

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.



Home for the Holidays



A few nights ago, I found myself rather nostalgic. That happens a lot during this season. Even Charles Dickens hinted at it. Scrooge was pressed to look to his past, though not in the most positive of ways. Sometimes looking back isn't holly and jolly, and it wasn't necessarily for me either.

I have very fond memories of putting up the Christmas tree in my childhood home, and also sordid ones. My mom was the captain of where things should hang on the tree, as am I with our tree. Unlike in my childhood home, the children also have their OWN tree to decorate where they can place whatever, wherever they want; in my childhood

home there was one tree. It was an artificial tree and the always white lights went on every year and came off every year. Trees were not pre-lit and if one bulb went out, they all went out, which was chaos in our house. My poor parents almost got divorced over the lights on our Christmas tree more times than I could count.

There were good moments though, too. Many of the ornaments on our tree were cross-stitched by my mother. There was a set of three angels that were just beautiful. There were teeny ones with little hand-stitched holly berries. There were cross-stitched Christmas trees. There was a glass reindeer with only one antler because I took the ornament to school in kindergarten for the school's big lobby Christmas tree and inevitably it came home less an antler. There were dough ornaments I'd made in pre-school and ornaments my brother and I had made with our pictures on them — he a bell and me a tree. Oh, and my mother had this crazy ornament that was a skinny Santa Claus riding a unicycle — a really neat piece because my mother could actually ride a unicycle. To this day I have no idea why. It was very special, and even though mom was always going to move whatever I put on the tree, it is one of the very best memories I have with her, and because she is gone, remembering it is very special to me.

Oh, there is one more ornament — one that I forgot to mention. There was this ornament that even then felt very vintage. It was a clear, plastic gingerbread house covered in this fake, glittery plastic snow. It was hollow and had a little hole in the back where one would stick a bulb from the lights so that it would glow. It was my very favorite ornament. It happened to be my brother's favorite ornament too, and he and I would fight over who got to put it on the tree every year. I loved that silly thing.

When we lost all of these things in our 2001 house fire it was one of the more devastating losses. Even as teenagers, we mourned over realizing that all we had left were the memories of those precious moments.

A few nights ago, recalling those holy family moments of my childhood, I did what any good 30-something might do. I set off to find a replica of the gingerbread ornament of my childhood. I knew very little about it and had little clarity of what it looked like. It had been 20 years since I'd seen it. To eBay I went with a flash. I started with "gingerbread ornament," then, "gingerbread house ornament," then, "vintage gingerbread ornament," then, "vintage 1980's gingerbread house ornament," thinking that I'd gotten way too specific to yield any results but then.....there it was. It was a 1984 Hallmark ornament (so made a year before I was born) and there it was. \$20. I've never spent \$20 more quickly



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in all of my life and as I hit “buy it now” I realized that very heavy, uncontrollable tears were streaming down my face. Josh was exceptionally worried, having had no idea all the things that had been going through my mind the moments before, and I was as well, not predicting just how it would make me feel to find it. I was happy, yes, but it was more than that. It was this connection to my brother and the fights we’d had as children. It was this connection to my mother who’d always leave that one ornament alone, wherever we put it. It was a connection to home — a home that meant the world to me.

Christmas, and for us, Advent, should call us home. It’s the one time a year where we don’t crave something new. We want the past. We want what’s familiar. We want the comfort of tradition, whether it be Aunt Elaine’s mac-n-cheese or granddaddy’s boiled custard. We want to come home.

Home for Trinity is candlelight on Christmas Eve. It is singing Silent Night as many times as we need to, to make sure everyone’s candle is lit. It is traditions we can no longer claim — worship in a full sanctuary with the organ — Jeri Ashley singing “Mary Did You Know.” It is the togetherness that only the manger can conjure, the smiles and hugs of those around us. It is our tradition to send a slew of cards to our absent members and, as of late, Sam Goff dressing up as Santa Claus for the Evergreen neighborhood kids. It’s “In the Bleak Midwinter” and Rosemary’s Christmas offering letter. This is home.

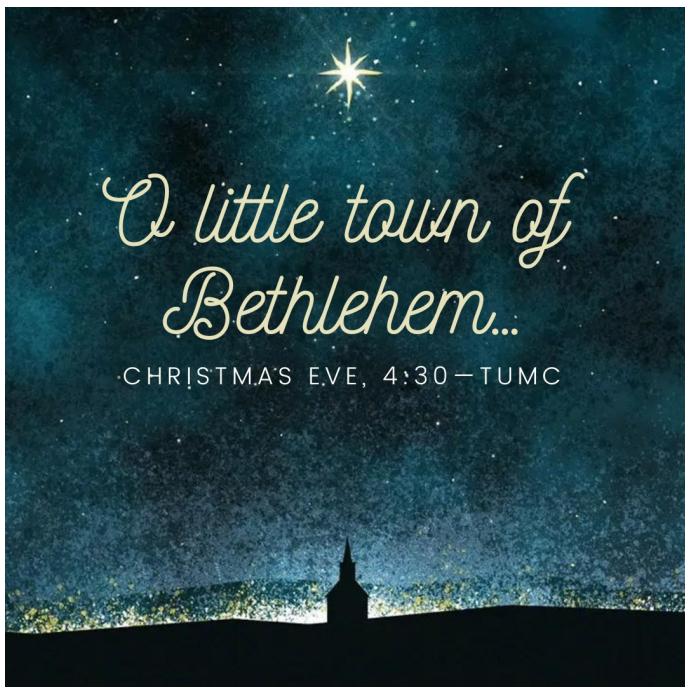
It’s not a journey across the desert, 9 months pregnant, atop a donkey. Our journey isn’t that, but Mary’s ride into Bethlehem calls to us to walk this path alongside her and I invite you — I implore you — to come home this season. Come and light your candle, sit next to your life-long friend in faith — give your heart again to the very one who was born for you — who was born to set you free. You may be surprised, overwhelmed even, with how home makes you feel. You may be surprised by joy — by the memories you have held dear. You may both lament and celebrate at the same time, what was that no longer is. And still, in all that you feel, all that nostalgia can bring, you will certainly find hope. You’ll find love. You’ll find peace and joy. It’s all there waiting for you.

You are invited to come.

Come home.

Waiting With You,
Rev. Sara

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. —Romans 15:13



Candlelight Service in The Center at 4:30 pm on Christmas Eve



Christmas Day Worship at Trinity UMC in The Center at 11:00



HOPE: to trust in God's promises

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

I read an article recently that suggested this as a verse that we could include in Christmas cards that we send out. After all, Christmas can be one of the loneliest and most difficult times of the year for many, especially for those who have lost loved ones or who are facing significant health problems or other painful circumstances, either personally or in the lives of those they love. During such difficult times, we are called to remind others that God loves and cares deeply for them, and that nothing has the power to separate them from Him.

With that in mind, our Trinity children and youth are once again preparing holiday greetings for our homebound friends. We sent booklets of Thanksgiving greetings before this most recent holiday, and we have received several grateful responses from friends who received them. Now we are in the process of working on Christmas greetings. Our kids have come up with some beautiful designs and heartfelt messages. These greetings, too, will be compiled in booklet form and mailed to homebound and ill members of our Trinity Church family as a special gift of love and well-wishes from our children and youth.

We continue to collect canned goods for our food pantries, remembering that there are other neighbors whom we will never personally know, but whose lives will be touched with the love of Christ through our efforts. We encourage you to join us in our efforts.

On the first Sunday in Advent, we began a new unit of study in our Children's Sunday School Class. Our **Faith Word** is **HOPE**, which means **"to trust in God's promises."** Our scripture for this unit is the angels' message to the shepherds in Luke 2:10: "Look! I bring good news to you – wonderful, joyous news for all people." During the month of December, we are exploring some well-known stories of Advent and Christmas. While these stories may be very familiar, even to our children, they are reminders that God is always capable of doing miraculous and extraordinary things, even in what we consider ordinary circumstances. Last Sunday's story was "An Angel Visits Mary," based on Luke 1:26-38. This coming week's story, "An Angel Visits Joseph," is based on Matthew 1:18-24. The diorama in our classroom continues to reflect the progression of the stories as we move through the season of Advent toward the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. As teachers, we are enjoying celebrating God's unconventional message of love as we once again hear and share these wonderful stories with the children of our Sunday School class.

Peace and love to all,
Alyson and Irene

SANTA STOP: COOKIES NEEDED FOR THIS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11TH!

We realize this is a busy time for all as we approach the Christmas holidays, but the Children's Department needs some cookie-bakers (or cookie-buyers)! This Sunday, December 11th, prior to the Neighborhood Christmas Caroling in the Evergreen Historic District, Santa will be welcoming children on Trinity's front porch. After their visit with Santa, the children and their parents will be invited to come inside to enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and cookies. Santa, believe it or not, busy as he is, will be preparing the hot chocolate for this hospitality event, but Trinity folks are needed to provide the cookies.

Your cookies may be either home-made or bakery prepared. Please bring your cookies to the church kitchen this Sunday morning before worship begins. You don't need to provide a serving dish; we will be putting them in special treat bags. If you can provide a batch of cookies, please email Irene Dycus at irenebdycus@hotmail.com or call her at 901-652-1105. Thanks so much for your help!

Please Return Your Keys

Friends, in an attempt to always be fully-transparent with you, I want to make you even more aware of why we are recalling church keys from everyone who has an exterior door key. The weekend after Thanksgiving, I was at the church with my family decorating the Center for Advent and discovered that the exterior chapel door was OPEN. It was a worrisome feeling. The next day (Saturday), the door was found OPEN again. Sunday morning it was clear that someone had slept in the church and used many corners of the building. This was later verified by our cameras. We'd hoped that gathering the keys and replacing them with more reliable key fobs for the main doors would keep this from happening, assuming our visitor entered through the door that's often ajar.

Sunday morning, Sam Goff entered the church early to make coffee and begin work on the chicken for our potluck lunch, to discover the same intruder in the church kitchen. When he was asked to leave (and given the opportunity to exit peacefully), and refused, Sam attempted to call the police, only to be met with a threat to his life and subsequent assault. Well, if you didn't already know, Sam has super-human powers and was able to detain the man until the police arrived. The police removed the man from the church property and later reported to us that there was more than desperation (something we could aid) at play, but also some considerable and concerning mental health challenges that were of a violent nature.

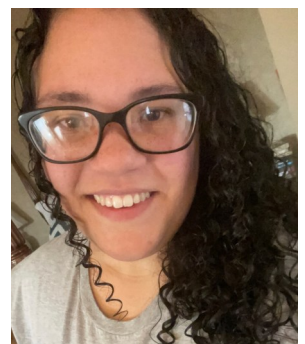
My gut reaction will always be to protect 'the flock.' The position Sam was in is a terrifying one to consider. What if he had NOT been the first in the building? What if this had been a weekday and it was teachers (and children) with the Lab School? Our communal concern broadens when we consider that we are a larger hub for ministry than what serves us alone, and where we could've offered the man transactional help (fed him or taken him to a shelter), this would only have been a bandaid on much larger issues that we are not qualified to address ourselves. Our obligation and response had to be to love other neighbors affected by his presence — to claim and remain a safe space for people to be.

Please know that I consulted with the District Superintendent on this matter as well, and he supports the actions we took and has offered district resources we might need to help make our space a place where people are not afraid to be. I encourage you to be in prayer for the man who was clearly desperate and in need and consider how we might, as a church, respond to the root problems that bring about homelessness, hunger, and a lack of access to mental health help.

If you have any further questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact me (Rev. Sara), or Rob Landrigan, who is chair of the trustees until January 1st, and THANK YOU for your continued compliance of turning your exterior door keys to the church office.

WELCOME, NEW YOUTH LEADER!

Amelia Strickland has a history of working with young teenagers and children. She currently works part time as a gymnastics coach, when she is not working with our youth group. Amelia joined Trinity recently and looks forward to teaching and learning from our young people. She finds work with Trinity's youth inspiring. Amelia is dedicated, creative, and attentive. Welcome, Amelia!



This Sunday (Dec. 11th) the youth will be putting together "care packages" for Room in the Inn guests, each including socks, granola bars, pocket tissues, antibacterial wipes, hand sanitizer, and toothbrushes.



Christmas Greetings for "Currently Absent" Members

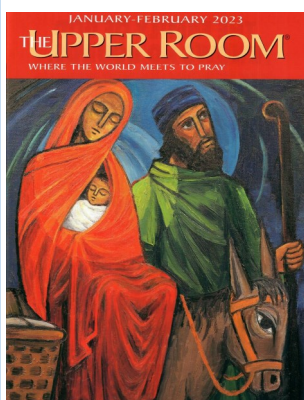
Whether it's because they're laid up, sidelined, indisposed, out of commission, cooped up, out of town, or even grounded, there are some very special members and friends we all miss, especially this time of year. Yes, that time is here again: time to remember those folks by showering them with Christmas cards. Your cards share memories, joy, and love with our friends who, for whatever reason, are no longer able to be with us in Sunday school or worship at Trinity. Please take an extra moment— or two—to remind them of your love by preparing Christmas cards. It's simple. Prepare the card, put it in an envelope with only the recipient's name written on it, bring it to the church by December 18th, and put it into the "Christmas Cards" box in the lobby. After worship that day, the cards will be on tables in the back of The Center so that they can be picked up to be hand-delivered (or mailed to those who live out of town now) to our friends. If you choose to deliver cards, you will be blessed with a memorable visit with a friend. Thanks in advance for your caring participation. Listed below are the names of those special people we all miss seeing every week:



Charlotte Comes
John Curry
Roscoe Dodson
Faye McClendon
Julie McMahan
Venoma Newhart
Irene & Gene Opel
Rosemary Potter
Sally & Eddie Ramsey
Jane Waldrup
Virginia Walters



THE UPPER ROOM



The January/February *Upper Room* is on display at the reception desk just outside the Worship Center. Feel free to pick up a copy when you come for worship on Sunday. If you need to have one mailed to you and

aren't on the regular *Upper Room* mailing list, call the church office at 901-274-6895 or send an email to office@trinityumcmemphis.org with your request. Be sure to specify the font size: large or regular. (*The November/December issue is still available at the front desk.*)

Announcing:

Santa Stop at Trinity on Dec. 11th at 1:00 pm. Come to the Galloway entrance to meet Santa! Cookies and hot chocolate will follow caroling by the Evergreen Historic District Assoc. & friends.



December 1	Lori Brown
December 3	Libby Streete
December 9	Rosemary Potter
December 16	Sue Taylor
December 19	Debby Marston
December 21	Melba Abraham
December 25	Carey Miller

PRAYER CONCERNS

Our country and the world - 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 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; the family and many friends of the Rev. Dr. Autura Eason-Williams as we grieve

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. Wisdom for our Trustees and Church Council. Also, specific prayer requests by and for:

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

Gene & Irene Opel, for Gene on hospice and Irene as she cares for him, with home nurse help

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 lung cancer, but doing better.

Joan Smith's cousin/mom, **Gigi**, aka **Kathryn Ellis**, receiving in-home care

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

Val Coates, in constant pain and undergoing testing to discover the cause; grieving the loss of her mother, sister, and father this year

George Marston, still undergoing dialysis; congestive heart failure

Rosemary Potter, recovering at home from her falls, having physical therapy

Lori Brown has aggressive HER2 breast cancer and is receiving gene therapy and radiation.

Eddie Ramsey, moving from hospital to rehab after his diagnosis of a UTI and the flu

Bishop Bill McAlilly as he does intense physical therapy to regain his ability to walk; successful heart surgery; Bishop McAlilly will be on medical leave during November and December.

Edward Thigpen, friend of Trinity UMC, good report from cancer doctor; will continue chemo through March of 2023

For **Charlotte Comes**, medical issue discovered that may require surgery

For **Living Word Christian Church** and their pastor, **Rev. Kyle Dearen**, as they worship and do ministry here on the campus of Trinity UMC.

For **The Lab School**, as their students learn, grow, and develop, and for their adult Guides

For **Pathway to Dignity** as they work towards starting classes in the near future and their acknowledgment of their late founder, Deloris Clayborne

For all our Scouts in **Pack 13**, **Troop 13G**, and **Troop 13B**, and for all their leaders

For those in the **NA** groups who meet at Trinity and for their continued determination to succeed

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