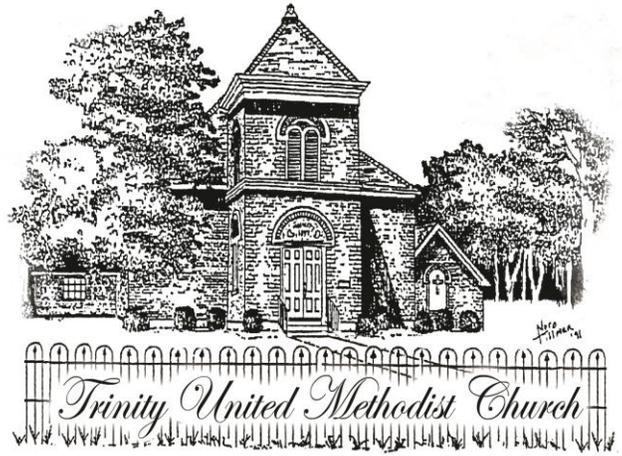




# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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December 2, 2015

## **Advent Is About God Reaching Out to the World**

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us...*

*John 1:14*

It's Advent or, as many Christians in the rest of the world call it, "the Christmas Season." We will soon be hearing the debates about the "true" meaning of Christmas and whether the "true" meaning is lost in all the commercial activity. There will also be those bemoaning the use of Holiday Season over Christmas Season; the so-called attacks on Christmas. However, even if you listen closely, you probably won't hear a consistent message from Christians about the true meaning of the season.

For some, it's about "Peace on Earth," something the world did not experience in Jesus' lifetime, or the two thousand years since. For many, it's a "Spirit of Good Will Toward All People," the message exemplified in the classic *Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens. For still others, the primary focus is the Christ Child in the manger as the symbol of new life and hope. Yet, while all these aspects certainly have their place in the celebrations of the season, Advent is first and foremost about God reaching out to the world.

The writer of John says it best in the verse quoted above. "The Word became flesh and walked among us." The faith claim of Christianity is that God so wanted us to be reconciled to God, that God reached into our world and became a part of our reality. In many ways the incarnation, the birth of Christ, is the center of our theology. The atoning sacrifice was a reality once God became flesh. Flesh must, at some point, die. Christ's death on the Cross would have no meaning if God had not been made flesh, nor would the resurrection. God took on human life and humanity killed that life. God responded with still more life. God's love cannot be turned away, even when confronted with the worst humanity can do.

The word Advent literally means "coming." God came into our reality. God sought us out where we live. In that act is the Good News. In that act is the hope of "Peace on Earth and Good Will Toward All People."

## **The Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant**

Every Church Christmas pageant shares these characteristics: there is a rush of preparation over three to four weeks, high levels of anxiety to get the performance organized, the effort to get young children to learn a few lines of dialogue and deliver them on cue and the effort to put the performance on with a minimum of mistakes. There is one more characteristic of Church Christmas Pageants. Despite the best efforts of the organizers the result is a somewhat chaotic presentation of the Christmas Story. However, no one really minds that because their children are part of that chaotic presentation.

The Unrehearsed Christmas pageant also produces a somewhat chaotic presentation of the Christmas story but it substitutes a lot of fun for the anxiety and stress usually accompanying a pageant. Instead of weeks of preparation, everyone arrives the night of the performance. They select a costume as a shepherd or sheep, a star or an angel, a wise person, a cow, a donkey, or an innkeeper and spouse. A narrator reads the Christmas story while the costumed participants act out this old and wonderful story. Christmas songs are sung and the story is retold to a new generation. 'Kids' of all ages are invited to get dressed and participate. Refreshments are then shared in the fellowship hall.

The **Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant** will be held **Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM** at Trinity United Methodist Church. Please come and be a part of this joyful event and bring a friend or two to join in the fun. Our Holy Family this year will be Lindsey and Jason Aldred with Ava Cole Aldred in the lead role of the Christ Child. A Chili Supper will follow in Fellowship Hall.

## **Thursday Morning Bible Study**

Our Thursday morning Bible Study meets on Thursday mornings between 10:00 and 11:30. Everyone is welcome to attend. It has been my practice to allow the group to decide what parts of the bible they wish to study. We have concluded our study of Mark and have begun a study of Matthew.

## **The Poverty and Justice Bible**

*How long before you save us  
from all this violence?  
<sup>3</sup>Why do you make me watch  
such terrible injustice?  
Why do you allow violence,  
lawlessness, crime, and cruelty  
to spread everywhere?  
<sup>4</sup>Laws cannot be enforced;  
justice is always the loser;  
criminals crowd out honest people  
and twist the laws around. Habakkuk 1.2b-4*

Habakkuk begins with a conversation between the prophet and God. We can, I think, identify with the words of the prophet. It seems that this year, more than any I can remember, has been filled with violence.

Crimes of violence in our neighborhoods, mass shootings, terrorists acts, threats of war, and actual warfare. We proclaim that God is a God of justice yet it seems that there is much unpunished injustice. Yet, in the midst of the worse tragedy are those who seek to help. The police officer who places his life between the violent and the innocent; the fireman who enters the burning building to rescue the helpless; the medic who risks life and limb to offer aid in impossible situations. Even in the midst of chaos, God's love is brought to bear through all such people. The only way God's love can be seen in this world is through the Body of Christ. The free will of humankind is the source of much suffering; but it is also the source of much hope.

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*The Poverty & Justice Bible* is a bible that highlights each passage of scripture that deals with the issues of poverty and justice. There are more than 2000 references in scripture to poverty and justice, as opposed to four or five on such controversial subjects as homosexual acts or marriage. Yet many Christians seem to think that helping the poor is a pointless and even harmful act. As an on-going part of this newsletter, I will be providing citations to passages from the Old and New Testaments each week that deal with what scripture tells us about poverty and justice. If you are interested in learning more about *The Poverty & Justice Bible* you can check on Amazon.com or go to [www.Justicebible.org](http://www.Justicebible.org).

### **Prayer Ministry**

The following persons are part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

Elva Beard	Mac McAfee	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Rachel Newman	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson
Leslie Eastwood		Sam Richardson	

The members of the prayer ministry of Trinity United Methodist church covenant with one another to pray daily for:

- Those concerns on the prayer list of the Church and for healing of body and spirit for all persons listed;
- For each ministry of the church that each ministry would work to bring the Gospel to those within our community and most especially to bring the Gospel to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- For all the members of the Trinity UMC community that they be led and enabled to live as the Body of Christ;
- For our local community and all its needs, especially for those who are struggling with the burden of poverty;
- For our nation and our world that God help lead the people of the world to live in peace with God's Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part of this ministry (or if you have already spoken to me about it and were inadvertently left off the list) please let me know and I will see that you are added.

## Up-Coming Sermons

**December 6: Sermon: The Messenger.** The promise of a messenger who would precede the coming of the Messiah was hundreds of years old by the time of Jesus' birth. Yet, the message is one that we need to hear today. My texts are Malachi 3:1-4 and Luke 3:1-6.

**December 13<sup>th</sup>: Sermon: Rejoice. God Is Singing Over Us.** Paul admonishes us to rejoice always. It is often difficult to see how we can. My texts are Zephaniah 3:14-20 and Philippians 4:4-7.

## Worship Leader's Schedule

### December 6

Dana Bauguess, **Liturgist**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

### December 13

Elaine Rohrig, **Liturgist**

Donnie & Renita Hartsock, **Greeters**

Hal & Rachel Newman, **Ushers**

## Announcements

**Give the gift of music and give to Trinity!** Mystisa Records has just announced the re-release of two of Brooks Crowell's previous albums, "**Christmas at Burke Hollow**" originally released in 2009 and "**Love Ye The Lord**" released in 2011. Digitally re-mastered to enhance the quality of the recordings, these CD's make a great inspirational gift. The CD's are available in Fellowship Hall for \$12 each and the proceeds for this re-release go to Trinity UMC general fund.

**The following is a listing of up-coming events:**

**Advent Sunday School Study:** The Nanette Crowell Sunday School class has begun a study written by our Pastor, Dennis Meaker. The Study is, "**The Days are Surely Coming.**" All are welcome at 9:45 in the Sunday School room.

**Sunday, December 13, the Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant and Chili Supper** sponsored by the men's group.

**Friday, December 18,** we will be serving food to the workers at the 61<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church.

**Sunday, December 20, Choir Concert.**

## Birthdays in December

**Cheryl Wilson, Ensley Mason, Betty Haynes, Ken Strait, Brooks Crowell, Ross Crutcher.**

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**