



December 2016 Newsletter of Trinity United Methodist Church

Advent means the beginning of something. We celebrate Advent as the beginning of a journey to the manger and the Christ Child. I found this article written by Les and Leslie Parrott that I believe should help all of us make the journey to the manger.

Can you imagine for a moment how the Christmas story might have been written if Mary and Joseph had not had the capacity to adjust to things beyond their control? To begin with, Joseph had to adjust to the fact that Mary, his fiancée, was pregnant. According to Old Testament law, he could have had her stoned or sent her into some large distant city like Rome, Carthage, or Ephesus. Before he could break with her, however, God sent an angel to tell Joseph that Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit, and would give birth to a son whose name would be Jesus. So instead of sending Mary away, Joseph married her.

While the first year of marriage is always difficult, Mary and Joseph faced a unique set of challenges. Nine months of pregnancy require enormous adjustments from a couple, regardless of how long they've been married — and this was no run-of-the-mill pregnancy.

On top of dealing with the implications of the impending birth, Mary and Joseph were trying to establish their home, run a business, and learn how to live with each other seven days a week. Further, they were forced to close down their business and travel to Bethlehem as the first step of a Roman plan to raise taxes. Just what they needed!

Early one morning, Mary and Joseph left their honeymoon abode behind them as they went out of the gate of Nazareth en route to Bethlehem. She was riding on the back of a little burro. (No easy ride. Some women can hardly ride in a Buick while they are waiting for the birth of a child, let alone on the back of a donkey!) Joseph had a short tether wrapped around his arm and anchored securely in his big fist to keep the little burro from dislodging Mary, who was more than eight months pregnant. At night they did not stop in a rooming house or motel as people might today. They stopped along the road, cooked with makeshift arrangements, slept on the hard ground, and made the best of a difficult situation.

Finally, when they arrived within sight of the city of Bethlehem, Mary stopped. She could not go another step. We can imagine her looking up at her husband and saying something like, "Joe, I cannot take another step. I am going to sit down here under this olive tree, and I want you to go into the city of Bethlehem, and get us a room in the Bethlehem Hilton. I would like one in the front if possible so I can watch the crowds go up and down, and I will get room service and wait out the time for the baby to come."

Mary was a long way from home, worn-out, tired, emotionally drained, and at the end of her rope. Furthermore, she must have wondered what she would do if her labor pains began and Joseph was not near. After all, her baby was almost due. Her anxiety level must have risen as she waited, watched, and eagerly scanned the highway for the familiar figure of Joseph.

(story continues on the next page)

Trinity United Methodist Church 8009 Q Street Ralston, NE 68127
Phone: 402-331-4054 <http://www.trinityralston.org> [facebook.com/TrinityRalstonUMC](https://www.facebook.com/TrinityRalstonUMC)

Sunday Worship: Services @ 8:30am & 11am, Sunday School @ 9:45am

Pastor: Rev Dr. Matt Fowler **Associate Pastor:** Rev Curt Copple **Pastor of Congregational Development:** Rev Dr. Bob Folkers
Executive Pastor: Rev Dr. Cole Fowler **Children /Youth Director:** Becky McClanathan
Choir Director: David Galant **Media Director/Worship Leader:** Matthew Hindley **Accompanist:** Vicki Buras
Facilities Coordinator: Jon Lindhjem **Administrative Assistant:** Vicky Segers **Building Supervisor:** Judy Slavik

Journey to the Manger continued

Finally Joseph returned, his characteristic smile gone, his shoulders drooping. She listened as he told her his story: “Mary, I went to the hotel, but there was no room. It’s filled with convention people. In fact, I went up and down the main street to every hotel and motel, but there are no rooms. Finally, I persuaded an old man to let us stay in the barn with his animals. He’s charging an exorbitant price, Mary, but he promised me he would clean it out. And most of all, Mary, he said we could be alone, and he would not make us share the stall with any other couple.”

Their hearts heavy, Mary and Joseph made their way to the stable, thankful at least for a shelter from the cold wind.

That night the Son of God was born.

Mission Notes

WOW!! We did it! We filled 101 **Operation Christmas Child** boxes with the help of Trinity members and friends. One friend in particular needs to be recognized, and that is Dan Eschliman, Becky McClanathan's dad. When Becky told him about our project, he most graciously and generously helped put us over the top. Congratulations to all who participated.

We are still collecting non-perishables and paper products for **Living Hope** as they continue to struggle in keeping their shelves stocked. We know that with your support many families were able to enjoy their Thanksgiving meals.

Dining for Women, which supports many projects around the globe, will continue after the first of the year. During the four years we have been meeting, we have donated \$4681.00!!! Thank you, ladies!

Judy Dappen
Mission Chair

Special Music News

The choir will be sharing the Christmas Cantata “Morning Star” on Sunday, December 4th between services. They invite you to come and listen to music that celebrates the everlasting light of Christmas.

The 35th Annual Community Christmas Carol Concert will be held on Sunday, December 11th at 7pm at St. Paul's UMC in Papillion. Enjoy an evening of seasonal music featuring a brass band, bell choirs, and community choirs.

Christmas Services

Our candle-light Christmas Eve Services will be at 5, 7, and 11pm this year. Then on Christmas Day, there will be a single service at 10am. We look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ with you and your family!

Scrip Program

If you have not already, do your holiday shopping at the scrip table between services each Sunday. Available for purchase are cards to Marcus Theaters, Omaha Steaks, Bed, Bath & Beyond, Bath & Body Works, Panera, Don & Millie's, Applebee's, Runza, and Barnes and Noble's. All profits go into the general church fund.

Calendar insert

You will find inserted in this month's Beacon a copy of the current calendar for December. Please note that this is a working document subject to change. If you are looking to host an event at Trinity, please check the website (trinityalston.org) for the most up-to-date calendar available. Vicky or Jon are also more than willing to help answer any questions regarding scheduling you may have. They can be reached by calling the church office at 402-331-4054.

Education Notes

December 7th: Will be our last **KFC** (Kids For Christ) for the year. KFC will resume January 18th.



December 11th: Will be our next gathering for **Trinity Youth**. We will be having dinner at the church as well as doing a gift exchange, creating fun photos, having a foosball challenge, and drinking some hot chocolate. Please email me with any questions at becky.m@trinityralston.org.

Saturday, December 17th: We will have a full dress rehearsal for our Christmas program. This will be in the community center. All kids and teachers, please join me at **9am Sharp!**

December 25th: NO Sunday School. Merry Christmas!

January 1st: NO Sunday School. Happy New Year!

January 8th: Sunday School resumes.

January 18th: KFC resumes.



Through December, the kids are on a mission to raise funds for a **Salama Stove!**
A description of this project, taken from their website, can be read below.

The Salama Stove

Salama Stove's rocket stove design and chimney reduce toxic emissions and ensure that any smoke is drawn out of the house, guaranteeing a healthier family environment. Salama Stoves are more efficient than traditional cooking methods and drastically reduce fuel consumption, saving money and freeing up time. An insulated combustion chamber keeps the sides from getting too hot, minimizing the risk of burns to children and cooks.

The Salama stove is locally manufactured in Nairobi, Kenya by local stove experts. All the materials and parts are sourced from Nairobi and the surrounding areas. Built by Kenyans in Kenya.

Each stove is \$60 and the children are collecting spare change and dollars for this mission project in Kenya. If you feel inclined to help, please find myself or a kiddo here at Trinity, and let them know what you would like to do, and they will take your change or dollar to our collection tub.

I'm excited to announce this year's **Christmas Program, "NEW STAR!"** Our kids have been practicing for this production already, and they are super excited to share it. This will be a special show of the "Old star" teaching the "New star" about the wonderful story of Christmas.



Come join us on Sunday, December 18th at 10am. We will perform in the Community Center with cookies and punch to follow. All are welcome!

May Your JOY be Full
Becky McClanathan

New Members

We welcome as new members to Trinity, Martin Wilson-Stepan through baptism, and Evert and Karen Peacock through transfer.

Plastic Shopping Bags

The Lost and Found Clothing Closet continues to minister to the needs of the community by providing gently used children's clothing for free each Sunday from 1-4pm. Currently they are running low on plastic shopping bags, and are asking for people to donate any of these bags they may have. Thank you!

December

Birthdays

- 12/2 Connie Folkers
Erin Gonzalez
Ron Hein
- 12/3 Michelle Morrissey
- 12/5 Tom Sullivan
Rosemary Whittaker
- 12/7 Joann Krohn
John York
- 12/8 Kris Brown
Avery Shannon
- 12/9 Maxine Citta
Dayton Conley
Nancy Ramsey
- 12/12 Greg Johnson
Jerry Olson
- 12/13 Casey Craven
- 12/14 Josh Brown
Ruth Heyde
Susan Jasman
- 12/15 Sandy Olson
- 12/18 Verlyn Farrar
Larry Woods
- 12/22 Bette Fink
- 12/24 Carla Richards
- 12/25 Carl Citta
- 12/26 Emma Frazee
- 12/27 Pam Brown-Tritsch
Bob Price
- 12/29 Mary Berglund
Angela Gilbert
Josh Hanson
- 12/31 D.J. Kuhn



UMW Notes

- Thurs, Dec 1st** Naomi Ruth Christmas Lunch 11:30am
@ Jack & Mary's Restaurant
- Sat, Dec 3rd** UMW Christmas Coffee & Carols 10am
- Thurs, Dec 8th** Esther Circle Christmas Dinner 6pm
@ Farm House Cafe
- Tues, Dec 13th** Mary Circle Christmas Potluck 6pm
@ Trinity UMC
- Thurs, Dec 15th** Bingo @ Hillcrest Shadowlake 2pm

Election Day Soup & Pie Meal

Many have asked how long the UMW have held the Election Day Soup and Pie Meal. Our first meal was held in 1988, then again in 1990, next in 1992, and then from 1995 through 2016. That would be a total of 24 years.

Saturday Book Club

Saturday Sisters Book Club will take a break for December, but will return Saturday, January 21st at 9am in Room 205. The January selection is "The Things We Keep" by Sally Hepworth. You are invited to join us at any time, even if you have not read the book.

Trinity Methodist Men

The Trinity Men's Group will not meet during the month of December. They will resume meeting on the last Saturday of each month at 8am beginning January 28th. Join them for coffee and breakfast as they build their faith together. For more information contact Steve Gage.

Thank You

Annette Wilson would like to thank everyone for the cards, letters, prayers, and the help generously given to them when she returned home. She still has a long recovery ahead of her.

Thank you to Trinity friends for all the calls, cards and prayers these past few weeks as I recover from a minor heart attack. I am recouping at my son's home, and can be reached at 402-677-2394 or 503 Waterloo Dr., Waterloo, NE 68069.
-Maxine Wilkins

Don & Millie's Sunday

Eat at Don & Millie's on Sunday, December 18th (please note this is the third Sunday, not our usual fourth) from 11am – 5pm and the church receives 20% of your purchase.

Office Closings

The church office will be closed on Monday, December 26th and Monday, January 2nd in honor of the holidays.