Rohrerstown Road Lancaster PA 17601

Office@tbelancaster.org (717) 581-7891

U.C.C. MISSION MOMENT
The Baptism of Christ/First Sunday after Epiphany
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Affirmed by Love

When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, a voice came from heaven introducing and announcing him as “beloved.” Since that holy day, belovedness has marked every baptized person as known, named and cherished by God.

Yet too often the church has been a place of condemnation and judgment for those who seek healing and solace. Especially bereft are the many at the mercy of our nation’s prison industry. But here and there, voices within the United Church of Christ call for healing and hope for these often-forgotten beloved ones.

***Rev. Phillip Reller of Arizona writes, “We are called to embody Jesus’ heart and show forth his compassion to prisoners. It is a very practical ministry of – Incarnation – love made visible in the flesh. Being there. Ours are a new set of ears listening to immensely consequential stories which have worn thin in the retelling to familiar cell and pod mates. Ours are new conversations and new perspectives.**

It is a ministry of advocacy. Being there. The men I visit are cut off by thousands of miles from their families, communities, and support systems in private for-profit prisons. They are treated as strange enemies and are forced into culturally and religiously molded programs of “rehabilitation” which strip them of their cultural identity and dignity. Visiting allows us to witness their struggle and speak as allies for rehabilitation and respectful treatment.

It is a ministry of reconciliation. Being there. I have been allowed to share firsthand reports of the condition of their sons, husbands, and daddies with families who have been estranged or ashamed or in the confusion of unresolved anger and grief. Appropriate sharing can build bridges towards forgiveness and new relationships. It can calm deep anxieties. It can pave the way for connections that create positive re-entry.”

On this celebration of baptism day, be in prayer about how you can “be there” along with Rev. Reller with God’s imprisoned beloved ones.

**Reller, Phillip. “Prison Ministry.” United Church of Christ,
www.ucc.org/domestic-policy/justice_criminal-justice_prison-ministry/*

JANUARY 9, 2022

(C)

**BAPTISM OF THE LORD
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

FIRST LESSON. Isaiah 43:1-7

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

SECOND LESSON. Acts 8:14-17

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

GOSPEL. Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

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