

December

From the Pastor's Pen

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(Bazas Cathedral in Bazas, France; Window by Joseph Villiet – Scenes from the Life of John the Baptist. This one is “The Archangel Gabriel and Zechariah,” 19th Century)

'Twas the Night Before Advent

'Twas the night before Advent, when all through my mind
ran stories of angels sent to humankind.
There was so much to do before Jesus appeared
they came to prepare us to welcome him here.

One story includes: Zechariah the priest
and Lizzy his wife, partner in best and least.
They both lived so righteously, worshipping God
but one thing there was – made their lives feel so flawed.

They never had children, whatever they tried
and when neighbors heard this – oh, how they'd deride!

Cont'd...

But God doesn't punish through anyone's womb
and soon they'd hear news that would brighten their
gloom.

Zechariah was serving in God's holy place
offring incense and pond'ring the breadth of God's
grace.

When what to his wond'ring eyes did appear,
but an angel from heaven that filled him with fear!
"Fear not," said the angel, "your prayer has been
heard,

your Lizzy'll be pregnant. I give you my word.
His name shall be John. He will fill you with glee
and many around will rejoice, come and see!
For he will be great in the sight of the Lord
but strong wine and drink he must never go toward.
When he's in the womb as he strengthens and grows,
he'll be so filled with Spirit he practically glows!
He'll be like Elijah, his spirit and power
will draw people to him for many an hour.
They'll come back to God, family wounds he will heal.
He'll fill them with wisdom to make their minds reel.
He'll come to this people, the way to prepare
crying, 'the Lord is coming – repent of your cares!'

All this Zechy heard with a mind so befuddled
and wondered how angels could get things so
muddled.
"See here," he declared, as he looked to the sky
"Me and Lizzy are old – there's no way this will fly!"

The angel was shocked the priest did not believe.
His eyes he did roll – he was so aggrieved!
"I'm Gabr'el," he said, "sent from God in the
highest.
You question my words, as though *I* might be
biased?!
I bring you good news, but because you do doubt,
your tongue will go silent – you won't scream or
shout.
Your words will return to you when your son comes
but until that day, little passes your gums."

As soon as he'd come, angel Gabr'el was gone
leaving Zechy to wonder just what had gone on.
The people outside saw that Zechy was late
and muttered as one, "Why do *we* have to wait?"
But when he came out with tongue stuck to his jaw,
they realized that surely a vision he saw.

Pastor's Pen cont.

With so many gestures, hands waved through the air,
He tried to describe what had happened in there.
Some things he conveyed and at others he failed.
In the state he was in he could not be detailed.

He went home to Lizzy, their mir'cle to share
they spent five months secluded in worship and
prayer.

Lizzy said, "See God loves me – I knew it was so.
God's grace is more pow'rful than people's low
blows."

And when labor pains over Lizzy did come,
the word was fulfilled: she gave birth to a son.
Her neighbors were glad and her family, too:
the Lord had shown mercy: our God through and
through!

The fam'ly was sure he'd be named for his father,
but Lizzy said, "No – now don't be such a bother!
We're calling him 'John' as the angel foretold."
They looked over to Zechy: what would he uphold?
He reached for a tablet: "My son's name is John,"
he wrote with a fury without rambling on.
The people stared blankly and some rolled their eyes,
but just then Zech's tongue freed, shouting praise to
the skies.

Then they were afraid of the things they had seen:
The things they had witnessed, what could they all
mean?

This child to be born marks a change in our land –
Perhaps we should listen and learn what we can.

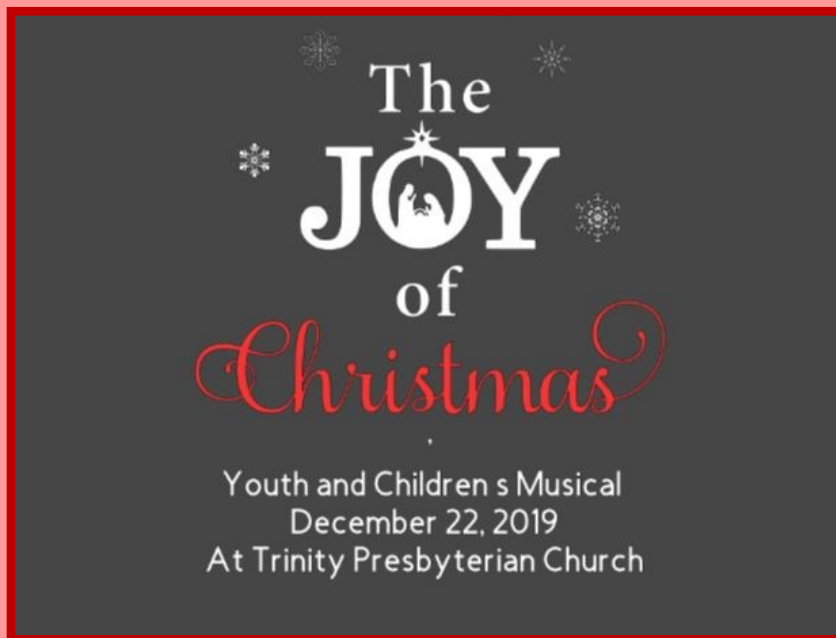
That John grew to be John the Baptist of yore,
he opened their hearts for what would be in store.
And we in our day hear good news shining bright
for Jesus is coming, all hearts to unite.
This season of Advent, oh let us make room
For the Savior whose love causes all hearts to bloom.

(Lk 1:5-25, 57-66)

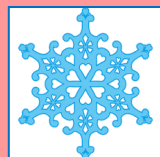
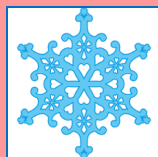
~Pastor Elana

Christian Education

Melinda Carver



Please join us on Sunday, December 22, 2019 at 10:30 a.m., for the 2019 Christmas Pageant entitled, "The Joy of Christmas." Many of the children have been working hard for weeks to bring you this wonderful production!



Sunday Morning Opportunities

Donna Bridenstine is available on Sunday mornings from 9:00 a.m. through the close of worship for quality, nurturing, and engaging childcare for infants through kindergarten. Preschool and kindergarten children can attend Sunday School, but are welcome to join her any time during worship. Adult volunteers assist Donna during worship whenever needed.

Schedule for Nursery help, if needed.	
Dec. 1	Lynn Sanstra
Dec. 8	Millie Spencer
Dec. 15	Melinda Carver
Dec. 22	_____
Dec. 29	Melinda Carver
Thank you ladies for your time and service!	

Multi-grade Sunday School (pre-k through fourth grade)

We will continue practice for our Christmas Pageant! Practice begins at 9:15 Sunday mornings in the upstairs music room until 10:00 a.m., when we will begin Sunday School. On the 22nd, the children will practice and prepare themselves for the Christmas Joyful Celebration during the Worship service. We invite all our children to come and participate!

For Sunday School, young children through fourth grade can come to the classroom by the CE office each week as we begin lessons celebrating the birth of our Lord. A great team of teachers are taking turns presenting a variety of kid-friendly experiences created to emphasize how very much God loves each of us! Hope to see you.

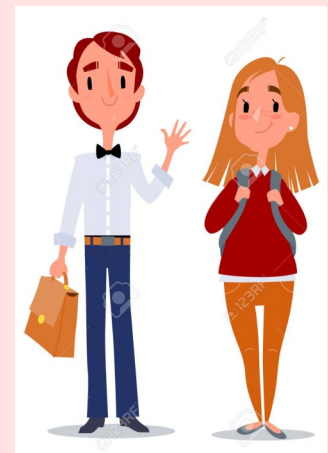
December	1st	_____
	8th	_____
	15th	Melinda Carver
	22nd	Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

If any of our wonderful, talented, teachers want to help out and jump in for Dec. 1st and/or the 8th, please see Melinda Carver!



The Tween/Youth Class (fifth through twelfth grade)

A Sunday School teen/tween class is available and all youth, sixth grade through twelfth grade. Please join us in the Youth Game Room.



YOUTH/KIDS/FAMILY NEWS



There will be a Christmas Brunch on the morning of Dec. 22nd, at 9:15 a.m. just before the Pageant! A sign-up sheet will be going around asking for folks to bring their favorite Christmas breakfast dishes to share! Be on the lookout for that list!



The Pageant, "The Joy of Christmas" will be performed on Dec. 22nd. during worship time. Be sure to plan on being here!



ANGEL TREE: We are once again asking for donations of new unwrapped gifts for our Backpack 4 Bixby kids! The Angel Tree will be set up soon, and lists of the children's "wants" and "needs" can be found on the wall next to the choir room door! Gift bags are always welcome, but please don't wrap your gifts! All gifts due to the church no later than Dec. 15, as they will be delivered to the schools on Dec.18.

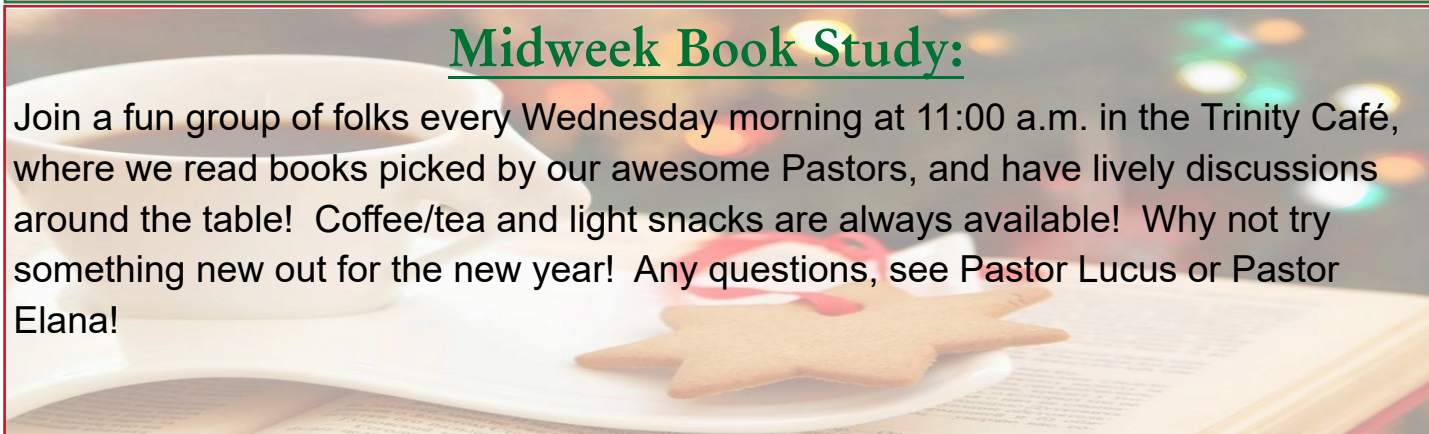


CHRISTMAS CANTATA: This year our choir will be performing their Christmas Cantata, entitled "Rhapsody in Bluegrass" on December 15, at 7:00 p.m. here at Trinity! This is a performance you won't forget, so don't miss it!



Midweek Book Study:

Join a fun group of folks every Wednesday morning at 11:00 a.m. in the Trinity Café, where we read books picked by our awesome Pastors, and have lively discussions around the table! Coffee/tea and light snacks are always available! Why not try something new out for the new year! Any questions, see Pastor Lucus or Pastor Elana!



Mission

Liz Powell



B4B CHRISTMAS – Once again this year, we are gathering Christmas gifts for the children we serve in our Backpacks for Bixby program. We receive from the school counselor a list of those children that do not receive gifts from other charitable groups. Each of these children list an item they “Need” and an item they “Want”. We post these items in the Narthex and members of the congregation can choose what they would like to give these children. If members don’t want to shop, then cash donations can be given, and the Mission Team will do the shopping. Gifts should not be wrapped, but gift bags are appreciated. This year all gifts are to be at the church by Sunday, December 15th. Gifts will be delivered to the schools on Wednesday, December 18th.



JOY OFFERING – The Joy Offering will be received on Sunday, December 22nd. This offering is one of the special offerings authorized by Session that is collected once a year. Trinity has participated in this offering for decades and the Joy Offering has been a Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Joy Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage, which has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. The theme for this year’s offering is “The Perfect Gift”. Please consider contributing this year.



Pastor Lucas, member Chuck Keppel and our Malawi visitors, Nase and Alfred, enjoying the beautiful November weather in Oklahoma!

Fellowship News

John Clawson



Christmas Brunch

Our Christmas brunch will be a potluck on Dec. 22 at 9:15 am. This event will be a fun time to spend with family and friends as we prepare for the Christmas Pageant on the same day. A signup list for the potluck will be passed around in the upcoming weeks so everyone has an opportunity to bring their special Christmas dishes to share.

The Fellowship team is looking forward to another great event at Trinity.

Respectfully submitted,
John Clawson



Banner Presentation at November Presbytery meeting



Alfred & Nase at Nov. Presbytery meeting



Music Notes

Erik Collins, Director of Music

Trinity Presbyterian Church
presents

Joseph Martin's

RHAPSODY IN BLUEGRASS

accompanied by Consort Orchestra

Sunday, December 15, 2019
7:00 P.M.

Trinity Presbyterian Church
9303 E. 111th St. S.
Bixby, OK 74008

For more information, please visit
www.trinitychurchbixby.org or call 918.369.3690

THIS EVENING IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
PLEASE CONSIDER BRINGING A CANNED GOOD ITEM THAT WILL
BE DONATED TO THE BIXBY OUTREACH CENTER.

Trinity presents Joseph Martin's *Rhapsody in Bluegrass: A Christmas Jubilee*

Once again, the Christmas season welcomes us with warm hearts and gentle spirits. I would like to welcome you to Trinity Presbyterian Church's presentation of *Rhapsody in Bluegrass: A Christmas Jubilee* accompanied by Bluegrass Ensemble. This collection of music was selected and arranged by Joseph Martin to create a musical interpretation of the story of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

At the coming of winter, there is a blessed quietness that seems to settle upon the heart. The chill of frosty air and the season's lengthening shadows invite us to a state of reflection and simplicity. As we retreat to the hearth and away from the cold, there is a subtle turning that seems to happen. Weary from struggle and frozen by distress, we find warmth and assurance inside our sanctuaries of contemplation. Peace falls like a gentle snow and we remember, with great hope, the grace and promises of our faith. The candles of hope, peace, love, and joy are once again kindled in our spirits. We gaze with longing hearts into the silence of the still night, seeking a star and listening for a song that will fill the deep silence and set our hearts to celebration.

It is then, above the whistle of the winter wind, the first notes of a distant Gloria arrive. Soft at first, it comes like a dream, and then in a great strengthening, it sweeps across the emptiness and fills our hearts with a symphony of angels' wings. The mountains and canyons sound an echo like cathedrals declaring the news: "Jesus the Savior is born. Glory to God in the Highest."

Continued on next page.....

Music Notes, *continued*....

Erik Collins, Director of Music

Overflowing with worship and surrounded by grace, we discover our miracle. Melody and message reach out and draw us close into a lavish embrace. Rejoicing, and filled with wonder, we join the music, lifting our praise into night. How amazing that in the very heart of winter's desolation, we have found a song ... a sound of wonder.

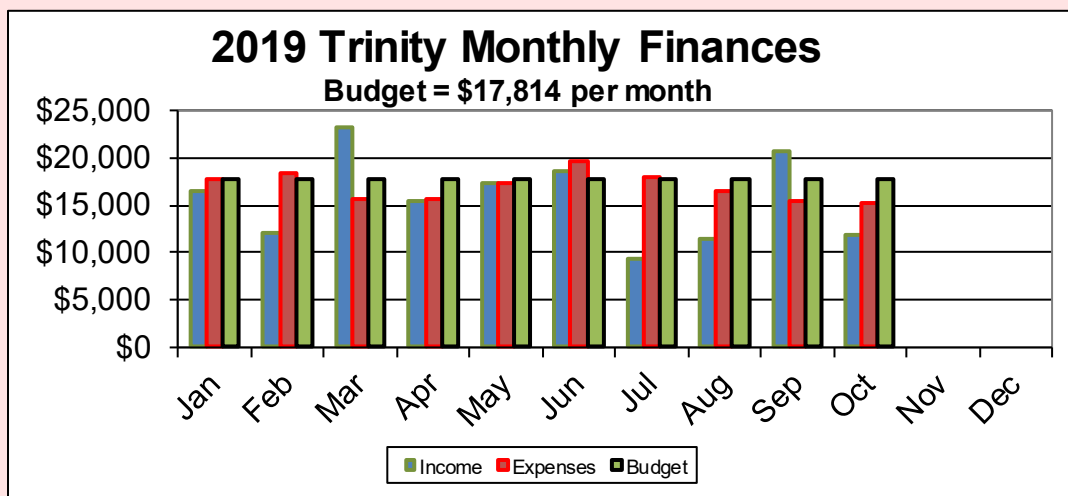
With the musical customs of Christmas, there is a wonderful intersection of ministry and artistry that can truly touch the heart. When we sing from this precious treasury of sacred songs, we connect with the spirit of the troubadour. We reprise our role as "storytellers," passing along our faith in melody and text that celebrate our faith with hopeful joy. Folk music holds a special place in the sacred lexicon, and every part of the world has its own repository of native song. Joseph Martin's cantata is an integration of traditional church choral sounds and the rustic beauty of bluegrass folk music. In the joining of these two styles, it is my hope that something transcendent be released into our seasonal worship gathering.

This sixty-minute work is filled with joyful sounds of the season, as well as introspective readings between each movement. The evening will close with our tradition "Peace, Peace," in which the congregation will sing *Silent Night* in collaboration with the choir. From songs and melodies that lift our spirits to peaceful carols, this great collection of music resonates through the warmth of God's grace. It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Trinity Presbyterian Church Choir, joined by some of Tulsa's finest musicians, in our presentation of *Rhapsody in Bluegrass: A Christmas Jubilee* on **Sunday evening, December 15th, at 7 P.M.**

Hope to see you there, Erik Collins
Director of Music~Trinity Presbyterian Church

Finance/Stewardship

Craig Hanson



2019	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budget</u>
YTD	\$ 156,648	\$170,137	\$178,140

Evangelism

Dwayne Strasheim

The Evangelism Team continues its work on the updating and revising of the “Welcome to Trinity Presbyterian Church” brochure. We will recommend less text, and more photos and white space. Drafting of the various sections of the brochure is currently under way. We are requesting input from the Mission and Christian Education Teams on the updating of those two sections of the brochure. We are also requesting input from Erik on the music sections, and from the pastors on their section, as well as on the brochure as a whole. Furthermore, Trinity members and friends are invited to share any advice or suggestions they might have.



Respectfully submitted, ...Dwayne Strasheim

Congregational Care

Grant Kessler

Grant Kessler is the Session contact for the Congregational Care Team and can be contacted at g@kessler5.com.

The Team has a list of congregational members who are willing to help other members by providing transportation to the worship service. If you are a member in need of assistance, please contact us.

The Congregational team proposes monthly Lunch Bunch events depending on the church schedule. Both members of the congregation and visitors are welcome to attend. The final dates and locations will be communicated as the days approach.

The most important way that you can help our Team, is by letting us know of any of Trinity's congregational members who are sick, who are in the hospital, are having surgery, or have other needs, so that we may support and provide assistance to them and their families. We will be glad to send cards, call, visit, provide meals, or other assistance as needed. Please make sure we are aware of our college students that are away from home and need a bit of additional support in the way of cards/letters and occasional gift cards.

Respectfully, Grant Kessler

Upcoming Events

Ever Wanted to Read the Bible From Cover to Cover?

This January, we're looking to start a Bible study group whose goal is to read the Bible from front to back, one book at a time. We would meet twice a month for an hour: once to get an overview/introduction of the book and a second time to discuss a section of that book. So, even if you can't read the whole book, you'd still be welcome to join us to discuss the section. This class would be led by Pastors Lucus and Elana. Please take a moment to fill out a survey sheet with your preferred class day/times. Surveys are available on the table under the church office window.



Pumpkin Day 2019 Fun!!

Monthly Liturgy

1st Sunday of Advent— December 1st

Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

2nd Sunday of Advent—December 8th

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

3rd Sunday of Advent—December 15th

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

4th Sunday of Advent—December 22nd

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 7-19
Romans 1:107
Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas Eve—December 24th

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

Nativity of Jesus Christ/Christmas Day— December 25th

<i>Dawn:</i>	<i>Day:</i>
Isaiah 62:6-12	Isaiah 52:7-10
<i>Psalm 97</i>	<i>Psalm 98</i>
Titus 3:4-7	Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)
Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20	John 1:1-14

1st Sunday after Christmas Day—December 29th

Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23



Advent Study

December Advent Study

Join Pastor Elana on Thursday evenings from 7-8:00 pm in Fellowship Hall as she takes us through the theology of the Messiah! Class will be Dec., 5, 12 and 19.

December Birthdays



Cathie Harper	12/04
Cathy Hanson	12/08
Ann Reed	12/08
Sally Autin	12/11
Hugh Bright	12/14
Seve Smith	12/14
Barry Straabe	12/14
Randy Smith	12/22
Adam Spencer	12/29
Melinda Carver	12/30



DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 COMMUNION SUNDAY 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 1:00 pm Team Meetings	2	3	4 10:15 Pack Backpacks 11:00 Midweek Book Study	5 6:00–7:00 pm Bells Practice 7-8:00 pm Advent Study	6	7
8 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	9	10	11 Presbyterian Women @ 9:45 in cafe Book Study at 11:00 a.m.	12 6:00–7:00 pm Bells Practice 7-8:00 pm Advent Study	13	14
15 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 7:00 pm Christmas Choir Cantata	16	17 Session 6:30 pm	18 10:15 Pack Backpacks 11:00 Midweek Book Study	19 6:00–7:00 pm Bells Practice 7-8:00 pm Advent Study	20	21 Dress Rehearsal for Pageant Time TBA (a.m.)
22 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:15 a.m. Christmas Brunch 10:30 a.m. Pageant	23	24 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Service Church office	25 Merry CHRISTMAS Church office closed	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Year's Eve	Jan 1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed			
						

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