

The Mission of Trinity United Methodist Church is to proclaim God's love by building community and living by the example and teachings of Jesus Christ.



Do Good Things (the 2024 Edition)

From
the desk
of...
The Rev.

Get insurance with God and do a good deed, settle down and stick to your last. Keep company with God, get in on the best. Psalm 37: 3-4, The Message (interpretation)

I'm going to share something about one of my children, and for their sake, I will let you guess which.

A couple of years ago, right after the kids got back to school after the very long year of pandemic virtual school, I got a phone call from my son's teacher. It was the middle of the day and all I could think was, "Oh no. He's sick." Well, he wasn't sick. He was in trouble. That's such an abnormal thing around here that it hadn't occurred to me to ever expect a phone call of that nature. Thus, I was careful about how I would carry the message. Said child had chosen to say a certain *word* in the cafeteria at school. Now, it's not that he hadn't heard the word before. Let me clarify, though. He didn't hear that word at MY house.

I asked his teacher to let me talk to him. The teary kiddo on the phone was remorseful. "Mom, so-and-so told me to say it and I'm a little afraid of so-and-so, so I said it. I don't even know what it means." I had him put his teacher back on the phone and verified that she'd also had a talk with so-and-so and reminded her that I wasn't a fan of peer-pressure bordering bullying. She knew my kid (or, she should've).

When said child got home from school (as well as his brother) I sat them both down and talked with them about 'grown-up words.' You see, we don't have 'bad words' in my house. There are just *words*, and their meanings, **and the power we give them**. I explained what most of the 'grown-up' words meant in a literal sense, and then helped them to see how those words, used in one way, shape, or form, could do harm. We had a talk about how we (Christians) try very hard to not do harm in our world, because there's already a lot of hurt. So, whether or not they ever intended those words in a harmful way, it's best not to use them until they're grown enough to understand the weight of doing harm. Essentially, we'll spend our 'now time' (the in-between) doing good.

We live in the in-between — the time after Christ's arrival in Bethlehem and the not yet, when he will come again. We are in the place where we know and conceive of all the goodness God can do and has done for Creation, and the inconceivable, or, what it'll be like at Christ's return. We are in this limbo state of being — this not-yet-knowing or understanding — but in it, we have just enough knowledge to know that, in this liminal space and time, we are charged with the task of doing all the good we can, by all the means we can, in all the ways we can, at all the times we can, as long as we ever can (roughly, John Wesley). We know just enough, have been shown just enough, to 'do good,' and that is our task. The tricky part is to also do no harm, and that is the weight of our calling, not as adults choosing to use adults words, but as mature people of faith who no longer drink the milk of faith, but eat the meat.

I wonder if that can be the path that we choose in this new year. While we are still in the

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

in-between, can we so choose to, with our words, with our choices, with our actions, with our relationships, with our privilege, and with our thoughts, prioritize doing no harm, doing good, and attending to the ordinances of our Creator? Can we guide those who are not yet there, the children we promised to show 'the way,' our faith-hungry neighbors, our physically hungry neighbors (the least, the last, and the lost), to a Promised Land of hope, of mercy, and of grace? Will we choose words that edify a Kingdom Ethic? Make choices that are harmless? Choose love? Do good things?

That's our family motto — do good things. I pray you'll join me, and my family, in this journey toward doing good things this year.

Looking Ahead,
Rev. Sara

Trustees Report January 2024

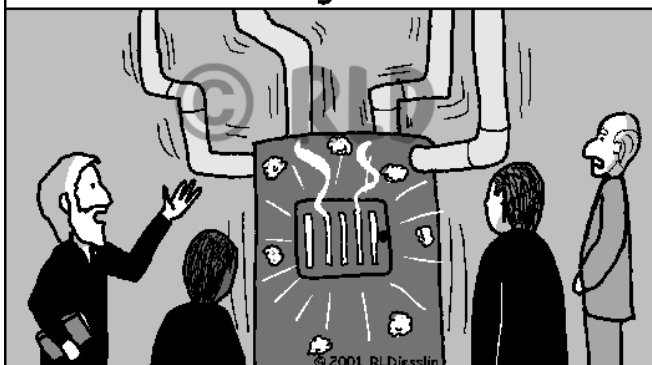


✘ Work on the HVAC system has taken longer than anticipated due to delayed shipments, parts that arrived damaged, and an ongoing problem with a recalcitrant pilot light on the boiler. Most of the major repairs are completed, but there are still some parts of the building that are either too cold or too hot and need further

thought and solutions. The Trustees appreciate the patience of the congregation and those others who inhabit the building.

- ✘ Our plumber repaired three leaking water fixtures and reattached the radiator in the women's restroom on the main floor. PLEASE contact a trustee or the church office if you are aware of a plumbing problem so it can be resolved in one trip, thus saving the church money.
- ✘ The City Code Enforcement office has added a new "once every five years" test that physically loads weight onto an elevator and tests how a bypass valve operates close to the device's maximum load. The extra cost of this new test is not covered under our maintenance contract, thus costing us around \$2,500.
- ✘ Electricians were hired to repair broken exterior lamp fixtures and a sagging metal conduit. Installation of lights at the Evergreen entrance and north stage door will happen within the week, which will complete our re-lamping effort, again making Trinity a shining beacon in the neighborhood.

The trustees decided a laying on of hands was in order if the furnace was to last through another winter!





Being Inclusive

As we begin a new year in the Children's Sunday School Class, we are also starting a new unit. Our FAITH WORD is INCLUDE, which means for the purposes of this study "to welcome all of God's children in God's love." This past Sunday, we had our usual "cast of characters" as far as the children in our class are concerned: the two Witt brothers and the two Dycus sisters. One great advantage of having a small class is that everyone gets to know each other very well and they are comfortable with one another. Because of this, everyone, from the first graders to the fourth graders, wants to take a turn when it comes to reading the lesson from the **Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook** and from the Bible itself. They may stumble over the pronunciation of certain words, such as the names of biblical towns and countries, but nobody is intimidated by this. It's a beautiful thing to witness, mainly because I was the total opposite as a child. While I was a straight-A student in school, reading out loud in front of my contemporaries was always terrifying for me, even as I grew older. Our Trinity children are willing to take other "learning by leading" roles as well. They take turns leading us in praying the Lord's Prayer. They share prayers at snack time that they have learned elsewhere, but they also share extemporaneous prayers that are often quite touching. Carson, who is taking piano lessons, now accompanies us as we sing "Sanctuary." Of course, they also want to light the Christ candle and to be the snack helper.

This past week, we talked about the other communities of which they are each a part. It was astounding the number of groups in which our children participate. Of course, the obvious ones are our faith community here at Trinity and their school communities. When they started listing the smaller groups in which they participate, from sports teams to Taekwondo to neighborhood friends, it was astounding how many children could possibly be influenced by our own children here at Trinity. Nora mentioned in class on Sunday that today (Monday), she would be making a new friend in her class. Her name is Charlotte, and Nora was quite excited about becoming friends with Charlotte. It was a perfect opportunity to talk about our FAITH WORD, INCLUDE, and how Nora could help this new child feel included and to become a part of her new school community. It gives me a new appreciation for Nora's teacher at Idlewild School, too, in that she is preparing her students to welcome this child to what will be to her a totally different, possibly overwhelming, new learning environment. In a world that seems to be increasingly the opposite of welcoming, it is a positive sign of emotional health that teachers are still encouraging students in what I have always considered to be a primary role of education, whether public or private: that is to teach our students to be good citizens and to get along with one another despite our differences.

We do not operate in a void. We practice our faith in day-to-day circumstances as adults and children. I ask your prayers as we continue to encourage our children in the faithful living of their days. May they always know that the Lord is with them, no matter what challenges they face, and that their faith family at Trinity Church loves them and is praying for them.

Peace and love,
Irene



Financial Report as of December 31, 2023

The summary for the financial performance for January 1—December 31, 2023 is as follows:

The income and expenses are presented by major categories.

January 1, 2023—December 2023:	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Over/Under</u>
Non-Pledged	\$ 80,833	\$ 46,800	\$ 34,033
Pledged	\$ 98,242	\$ 117,020	\$ (18,778)
Facility Use	\$ 55,777	\$ 60,768	\$ (4,991)
All Other Income	<u>\$ 17,047</u>	<u>\$ 9,340</u>	<u>\$ 7,707</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 251,899	\$ 233,928	\$ (17,971)
Expenditures			
Administrative/ General	\$ 114,834	\$ 137,484	\$ (22,650)
Apportionments	\$ 23,994	\$ 22,148	\$ 1,846
Maintenance/ Operations	\$ 93,849	\$ 100,900	\$ (7,051)
Program Expenses	\$ 9,409	\$ 7,491	\$ 1,918
Other Expenses	<u>\$ -0-</u>	<u>\$ -0-</u>	<u>\$ -0-</u>
Total Expenditures	\$ 242,086	\$ 268,023	\$ (25,937)
Net Income	\$ 9,813	\$ (34,095)	\$ 43,908

As of December 31, 2023, our total revenues exceeded our original projections. We have not accomplished this net income for a good many years. Even though the pledged giving was below budget, the non-pledged giving greatly exceeded the budget by \$34,033. Memorials and Bequests were also over budget by \$4,190.

Facility Use ended up under budget by \$4,991. We did not receive as much money from the NA groups and other organizations as we had budgeted.

On the expense side, we were under budget in Administrative & General by (\$22,650). The director of music position was not filed until December 2023, saving us that salary, and our substitute pianist was paid through a worship line item. We were under budget in Maintenance & Operations by (\$7,051). Program expenses were over budget due to the payments made to the accompanist mentioned above.

As a heads up for 2024, we have paid \$11,822.60 from the Holmquist Fund for a boiler repair. That fund now has a balance of \$55,295.

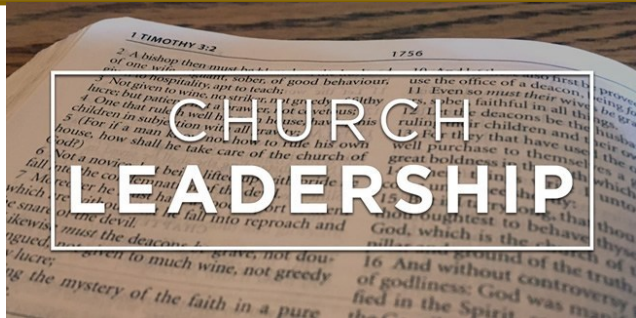
The summary projection of Unrestricted Cash Balance as of 12/31/2023 shows that we have net unrestricted income of \$20,608 to start off 2024. Hallelujah!

Many thanks to all of Trinity's givers for their continued generosity!

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Potter
Finance Co-Chair

Craig Jordan
Finance Co-Chair



2024 Trinity Church Leadership

Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair
Kay Jordan

Administrative Council Chair
Craig Jordan

Finance Committee Chair
Rosemary Potter

Treasurer – Craig Jordan

Trustees Chair – Tom Wilson

Lay Leader – Sam Goff

Youth – Amelia Strickland

Children – Irene Dycus

Pray for the leaders of our congregation as they work to build God's Kingdom.

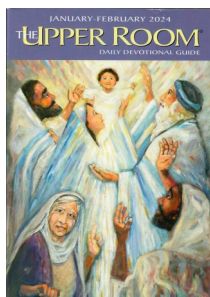


January Birthdays

John Curry	January 2
Kay Jordan	January 4
Eleanor Brooks	January 5
Roscoe Dodson	January 10
Tom Wilson	January 10
Harrison Witt	January 10
Jay Keller	January 16
Joan Foley	January 18
Lisa Wong	January 19
Doris Porter	January 23
Irene Dycus	January 25
Lila Dycus	January 25
Jeff Corbett	January 27
Caley Foreman	January 29
Carol Miller	January 30
Sharmin Murley	January 30

Tiny Pantry/Food Vouchers

- ✱ Our **Tiny Pantry** is still perched in place on Trinity's front lawn, and we occasionally see neighbors come by to replenish it. It's easy to forget how important the gift of a little food can be. Most of us don't miss many meals. There are, however, hungry folks who come by looking for a can of tuna or soup, or for just enough to get them by until their food stamps arrive. Those neighbors who are chronically unsheltered may not even have public aid in the form of food subsidies. Imagine going to bed hungry, not just one night, but almost every night. Remember to keep our Tiny Pantry stocked. Next time you go to the grocery store, pick up some extra food that can be eaten "as is," without cooking, like Vienna sausages, fruit cups, or tuna packets with crackers.
- ✱ Our **food voucher fund** is pretty empty right now. We are giving out assistance in the form of \$25 Kroger gift cards as our finances allow. Right now, finances just don't allow us to purchase very many cards. Please "dig deep" and write a check with "Food Vouchers" on the memo line. It'll be greatly appreciated!



THE UPPER ROOM

The January/February *Upper Room* is on display at the reception desk just outside The Center. Feel free to pick up a copy when you come for worship on Sunday. If you need to have one mailed to you (or a friend or neighbor) and aren't on the regular *Upper Room* mailing list, send an email to office@trinityumcmemphis.org or call the church office at 901-274-6895 or with your request. Be sure to specify the font size: large or regular. This issue of *Upper Room* is being mailed to homebound members this week.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Our country and the world - for all those endangered by the war between Israel and Hamas and for families on both sides who have lost loved ones; for victims of natural disasters; for those families and communities who have fallen victim to the horror of gun violence in our country; for the people of Ukraine who are imperiled by the invasion of Russian troops, shelling of residential areas, and the terror being experienced by the civilian population; for all those in our country and around the world still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and variants; for people of faith around the world who are experiencing persecution; for refugees seeking asylum from war and social unrest; for safe drinking water for those living in developing countries; for people around the world experiencing terrorist attacks; for the poor, homeless, and disenfranchised in our city; for immigrants who still struggle due to lost jobs and lack of resources; for persons of color who are speaking out against racial profiling and injustice and for families who have lost loved ones due to race related violence; for President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris—pray for their wisdom and that of all political leaders.

The United Methodist Church - for our Pastor, Rev. Sara Corum, her husband, Josh McClurkan, and their five children; for our Bishop, the Rev. Bill McAlilly; and for our interim District Superintendent, the Rev. Dr. David Weatherly;

Trinity UMC - for members of the congregation homebound due to chronic illness or age; for new visitors joining us as we worship in person and online; for all families who are grieving; for our congregation as we deal with transitions; and wisdom for our Trustees and Church Council. Also, specific prayer requests by and for:

The family and many friends of **Nelda Gray**, who died December 20th

Sandy Guntharp's sister, **Diana DuBois**, is in remission! No cancer in pancreas & liver nodules shrinking

Rosemary Potter, recovering at home following hip surgery

Chris Glover's sister **Carol** is now in hospice care at home

Mike Baloga, encephalitis, at home with nursing care, and wife **Juli** (neighbors of Joe & Katy Spake)

Gene Archer, diagnosed with stomach cancer; **Lauren Crews**, diagnosed with ALS - both the Millers' friends
Melba Abraham's cousin, **Lydia Melton**, has cervical cancer.

Gracia Alequin, Amelia Strickland's friend, auto accident; at home with fractured leg

Pray for **schoolchildren and youth**: for travel safety, health, successes & recoveries from failures, and for teachers & parents as they guide them.

Gwen Dodson, bladder cancer, COPD, and osteoporosis; IV cancer treatment ongoing every 3 weeks

Charlotte Comes, portacath installed November 14th; chemo has started

Maggi Comes' niece, **Katie Pendleton**, diagnosed with Tumefactive MS

Kanyon Glover, pray for his speech therapy and the use of his left arm (due to a stroke)

Jacob Foreman, chronic back pain and nerve damage in left leg; doctors have no answer

David Harrison, Carol Miller's brother, on dialysis, paralyzed on one side after stroke, asthma, COPD

Don Culpepper, Carol Miller's brother-in-law, has cancer in five locations; receiving radiation therapy.

Peggy Kinney, Charlotte Comes' 97 year old cousin, now residing permanently in a rehab center

Val Coates, ongoing serious health concerns

Eddie Ramsey, now in hospice care at home; **Sally**, as she prepares herself for the future; the **Ramsey family**

Seth Genes, 13 year old friend of Debby Marston; tumor in leg has shrunk; four more chemo treatments at St. Jude; surgery scheduled for January 22nd to remove femur and replace with prosthetic bone.

Pray for **Jonathan Goff**.

Lyle Klein, family member of Amelia Strickland, diagnosed with Parkinson's, cancer, and heart disease

For **Living Word Christian Church**; for **The Lab School**; for all our Scouts and leaders of **Pack 13, Troop 13G, and Troop 13B**; and for those in the **NA** groups who meet at Trinity

(Please contact the church office if you have additional prayer concerns, need a concern removed, or need to make a change or correction.)