



## From the Pastor's Pen

### Inside this issue:

From the Pastor's Pen .....	1-2
Worship.....	2
Christian Education .....	3
Mission.....	4
Finance & Stewardship.....	5
Lectionary/Birthdays .....	6
Calendar .....	7



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### “All I Want for Christmas...”



(Christmas Pageant from 2016)

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”  
– Matthew 6:21

When you hear the phrase “all I want for Christmas,” what comes to mind next? Is it Alvin & the Chipmunks singing, “my two front teeth”? Is it Mariah Carey singing, “all I want for Christmas is you”? Every year, we have layered so much into our celebrations of Christ’s birth – time to find romance, dream of new toys, spoil our children, reconnect with family.

Whether frivolous or sacred, there’s a lot that we want when we come together to honor Christ’s birth. We hear words of hope, peace, joy, and love preparing our hearts to receive Christ once more. We take the good news that is at the center of our faith and we recommit ourselves to living with a bit more grace, a bit more tenderness.

But this year, no matter what happens, things will be different.

*Pastor's Pen cont.*

So many of our carefully kept traditions are suddenly up in the air. We hear strong words of caution from public health authorities and doctors and we don't know what to do. Our visions of a perfect Christmas celebration are getting hazier and that weighs on our hearts. There are just certain traditions that we have that we start to believe – it's not *really* Christmas if I can't do this or be there or see that person.

It is some consolation that Mary and Joseph did not have the Christmas that they expected either. Mary's miraculous pregnancy, mean reactions from those around her, and surprise travel plans certainly did not make for an easy nine months. Yet, despite all that "went wrong," Jesus came into the world. Jesus showed up just as he meant to. It didn't matter that the emperor and the governor treated peasants like pawns; it didn't matter that their friends and family were far away. Still, Jesus came into their lives and into the world.

It will certainly be a hard Christmas and we pray that the pandemic does not spiral out of control. Yet, even if we are totally locked down, heart-broken from what we are giving up – still Jesus is coming to us. We remember in the Gospel of Matthew, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Walls, locked doors, viruses, chaos, sin, evil – nothing, nothing, nothing can keep Christ from filling our hearts and tending our thread bare souls. This is the miracle of Christmas that we strain so hard to remember amid the great parties and lights and gifts and distractions. Let us pray that this year we remember that no matter what we lose, we cannot lose Christ. That is our hope, our peace, our joy, and the love that lights up all creation.

As we celebrate, let us be cautious and careful, trusting that our heart-felt praise and worship makes him glad. Amen.

Pastor Elana

## Worship

*Liz Powell*

### **Poinsettias:**

If during one of the four weeks of Advent you would like to donate a poinsettia in memory or honor of a special person in your life, please call the church office by Wednesday morning before 11:00 am to advise our staff of your interest in purchasing a poinsettia!

Each week there will be a note in the bulletin of the one(s) honored.

After the weekly worship service, you may retrieve your poinsettia from the church, or it will be given to a home bound member of the congregation.

The cost of the poinsettia is \$12.



# Christian Education

*Katie Hanson*

The Christian Education team has been busy getting Advent boxes to everyone. They look like lots of fun and I cannot wait to get started this Sunday! A BIG thanks goes out to Liz Powell for making the drive to Little Rock and back to pick up our boxes! Another thank you goes out to Cathy Hanson and Melinda Carver for helping pass the boxes out! We could not have been successful without you all.

For those of you that ordered boxes, follow the detailed program guide to work your way through Advent. If you did not order a box, the scripture readings for each week are in the picture below. I invite each member of the congregation to reflect on the themes (hope, faith, joy, peace, and love) for each week, whether you ordered a box, or not.

Where have you seen each theme in your own life? How can you show or give each theme to your family, friends, and strangers this Advent season?

## ADVENT-IN-A-BOX SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

WEEK	THEME	SCRIPTURE
WEEK 1 NOVEMBER 29 - DECEMBER 5	HOPE	ISAIAH 9:2-7
WEEK 2 DECEMBER 6 - DECEMBER 12	FAITH	LUKE 1:26-38 MATTHEW 1:19-24
WEEK 3 DECEMBER 13 -DECEMBER 20	JOY	LUKE 1:39-45
WEEK 4 DECEMBER 21 -DECEMBER 24	PEACE	ISAIAH 11:1-10
BONUS CHRISTMAS DAY DECEMBER 25TH	LOVE	LUKE 2:1-20

I hope this Advent season brings each of us a little hope, faith, joy, peace, and love.

Respectfully, Katie Hanson



On Christmas Eve, please join us for  
"Our Living Christmas Story"  
4:30 pm—6:00 pm on Christmas Eve.

Join Trinity for a drive-thru retelling  
of the Christmas story, recreated in  
the parking lot of our church.

This year, our Christmas Eve service  
will be online only  
beginning at 7:30 pm.



## Midweek Book Study:

Join a fun group of folks every Wednesday morning at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom, where we read books picked by our awesome Pastors, and have lively discussions “around the table!” Why not try something new out for the new year! Any questions, see Pastor Lucus or Pastor Elana!

## Mission

*Leslie Haughey*



**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 13<sup>th</sup>. Gifts will be delivered to the schools on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.

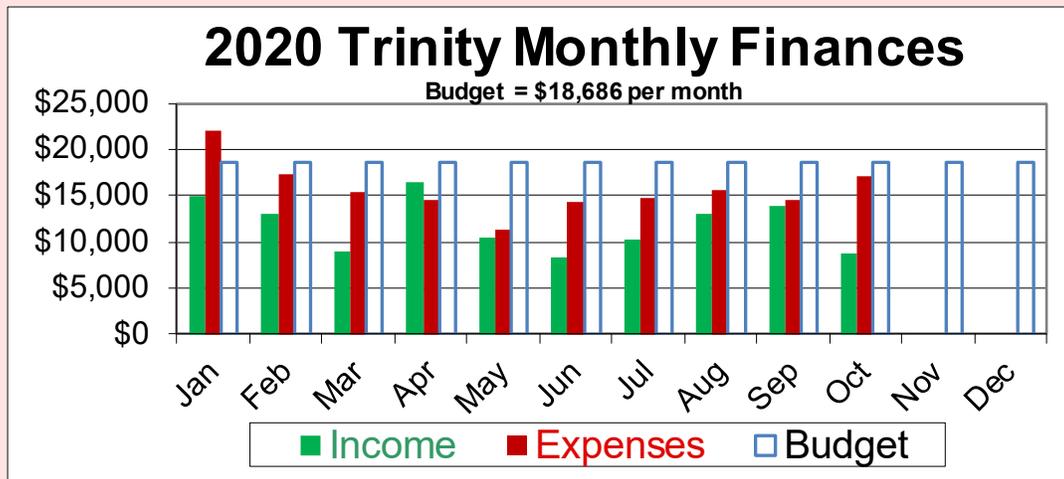
## Thank You FRONTLINERS

Our church is compiling a list of frontline workers  
to send Christmas cards to!  
Your shepherd will reach out to invite you to participate.



## Finance/Stewardship

*Grant Kessler*



2020	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budget</u>
YTD	\$ 118,714	\$156,806	\$224,226

Ever wonder why we find the same animals in almost every nativity and manger scene?

Join us for an **Advent Evening Study**  
Thursdays in December at 6:30 pm via Zoom

Journey into Christmas with a Bible study  
"Animals at the Manger"  
in the Old and New Testament

December 3<sup>rd</sup>: sheep  
December 10<sup>th</sup>: cattle  
December 17<sup>th</sup>: donkeys

Be sure to bring your favorite animal from your favorite nativity set to share.

# Monthly Liturgy

## 2nd Sunday of Advent– December 6th

Isaiah 40:1-11;  
*Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;*  
2 Peter 3:8-15a;  
Mark 1:1-8

## 3rd Sunday of Advent—December 13th

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11;  
*Psalm 126*  
Thess. 5:16-24;  
John 1:6-8, 19-28

## 4th Sunday of Advent—December 20th

2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16;  
*Luke 1:46b-55, OR Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;*  
Romans 16:25-27;  
Luke 1:26-38

## 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; <i>Psalm 97</i>	Isaiah 52:7-10 <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 of Christmas—December 27th

Isaiah 61:10-62:3;  
*Psalm 148;*  
Galatians 4:4-7;  
Luke 2:22-40



## December Birthdays



Cathie Harper	12/04
Cathy Hanson	12/08
Ann Reed	12/08
Hugh Bright	12/14
Seve Smith	12/14
Barry Straabe	12/14
Kailey Rainwater	12/19
Melanie Rainwater	12/20
Randy Smith	12/22
Adam Spencer	12/29
Melinda Carver	12/30

# DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 11:00 Midweek Book Study via Zoom  5:30 pm Bells Practice	3  6:30 -8:00 pm Advent Study	4	5
6 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT  COMMUNION SUNDAY	7	8	9 Presbyterian Women @ 9:45 via Zoom 11:00 Midweek Book Study via Zoom 5:30 pm Bells Practice	10  6:30-8:00 pm Advent Study	11	12
13 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	14	15	16  11:00 Midweek Book Study via Zoom  5:30 pm Bells Practice	17  6:30-8:00 pm Advent Study	18	19
20 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT  Session 12:00 pm via Zoom	21	22	23  5:30 pm Bells Practice	24 4:30-6:00 "Our Living Christmas Story" Drive-thru 7:30 pm Online Christmas Eve Service	25  <b>Church Office Closed</b>	26
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	Jan 1 New Year's Day  Church Office Closed	
						

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