

# 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.**



## Of Hymns and Songs

*“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed.”* Luke 1:46b-47

One of my very favorite things about this season, is the songs we sing. From hymns in worship, to the contemporary Christian takes on the path to the manger, and even the holiday carols that tell parts of the story that are a little less Biblical. I love the songs we sing and the way those songs make us feel. They bring us together. They make us excited and grateful. They point us toward our childhood because so many have been around for so long. They give us joy.

One of my least favorite things about being theologically in-tune with the story of Jesus’ birth, is how that bit of knowledge messes with my favorite Advent and Christmas songs. I love (love, love) the song, “Mary Did You Know?” I love it. I know that many of you do as well. And we all have our favorite version of that song. I enjoy the version sung by the a cappella group, Pentatonix. And, of course, for many of us, we cannot hear anyone sing it but Jeri Ashley, and we’ll very much miss that this year.

“Mary Did You Know?” is a wonderful take on Mary’s part in this story. It asks questions in a telling way. “Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water? Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?” And it goes on and on and asks some wonderfully relevant questions that, to a hearer who might not know the Gospel story of Jesus, it might be eye-opening. It’s a secular way of telling a religious story, and we love to hear it during Advent.

But, I fight with it every time I hear it. I love it, but it frustrates me. You see, to Mary, the song wouldn’t have been enlightening at all. The song asks a question that we know the answer to. In fact, this Sunday, this is the story that we’ll talk about. “Mary, did you know?” Yes! Yes, she did!

The angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her that she’d been chosen by God to do an incredibly difficult thing — to not only bring a baby into the world in the middle of her engagement to Joseph (which could really put her in a very compromising position, and at only 14 years old), but that he would suffer for us — that he would do hard things in this world, for a world that doesn’t deserve it — that he would become the Israeli poster-child for the word “grace.” All of this would mean his death on a cross at only 33 years old.

Gabriel didn’t give Mary a choice, but Mary embraced her calling and sang a song called the Magnificat, which tells us today, yes, indeed, she knew.

And we know too. We know Mary’s story and have a chance, during Advent, to, like John in utero, leap for joy that he is coming. We know, and we have an opportunity to sing our praise for the work that God did through an unwed, 14-year-old Mary, for the sake of all creation, for all time. We know and we have every opportunity to gather and sing praise to the God who was, the God who is, and the God who is to come. We know. We know, too.

*“The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again. The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the praises of the lamb.”*

*(continued on page 2)*

(continued from page 1)

This Sunday we will gather in worship to light the candle of joy, to reflect on our joy-abundant, and to see how Mary's joy, the joy she knew, became ours for all time. It's a time to raise our voices and sing praises. Will you come?

In Hopeful Anticipation,

*Rev. Sara*



December 1	Lori Brown
December 3	Libby Streete
December 5	Jean Moss
December 6	Tucker Shaw
December 9	Rosemary Potter
December 16	Sue Taylor
December 18	Phil Isbell
December 19	Debby Marston
December 21	Melba Abraham
December 25	Carey Miller

*If any birthdays have been omitted, please send the name and date of birth to [office@trinityumcmemphis.org](mailto:office@trinityumcmemphis.org) or call the church office at 901-274-6895 and leave a message so we can make that correction.*

## MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

### MEMORIALS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

- IN MEMORY OF **JOHN STUART** FROM  
TOM & LEANNE WILSON
- IN MEMORY OF **NANCY RANKIN** FROM  
TOM & LEANNE WILSON
- IN MEMORY OF **LORI MCFALLS** FROM  
SHIRLEY FLINT
- IN MEMORY OF **PAT LOVINGTON** FROM  
CHARLES & MELBA ABRAHAM
- IN MEMORY OF **FRED MARTIN** FROM  
CHARLES & MELBA ABRAHAM
- IN MEMORY OF **JERI ASHLEY** FROM  
CHARLES & MELBA ABRAHAM
- IN MEMORY OF **JOHN STUART** FROM  
CHARLES & MELBA ABRAHAM
- IN MEMORY OF **NANCY RANKIN** FROM  
CHARLES & MELBA ABRAHAM
- IN MEMORY OF **JERI ASHLEY** FROM  
CONNIE JOHNS
- IN MEMORY OF **JOHN STUART** FROM  
CONNIE JOHNS
- IN MEMORY OF **FRED MARTIN** FROM  
CONNIE JOHNS
- IN MEMORY OF **NANCY RANKIN** FROM  
CONNIE JOHNS
- IN MEMORY OF **NANCY RANKIN** FROM  
CALEY & ALYSON FOREMAN
- IN MEMORY OF **JOHN STUART** FROM  
MIKE & ROSEMARY POTTER
- IN MEMORY OF **NANCY RANKIN** FROM  
MIKE & ROSEMARY POTTER
- IN MEMORY OF **NANCY RANKIN** FROM  
DORIS PORTER
- IN MEMORY OF **JOHN STUART** FROM  
DORIS PORTER
- IN MEMORY OF **NANCY RANKIN** FROM  
EDDIE & SALLY RAMSEY

### HONORARIUMS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

- IN HONOR OF **IRENE DYCUS** FROM  
CALEY & ALYSON FOREMAN
- IN HONOR OF **ALYSON FOREMAN** FROM  
IRENE DYCUS



## Advent: prepare for Jesus' birth

This past Sunday, which was the second Sunday of Advent, we began a new unit of study in our Children's Sunday School Class. Our FAITH WORD for December is a timely one: **ADVENT**, which is a time when we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus. Our SPIRITUAL PRACTICE for the next few Sundays will be on exploring Advent through presence. In our story this past Sunday, Mary, a young virgin in Nazareth, is visited by the angel Gabriel, who tells her that she will have a baby, whom she will name Jesus, and that this special child will be none other than the Son of God Himself. Can you imagine what amazing, overwhelming, possibly terrifying news this would have been for a young, unmarried virgin to hear? But if we look at the first words the angel speaks to Mary, we hear profoundly affirming and reassuring words from the very beginning. First, Mary is called "favored one," and second, she is told, "The Lord is with you." Then Gabriel mentions Mary's cousin Elizabeth, who in her old age has conceived a son (John the Baptist); his words regarding this situation are further encouraging: "For nothing will be impossible for God." So, what does this young, inexperienced virgin do? Mary accepts Gabriel's words with outright joy, declaring that she is a servant of God and that she will do what God wants her to do. Mary has faith in God and presents herself to Him to fulfill what God has planned. Talk about faithful presence!

Next Sunday, our study focuses on Mary and Elizabeth. We learn that Elizabeth's child leaps for joy in her womb because he is in the presence of the Lord. John and Jesus, both yet to be born, are already filled with the Spirit. Their mothers recognize that they are greatly blessed by God; in fact, Mary joyfully praises God with a beautiful song that we know as "The Magnificat." Presence, waiting, preparing – all are factors in this wonderful story of two mothers especially chosen by God to play vital roles in His plan for the redemption of the world.

Being present is part of God's plan for us as well. In the devotion from *The Upper Room Disciplines* on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, we read: "Part of being people after God's desires is choosing to serve as the presence others need, stretching ourselves to love in ways that reflect God's love. When we choose to serve the relational and spiritual needs of others, we receive God's power and operate without fear...The moments we have with our children, our neighbors, and our closest loved ones are opportunities to practice what we say and believe every time we focus our attention on God."

The prayer from that devotion is one that speaks very directly to those of us who are teachers of children: "May we never think too lightly as God teaches us through children. May we embody Christ, listen to the Spirit, connect with others, and take focused time apart to reflect on what God is doing in and around us. Amen."

Peace and love,  
*Irene and Alyson*

**Just a reminder: Our Children's Sunday School Class hopes you will join us in bringing canned and boxed goods for the Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry. You may bring your food items to the worship service, or you can give one of the teachers a call, and we will pick your food up (Irene: 901-652-1105 OR Alyson: 901-734-2796).**

## Advent Devotional

It is not unusual for different versions of the Bible to translate words from Hebrew and Greek into English that vary slightly from one another. For instance, in *Ecclesiastes 3:7*, the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible has “sew” and the New International Version translates this word as “mend.” Both words are valid, although “mend” is actually a subset of “sew.” “Sew” often indicates the creation of a new garment, while “mend” implies repairing an already existing article of clothing.

Both motifs of “sew” and “mend” have implications for understanding the season of Advent. There is heavy emphasis on Christ coming into the world as a brand new baby, a new being. Yet that event only makes sense in light of the larger purpose of God – to one day create a new heaven and earth, to heal and make whole what sin has torn into shreds.

Advent is the time when we choose our fabric, lay out the pattern pieces, get out the pins and needles, and envision how everything will come together. It is the angel announcing to Mary that she will have a son who will be called Jesus, the Son of God. “How can this be?” Mary wonders. The fabric has not yet been cut; the pieces don’t quite fit together – yet. In due time, they will, God the seamstress, the tailor, will bring everything together. To us a child is born. To us, God’s son is given – and his name shall be Emmanuel.

The child’s cries are still ringing in our hearts when we hear another cry – that of John the Baptist. “Repent! The time is coming! The kingdom of God is at hand!” The fabric of our lives is about to unravel. Are we ready? Are *you* ready?

Before we put on that sweater, pair of pants, or coat from last year, we take a close look. Does the zipper work? Are any buttons missing? Have the corners of any pockets come loose? What about that stain on the sleeve? Time to get out the needles, thread, and stain remover! Time to replace that pair of pants that doesn’t fit anymore and never will again.

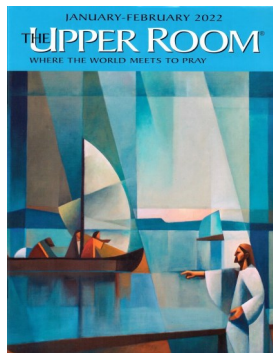
Even more important, take a close look at yourself. Where are the missing buttons that hold your life together? What are the stains that could use a good scrubbing? What attitude, characteristic, personality trait, or temperament no longer fits? Fix what can be fixed, and replace what is no longer suitable. Get your spiritual wardrobe in order because, any minute, God might be knocking at the door.

There is a time to tear, and a time to sew – a time to mend, and a time to start from scratch. One way or another, God will take over the needles and threads and make a new creation out of the scraps of our broken lives.

### Prayer

God of the beginning and of the end, and of all the times in-between; our spirits are in need of some mending. There are pieces that have come loose and need some tightening. There are items that no longer fit, and need to be replaced. There are stains we cannot remove, no matter how hard we try. Only you can do that. We give to you the torn scraps, the cast-off garments, the needles and thread; and wait with joyous expectation to discover the new creation that you will make of us and of all your world, through Jesus Christ, who was, and is, and ever shall be. Amen.

(From the 2005-2006 Horizons Bible Study "For Everything, A Season: A Study of the Liturgical Calendar" by Kathleen Long Bostrom)



## January/February

The latest issue of *The Upper Room* can be picked up from the front desk of the Worship Center. Both large & regular print copies are available. We can also mail you a copy if you cannot get out.

E-mail [office@trinityumcmemphis.org](mailto:office@trinityumcmemphis.org) or leave a message on the church office voicemail (901-274-6895). Please be sure to specify the print size: regular or large print. Both can be mailed out right away.



**FEED THE HUNGRY**

## BINGHAMPTON FOOD PANTRY

**Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry** at Binghampton UMM, 258 N. Merton St., is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables....people can come as often as they want for these.

Once a month, folks can request an emergency food bag (canned goods, peanut butter, cereal, rice, dried beans, soup, etc). Neither of these options require any proof of residency or need....you ask, you receive. Individuals and families who need an emergency food bag can call Michael Anderson at (901) 503-2748.

BUMM provided food bags for 56 households in October!

**Trinity members:** Be sure and read the blurb at the bottom of page 3 that details what the children's Sunday School class and their teachers are doing to revive their summer food drive. Also, donation in the form of a check written to Trinity UMC, with "Fishes & Loaves" on the memo line, will also help keep the food pantry well stocked and will be very much appreciated. Hunger is an ongoing problem. Let's commit to feeding our neighbors in need!

## Really, Really Free Market

The Village (formerly known as Caritas Village) is going to host a Really, Really Free Market on the lawn in front of the building (weather permitting) on Saturday, December 11th from 12 noon to 2 p.m. Caesar, the director of The Village, will be able to take donations for the market, so email him at [clomo@thevillagememphis.org](mailto:clomo@thevillagememphis.org) to arrange for drop-off of your donated items. The Village is located at 2509 Harvard Ave, Memphis, TN 38112.

The organizers hope to gather winter clothing and Christmas/holiday gifts, not summer items or things that need to be stored long-term, as there is no extra storage space available.

The idea is to donate items you no longer need or use that one of your neighbors may be able to put to good use.

Please spread the word among your friends and neighbors in order to make this event a success. Remember: one person's trash is another person's treasure!



## PRAYER CONCERNS

**Our country and the world** - for all those in our country and around the world still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Delta variant; for Haiti in the aftermath of an earthquake and hurricane; 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 are struggling 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 in their first year in office—pray for their wisdom.

**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 District Superintendent, the Rev. Autura Eason-Williams

**Trinity UMC** - for members of the congregation homebound due to chronic illness or age; for new visitors joining us as we worship online and now in person; 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

**Bryce Sellers**, fighting Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

**Kanyon Glover**, now 3 years old, is beginning to walk. He still can't talk or use his left arm, so he's in therapy for those issues.

**Donnie Glover**, now on oral medication, as well as chemotherapy; needs blood & platelets weekly, but back to driving a truck. (You can't keep a good man down!)

**Bobby Glover**, Chris' brother, who had moved to assisted living, is now back home in his tiny house!

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

**Gene & Irene Opel**, still experiencing health concerns

**David Harrison**, Carol Miller's brother, recovered from broken hip; dialysis going well

**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' 95 year old cousin, now residing permanently in rehab center; had to sell home and store her possessions.

**Charles Abraham**, seeing an occupational therapist at home; now experiencing vertigo

**Val Coates**, serious heart condition; still in constant pain and undergoing testing to discover the cause

**George Marston**, still undergoing dialysis; congestive heart failure; COPD; improved mobility

The family and friends of **Nancy Rankin**, who passed away on October 27th. Pray for **Nelda Gray** and Nancy's extended family as they grieve.

**Jean Moss**, now in hospice care

**Margaret Rucker**, Irene Dycus' sister, moved to assisted living, doing well in her new home

**Phil Isbell**, hospitalized for treatment of an infection; will receive extra care when he goes back to Harbor Chase for hospice care

**Jim Schaeffer**, now at home and having rehab following repair of a broken femur and hip

**Rosemary Potter**, recovering at home from her broken femur

Pray for the family of **Lee Hutchinson**, who passed away October 26th [friend of Carol & Carey Miller]

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