Trinotes

December 3, 2025

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.

(Allen Stanton, Chairperson of Trinity's Church Coucil)

Dear friends,

In 2015, on the first Sunday of Advent, I stepped into a new pastorate. It was a surprise to me that I was serving there. I was expecting to start a church in July; the bishop had other plans. So, I found myself there in a new church trying to figure out how to be a pastor.

I was thrilled when I found out that our church would kick off Advent with a Moravian Lovefeast. Within Methodism, the Moravian Lovefeast is a special tradition, a means of grace, where we can share our experiences of God's love for us. Within my own journey, the Moravian Lovefeast has its own significance. My alma mater, Wake Forest University, is home to the largest traditional Moravian Lovefeast in North America. It was an event I looked forward to every year. The highlight, for me, was when the lights in the chapel were turned off. Then, in the darkness, a single candle would move from the back of the crowd towards the front. It would multiply quickly. Soon, where there was darkness, there would be 2,000 candles held high.

As a new pastor, I was expecting that same level of aesthetic beauty from my small congregation of 40 people. Instead, we had a hodgepodge of soloists of varying talent, some watery hot chocolate, and dry biscuits. We closed with a candle lighting, but it didn't have quite that same dramatic effect as the chapel at Wake Forest University.

Over the next few days, I found myself thinking back to one of the songs a church member sung. She was not a particularly skilled singer. Yet, she stood up and sang, "In the Bleak Midwinter" a cappella. It was raw and rugged and hauntingly beautiful. Ten years later, I can still remember her voice, braving the way through notes alone. It remains one of the best images of Advent that I've experienced.

In my thinking, Advent has two lessons that I try to remember. The first is that darkness exists. Sometimes, it's just dark. The second is that darkness is really fragile. We sometimes think about darkness as something deep and oppressive. But the reality is that a single candle can end it.

It's easy to feel like darkness is overwhelming; that the only solution to it is something dramatic. We feel like we have to do more, try more, be more. That the only way to get past any of the darkness of the world is to offer a spiritual floodlight that can stamp out every shadow.

But really, you just need a single light that's willing to be shared; a single voice willing to sing a song of hope. As it turns out, the greatest enemy of darkness is a simple candle. It's a lesson I learned in my tiny church on my first Sunday as a pastor. I expected something dramatic; I got something powerful.

One of the joys of being the church council chair at Trinity is that I get to relearn that lesson constantly. I get to watch us be a small candle in a dark world. It's not flashy. We make room for grief; we share in our joys; we navigate complex discussions together; we discuss hard topics; we make room for the next generation. All things that a church is a supposed to do. But that's what makes it beautiful. It's not dramatic. It's not flashy. It is a small persistent light in a place of darkness.

That's probably the most important thing we can be right now.

Happy Advent,
Allen

@TUMCMEMPHIS

December 7th

SO MUCH TO CELEBRATE AT TUMC!

Worship is at 11:00 followed by a reception honoring Debby Marston, followed by the EHDA Christmas Caroling, Santa Stop, cookies and hot chocolate, and Advent crafts.

Welcome, Callie!

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Callie Bugg. I am the new administrative assistant at TUMC. I have received such a warm welcome from everyone. As Debby has been showing me the ropes this past week, I have seen the care everyone has for each and the dedication to the ministries TUMC supports. Trinity is a great family to join.

While I might be new to this job, I am not entirely new to the community Trinity offers. My son, James, has been a cub scout with Pack 13 since kindergarten and is now a Webelo. I am one of the co-leaders for his den. We have enjoyed many meetings, pinewood derbies, and celebrations here. My husband, Andrew Wofford, was also part of Pack 13 growing up. Our family (Andrew, Ryan, James, and I) lives in the neighborhood on Stonewall Street. I am very happy to be here and I look forward to helping this small but mighty church continue to share God's love with our city.

Dear Members of Trinity UMC,

For five years you have supported the Immigrant Relief Fund which has helped immigrant families face these tough times. For five years with your help we have dispersed more than $70,000 for rent, utility help, medical assistance and Christmas gift cards.

As I have talked with folks in the immigrant community, I have realized how much the witness of your church through this fund is touching lives. Folks know about Trinity and they know that you care. In the organizing world we call this social capital but in the faith world we call it love.

Thank you all for this most holy gift to so many of our sisters and brothers in pain.

With gratitude and love,

Joni Laney

Binghampton UMM

Advent Anarchy!

Are you ready for another afternoon of "organized chaos" at Trinity Church? Well, ready or not, here it comes! Children's Ministry leaders have been working hard to get volunteers, craft supplies, table coverings, and cookies organized for **Sunday afternoon's <u>Advent Workshop</u>** for children of the church and neighborhood. This includes the boys and girls in Cub Pack 13 and the Lab School. The workshop, which will take place **<u>3-5 p.m.</u>** in the Center at Trinity, is a big part of the afternoon activities, as we start the Advent/Christmas season with a bang. Jolly old Santa will once again be on hand to welcome neighborhood families at the Santa Stop, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

<u>All Advent Workshop helpers need to be in the Center no later than 2:30 p.m.</u>! We will need to do some rearrangement of tables and chairs before we set out materials, since we will be following on the coattails

of the barbecue lunch honoring our wonderful Administrative Assistant, Debby Marston. We will then give helpers instructions on what we will be doing with the kids. Our workshop coordinators, Jessica Dycus and Heather Jacoby-Keller, have come up with a beautiful design for a wooden Advent wreath. All children will make wreaths to take home with them as a reminder of the significance of the season. The more adult helpers we have as we do this creative activity, the more smoothly things will run.

Cub Scout Pack 13 will have a quick initial meeting downstairs for the Pledge of Allegiance and Scout Oath and Law, and then they will head up to the Center to join us. We are expecting about 50 Cubs, and their siblings are invited to participate as well. We will have neighborhood children, too, especially after the EHDA Caroling Event finishes around 4 p.m.

Santa will be singing along with the EHDA carolers as they travel through the neighborhood, but he will be back to visit with the Cubs and other children once they return to Trinity Church. His hard-working assistant, Sara Goff, will be on the go, serving hot chocolate all afternoon long, and visitors will be happily nibbling on cookies provided by our faithful Trinity volunteers. Cookie helpers, please remember to pack your cookies in zip-lock bags (2 cookies per bag) and bring them before worship on a disposable dish that does not need to be returned to you. Cookies may be homemade or bakery bought. If you haven't yet signed up to help with cookies or the workshop, it's not too late. We could definitely use your help! Just contact Ms. Irene (email her at irenebdycus@hotmail.com OR phone/text her at 901-652-1105).

We're looking forward to a wonderful Sunday afternoon at Trinity Church. It may appear to be chaotic, but it's going to be filled with fun, food, and fellowship! We hope you can join us!

Peace in Christ,
Irene

Every year, we are given the opportunity to reach out to special people we love but don't get to see very often. Those friends and members of Trinity who, for reasons of age, health, or distance are unable to attend services or participate in the life of the church on a regular basis, are still part of us and who we are as a congregation and people of God. In celebration of the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we will be sending Christmas cards out by special delivery - in person when possible or by mail for those out of town or state - and everyone in the congregation is invited to participate in the following ways:

- Address a Christmas card to each individual or couple on the list below, signing your name with your love and best wishes for this holy season.
- Bundle your signed, addressed cards together and bring them to worship by December 7th or to the church office by December 15th.
- Each bundle of cards will be sorted and placed in large envelopes addressed to each of our out-of-town or homebound loved ones, then distributed to volunteers who will hand-deliver the packets to local folks.

The remaining packets will be mailed out in time to arrive before Christmas. Those who wish to volunteer for in-person visits should contact the church office by December 15th for their assignment. This will be first-come, first-served, so get your name in fast. In the event we have more volunteers than needed, we can pair people up.

Wilma Bickers*	Nancy Pence
Julie McMahan*	John Curry
Doris Carney*	Sally Ramsey

*out of town/state

United Women in Faith

UWF Update

United Women in Faith met 21 November to approve our Winter 2025 Mission Project as well as our 2026 Mission Projects. Trinity's Room in the Inn is both our Winter 2025 and Winter 2026 Mission Project. Salvation Army Purdue Home Easter Egg Hunt is once again our 2026 Spring Mission; Golden Cross our 2026 Summer Mission; and Neighbors Feeding Neighbors our 2026 Fall Mission.

UWF will also support Church Women United, Methodist Hospital Auxiliary, and United Methodist Neighborhood Centers. Our pledges will be sent to UMCOR'S Global Missions.

Kay and Irene announced plans for the EHDA Santa Stop and Trinity's Advent Workshop on 07 December. Please plan to help make ornaments, dispense hot chocolate and the cookies **we** need to bring, and clean up. Cookies may be either home baked or purchased. The Lab School and Scouts, as well as the neighborhood, have been invited, so we need LOTS of cookies packaged two to a bag in Ziploc containers.

Also on 07 December please attend the BBQ luncheon after services to honor Debby and show how much we love and appreciate her.

Our next meeting will be potluck 19 December 2025 at 1130 in the Center. Please bring small items to assemble into 15 **Bags of Grace** for Trinity's first Room in the Inn activity in 2026. The program will include discussion of "God's Surprises" and the 17 December UPPER ROOM "Untimely Grief."

Come and be welcome; invite a friend!

Confirmation Class Schedule

December 14:
Luke/John

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Lori Brown	December 1
Kate Ostenrude	December 5
Alexis Weatherly	December 12
Sue Taylor	December 16
Andrew Montgomery	December 19
Debby Marston	December 19
Melba Abraham	December 21
Carey Miller	December 25

Joys and Sorrows of Transitions

December is always a busy time, and at Trinity this December will be especially busy, as we transition from seeing Debby Marston in her chair as Administrative Assistant to seeing Callie Bugg in that office.

During this time of transition, we will experience joys and sorrows. It's easy to see the sorrows: We know and love Debby, we will miss her so much, we are used to the way she does things, she so often knows what needs to be done before anyone else realizes or voices it. As a congregation and as individuals, we can allow ourselves to grieve having to say goodbye to Debby while also supporting Callie as she becomes a part of our lives.

For there will be joys as well, if we are looking for them. Callie is a new person, with new talents and abilities. We can enjoy those gifts. We can start anew in the ways we relate to her, in the ways we ask her to spend her time. If we have slipped into bad habits (forgetting to turn in our receipts for church-authorized expenses on time, neglecting to carry the tax exemption form when we will be purchasing for the church—you fill in your own habit), we can start fresh with Callie. She probably doesn't know who has messed up in the past!

As chair of the Staff/Parish Relations Committee, I am asking for your help in making the transitions of the month of December easier for everyone. Hold off on non-essential questions and interruptions to Debby and Callie as they work through training. Withhold criticisms of little things that don't get done the way you think they should be done. Introduce yourself to Callie, but save long conversations for another time. Smile! We rejoice that Debby is entering a well-deserved time of retirement, and that she will be nearer to her family as she moves. And we are grateful to have found in Callie a new person to be in ministry with us at Trinity. If we focus on these things, the joys of transition will outweigh the sorrows.

Kay Jordan, chairperson

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Joni Laney

Binghampton UMM

Prayer Concerns

Our country and the world - for the continued process of resolution of the conflict between Israel and Hamas; for victims of natural disasters, especially for those who have lost loved ones; 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 struggle due to lost jobs, threatened deportation, 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 the resolution of division among people of the United States and the wisdom and courage of all political leaders.

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

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:

Shelby Roesch, at Methodist Germantown with pregnancy complications
Jennifer McConnell's recovery from surgery
Laura Comes Hubbard, incurable multiple myeloma
Jimmy Rast, Melba Abraham's brother, diagnosed with genetic Alzheimer's
From Carol Miller, pray for **Melissa**, who has pleurisy.
Millie, 8 month old infant with tumor on her liver; now at St. Jude (request from Myra Finch)
Betsy Black's friend **Ken Savage**, diagnosed with metastatic cancer; relative **Bobby Johnson**, serious accident
From Joan Smith: **Doug Robbins** family: cancer recovery, successful book sales, orthopedic surgery recovery;
Deanna Ward Willis, leg amputation
From Elizabeth Hopper, **Michelle Bowen** & family's health issues; **Lida Browne Martin**, battling cancer
Irene Dycus' neighbor **Steve Noblett** died; **Mike Mabry**, having infusions
Baby Stella, born 7 weeks early with extra chromosome; developmental problems expected
Sharman Murley & Frank Cantrell's son, **Frank, Jr.**, heart issues
From Sandy Guntharp: **Jim Stafford**, living alone with dementia
Sandy's brother, **Jerry Newton**, died shortly after being diagnosed with sarcoma. Please pray for Sandy in her grief.
Martha Ostenrude's close friend **Ashley**, diagnosed with leukemia
Continued prayers for **Sally Ramsey** and daughter **Sandi**
Bobby Glover, Chris's brother, in care for early Alzheimer's
For Sharman Murley's grandchild **El**, for well-being, making friends, and a better school year
Chris Glover's sister, **Sherry Carruthers**
Seth Norton, Raquel's son, serious ongoing medical concerns
Gwen Dodson, bladder cancer, COPD, osteoporosis; cancer treatment
Kanyon Glover, good medical report; no sign of heart rejection
Jacob Foreman, for healing and pain relief
Julia has MS. (Friend of the Millers)
Carol Miller's brothers: **David Harrison** in nursing home with in-house dialysis; **Jerry Harrison**, now at home.
Carey Miller's brother, **Lee Miller**, is in long-term rehab.
Val Coates, for relief of constant pain & healing of serious multiple issues, including depression
Karen Barker, Sara Goff's sister, lung issues; **Jonathan Goff**
Laura Major Conner, for her physical health and living situation
Bonnie Stubblefield, early Alzheimer's (Debby Marston's cousin's wife)
For Trinity's new **Youth Group** and **Confirmation Class**
For Trinity's **Children's SS Class**