

# Trinotes

**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.**



## Trinity Discernment in 2023

From  
*the desk*  
of...  
The Rev.

*I am about to make breath enter you so that you will live. I will attach tendons to you. I will put flesh back on you. I will cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you will live. Then you will know that I am the Lord. — Ezekiel. 37:6*

Beloved, at the beginning of this calendar year, I appointed a task force (a discernment team) to look at Trinity’s recent history and trends (both in financial numbers and the numbers of willing servants), so that we might make any immediate changes that need to be made for the sustainability of the church. We also looked ahead to the next 3 to 5

years to discern if any big changes might need to be made in the near future.

It is no secret that the United Methodist Church is in decline, given the denominational splinter of the last 2 years (or longer). It is no secret that the Church universal (from the American evangelical sects of Christendom, to our Wesleyan traditions and beyond) is in decline, particularly in the United States, and have felt that in a greater way in recent years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The churches across our conference, and just about every conference of the United Methodist Church, have suffered decline on a local level, including ours. Folks who were on the fence, have not come back. Folks who believe Trinity leans one way or the other amid the splintering of the greater church and no longer felt Trinity is ‘home,’ have left. We pray that in each circumstance, they have gone where God has led them and are being spiritually nurtured where they are. We have taken a lot of proverbial hits in recent years, and yet we are alive. God is not finished with us yet. Thanks be to God.

The discernment team began meeting in January. Though we have made every attempt to be transparent, whispers of concern could be heard throughout our ministries this year, and I want to make another attempt to make sure you are aware of what we have (and perhaps, haven’t) done.

We determined that there is no need to entertain the idea of closing our doors — not to cease to exist or to relocate to a different physical plant.

We made the determination that, believe it or not, we are in ‘**slow-growth**’ mode! That is a wholly exciting reality in this season of the Church.

We determined that there is no need to entertain the possibility of requesting a change in status of the church’s clergy person (for example: to go from a full-time clergy person to anything less than that). We also made no plans to sell church property (the former education building or parsonage) or to merge with another congregation of the United Methodist Church. We recognize that we may need to revisit these issues in the future.

We distinguished a positive shift in attitude of the entire congregation! I could make guesses as to why that may be, but for the purposes of this article (to solely provide information) I will hang onto those for future writing.

As a team, we helped to create an atmosphere that engenders optimism in our church by empowering leadership in others and supporting the leadership already in place. We hope to see more of that in the coming year.

We reached out to new and developing communities in our neighborhood to form new relationships and envision where we might create partnerships and make new opportunities for different expressions of faith, worship, and discipling communities. More on this to come.

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We noted that we have had our BEST financial year in “who-knows-when” (recognizing that Rosemary would, in fact, know when). The financial stress was greatly reduced throughout the year. Thank you for giving, and don’t forget to pledge so we can make plans for what’s next. We are looking at 2024 expecting limited hands to serve and the need for a larger budget. It is time to be both careful and faithful in giving and spending.

We shifted our mindset to make sensible long-term plans, bearing witness to our own denial and establishing how we might best use the resources we already have.

We made efforts to engender the congregation to move even closer to the Evergreen Historic District, partnering in mutual efforts that benefit both the church and EHDA.

We committed to, in the coming months, further monitor the pulse of the Trinity congregation and its willingness to be engaged in ministry.

And we committed to authentically report to the Church Council structural needs and truths that we see. It is our goal to be vigilant, supportive, honest, and encouraging.

The final thing we did was distinguish what the breaking point for Trinity would be and reached the conclusion that much of that would be linked to the church’s attitude, energy, willingness, and habits of inviting, as all of these things affect the two bottom line matters of our budget and personnel (that’s you).

You haven’t seen us. We haven’t reported from the pulpit. If you’ve come to Church Council, we’ve presented a little here and there. Know that we’ve been watching. We’ve been praying. We’ve been strategizing, dreaming, and looking at the very hard realities of the Church and of Trinity Church.

But, beloved, as we closed our year of meetings, we were encouraged because the church we began discussing in the beginning no longer was, and we could each reflect on what a difference this year has made. We pray that you are encouraged too. Be excited as we are yet alive.

With much gratitude and joy,

*Rev. Sara*



Everyone got into the act, even eager pups wanting to make sure Santa heard their wish list!



EHDA's Santa Stop was again a big hit with kids, pets, and neighbors hungry for cookies and hot chocolate.





## REFLECTIONS ON A VERY BUSY SUNDAY

Last Sunday things were hopping in Children's Ministries at Trinity Church. The day was filled with **JOY** (which just happens to be our FAITH WORD for the month of December). The morning began, of course, with Sunday School, during which we learned about the story of Jesus' birth from Joseph's perspective, as we continued our celebration of Advent. While big sister Lila headed home with Dad after the art activity, first grader Nora stayed for the whole lesson. Since she was the only kid there, Nora lit the Christ candle, led us in the Lord's Prayer, sang a solo rendition of "Sanctuary," read the whole lesson out loud (both the shorter version and the expanded one), was the snack helper, and read the information on the Advent calendar. I told Nora that it's not often anyone gets to be an "only child" during Sunday School. She also basked in the attention of two "Nana's," since that's both Kathy's and my "Grandma monikers."

After Sunday's worship service, we were busy getting ready for the afternoon's activities with the children of the neighborhood and the kids and families of Cub Scout Pack 13 and Troop 13G. Our Trinity bakers had generously provided all sorts of delicious home-baked and "boughten" cookies and brownies. Everyone had packed their goodies two to a bag, as requested, so there was no last-minute scramble to repackage the cookies. Our table helpers showed up on time, even early. The tables were absolutely covered with delicious baked goods, with an abundance more on the rolling cart behind the table. In the early afternoon, during the Santa Stop for the neighborhood children, Santa welcomed young friends on the front porch, affording photo ops for proud parents. This crew left around 2 p.m. for the EHDA Neighborhood Christmas Caroling. Ms. Santa bustled back and forth all afternoon, constantly replenishing the supply of hot chocolate. The neighborhood crew returned about the same time Cub Scouts and their families started arriving for their awards ceremony. Everyone was delighted to see – and taste – the delicious treats. Some even came back for seconds. (Hmm...I think one of those Dycus kids even had thirds.)

By 5:00 p.m., while the Troop 13G group was still in the middle of their awards ceremony downstairs, our exhausted helpers called it a day and headed home, leaving an abundance of sweet treats on the table for the Scouts. In fact, there were still a huge number of cookies on the table on Monday morning. I called my down-the-hall neighbor who works almost every weekday in the food ministry at First Congregational Church; she said they would welcome the gift of the cookies. So, the generosity of Trinity Church blessed many more of God's children, ones who seldom get special treats, much less "enough" of anything else.

Of course, I overbought extra cookies. When planning events in which there are "open numbers" of participants, I am inclined to provide too much, rather than not enough. That applies to the "things" that are required (food or otherwise), as well as the time and energy that's needed. It's a key factor in practicing gracious hospitality. I'm thrilled that we were able to treat so many children and adults this year, and I look forward to our doing it again next year.

Peace in Christ,  
*Irene*

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:**  
**The Children's Sunday School Class will not**  
**meet on Sunday,**

## Lucas Smith Named as New TUMC Music Director

Lucas Smith is a Memphis native pianist who has performed in various venues and churches in and outside the area. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from the University of Memphis in May 2023. Lucas has also studied abroad in Germany recently in the International Summer Academy of Music at the Landesakademie in Ochsenhausen. In early 2023, he won the Rudi E. Scheidt School Of Music Soloist Competition for his performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto no.1. Lucas was recently featured in Focus magazine where he was described to have "an ability to conjure emotions out of pure sound." Lucas currently resides in Memphis with his long time partner and beloved dog. He enjoys creating new ways in which music can communicate and touch the lives of people. He truly believes that music has the unique ability to heal people and give them a sense of peace in times of darkness.



### CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP



TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
SUNDAY, DEC. 24TH -- 11:00 A.M. (ONLY)



Lori Brown	December 1
Rosemary Potter	December 9
Sara Jane Goodman	December 13
Sue Taylor	December 16
Debby Marston	December 19
Melba Abraham	December 21
Carey Miller	December 25





## 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.*

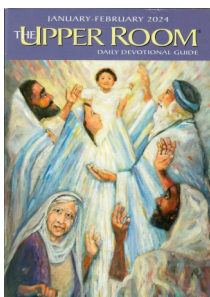


## January Birthdays

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
Carol Miller	January 23
Sharmin Murley	January 23
Doris Porter	January 23
Irene Dycus	January 25
Lila Dycus	January 25
Jeff Corbett	January 27
Caley Foreman	January 29

## 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](mailto: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:

**Alyson Foreman**, some chronic health concerns

**Irene Dycus**, still under “no driving” orders from doctor, so in need of occasional volunteer chauffeurs  
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** suffered a massive stroke recently, but making a good recovery.

**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**, hip/leg/back and nerve damage issues, doing PT & showing some slow improvement

**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; malignancy found in leg; ongoing chemo at At. Jude;  
surgery planned in January

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.)*