



Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World

December 2019 Newsletter of Trinity United Methodist Church

Happy New Year!

Did you check the date on the newsletter when you read the title? It is December, and you still have a few days until Christmas. However, it is the new year for the church. Advent is the start of the Christian year. It begins with waiting for the Christ Child to be born. What a way to begin, waiting. I am not good at waiting. I like things to happen quickly. I like to know without a doubt that everything will be okay, but life does not come with that guarantee. So, we wait.

As we wait, we hope, we experience peace that passes all understanding, we are filled with joy, and we have the courage to love. How? Through God's grace that reminds us when we are unsure, God is sure. As I write this article, we have not yet met each other. I know a little about you, and you about me, we are all waiting to meet. I hope as we wait, you are trusting that God is blessing the time we will spend together, and God is in all that has happened to unite us together. In fact, God is in all our lives.

This is what Saint Francis knew and wanted to share when he created the first living nativity. God is here with us. No tradition reminds us of this quite like the nativity. Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus, possibly with shepherds, wise men, angels, and animals remind us of the night God chose to come in human form and physically live among us.

Mike Slaughter says this so well in Trinity Ralston UMC's Advent study book, *Down to Earth* by Mike Slaughter and Rachel Billups. Rev. Slaughter writes on page 12, "I believe the greatest miracle of all time was Jesus' birth: God Almighty willingly choosing to become God incarnate, God in the flesh. The Lord of the Universe, as a vulnerable babe, entered into the struggles of humankind at a tumultuous time and in a nondescript place."

As we meet and begin our time of ministry together this Advent, I invite you to join me in celebrating this gift from God. We will do this in worship services, but I also invite you to do this in sharing your family nativities and stories that remind you of the gift of this baby born at Christmas. Let's add to the decorations in the church with nativities. You can bring one for a week or for the entire month.

How will this work? Cards will be provided for your name and the story behind your nativity. You can place it with your set and leave it for one Sunday or take it home after Epiphany Sunday on January 5th. After all, that is when the wise men came to see the Lord.

Why do this? For me, Church is all about the people who come together because of the Lord. Some come because they are searching, others to grow in faith, and some come full of doubt and uncertainty. As we all come, wherever we are, we come as unique and wonderful people created by and united by God. We are the Church and we live into being the Church by sharing our stories and learning about each other so we can learn how to serve together. I hope these nativities help us tell those stories so I can get to know you all. I am excited to meet you and start this time of serving the Lord with each of you. See you on December 1st!

Pastor Tessa

Trinity United Methodist Church 8009 Q Street Ralston, NE 68127

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Sunday Worship: Services @ 8:30am & 11am

Pastor: Rev Tessa Zehring **Associate Pastor:** Rev Curt Copple **Pastoral Care:** Rev Dr. Bob Folkers

Children /Youth Director: **Daycare Director:** Megan Greise

Choir Director: Dr. David Galant **Media Director/Worship Leader:** Matthew Hindley **Accompanist:** Alex Lunardi

Controller: **Administrative Assistant:** Vicky Segers **Facility Attendant:** Cory Henson

Mission Notes

Barb Gresham at Living Hope food pantry was so appreciative of our donations that will be used for Thanksgiving meals. We have had a long relationship with Living Hope (formerly Pearl UMC) and with Barb who has worked there for over 25 years. We talked about reciprocating our services since they no longer have a clothing pantry and we don't provide food. Recipients from either provider can make use of each other's services. Barb says that anyone is welcome at their pantry.

Christmas time can be such a lonely time for many, especially those who are residents in nursing homes. The mission team decided it would be such a simple gesture, but nonetheless, a kind one to write cards to the seniors in Papillion Manor. Starting December 1st and the following two Sundays, the mission team will place Christmas cards on the tables in Fellowship Hall. There will be a list of names (first names only) from Papillion Manor (where we provide prayer shawls each month.) We are asking you to take the time to write a card for several names on the list. There will be instructions on each table with pens, markers, stickers, etc. There will be five lists of names since that is how they designate their residents at the manor. Hopefully, the residents will enjoy this small gift and know that others are thinking of them. Thank you for your time and giving spirit.

Dining for Women will meet again in February. For those of you who have never attended our monthly meetings, you are missing out on some awesome food and stimulating conversations. We have learned so much about our world, and are reminded of how our lives are continually blessed.

Even though 2020 is not here yet, the mission team has been planning ahead. We have a tentative schedule with projects designated for certain months. Some are repeats and some are ongoing, such as sack lunches and prayer shawls. We are encouraging those who are not on the committee to feel free to participate at any time. We have had a group of women (not on team) who faithfully help with sack lunches. There is always something that you can do. Just keep us in mind and we will welcome you with open arms.

I would like to give a shout out to all those who staff the clothes pantry and keep it running. Such a service is a welcome and vital part of Trinity's mission. We are blessed by being able to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

Judy Dappen
Chairperson

Thank You

This is a VERY special thank you to Pastor Curt for stepping up to become our interim pastor with very little notice. We have enjoyed hearing his messages on Sunday mornings, and his counsel by listening to our problems and helping us to solve them. We, the congregation, hope the best for him and his family. Our blessings and prayers are with him and his family, and hope that he knows that he will always be a part of Trinity Ralston.

Sincerely,
SPRC and the congregation.

Christmas Eve

Join us in celebrating the birth of the Christ Child on Tuesday, December 24th. Our candlelight Christmas Eve services will be held at 5, 7, and 11pm.

Education Notes

Children & Youth

We are following the study of *Down to Earth* with the church for this Advent season. If your children aged 3 through 6th grade are interested in joining, we will offer classes on Sunday morning at 9:45am during Sunday School. If your older children would like to participate, let me know and I will create a group for them. The last day of Kids For Christ this year will be Wednesday December 11th. The last day of Sunday School this year will be Sunday December 15th. Happy Holidays everyone!!!

Trinity Learning Center



We are 2/3rds of the way through construction! We have walls and are now working on getting ceilings and floors. We have begun the process of hiring teachers, and have sent out advertisements for children. I currently have six families on the interested list who will have first chose on enrollment. If you know of anyone looking for employment or childcare please have them e-mail me at info@tlcralston.org or call at 531-466-1701.



Advent Study

It's not too late to sign up! Trinity invites members and non-members alike to join us for an all church Advent Study of the book *Down to Earth* by Mike Slaughter and Rachel Billups. This four week study reveals to us God's Christmas surprise and how it changed everything. We have four groups that are open to be a part of beginning December 1st: the two adult Sunday classes at 9:45am, a Monday class at 6pm, and a Saturday class at 9am. Cost of the book is \$7.

Christmas Cantata

The Chancel Choir invites you to hear the message of the season by listening to this year's cantata "Have You Heard?" on Sunday, December 8th at either the 8:30 or 11am services. You will enjoy familiar carols with a Celtic flavor woven together with the timeless story surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ. We look forward to seeing you then!

Poinsettia Orders

Once again, Trinity offers you the opportunity to purchase a poinsettia for \$10 in honor or memory of a loved one. Starting December 1st, order forms will be available to fill out in the Sunday bulletins. Sunday, December 15th will be the last day for orders. If you are unable to make it to the church, but still wish to purchase a plant, please contact the church office at 402-331-4054 and someone will be more than happy to help. For those who buy a poinsettia, they can be picked up December 29th.

December Birthdays

- 12/2** Connie Folkers
Erin Gonzalez
Ron Hein
Steve Markowsky
- 12/3** Michelle Morrissey
- 12/5** Tom Sullivan
Rosemary Whittaker
- 12/7** Joann Krohn
Samantha Lanam
- 12/8** Kris Martinez
Avery Shannon
- 12/9** Maxine Citta
Dayton Conley
Nancy Ramsey
- 12/12** Greg Johnson
Jerry Olson
- 12/13** Casey Craven
- 12/14** Josh Brown
Susan Jasman
- 12/15** Sandy Olson
- 12/18** Verlyn Farrar
Larry Woods
- 12/22** Betty Fink
- 12/25** Carl Citta
- 12/26** Emma Frazee
- 12/27** Pam Brown-Tritsch
Bob Price
- 12/29** Mary Berglund
Angela Gilbert
Josh Hanson



UMW Notes

- Thurs, Dec 5th** Naomi Ruth Circle
@ Garden Cafe 11:30am
- Sat, Dec 7th** UMW Coffee & Carols 10am
- Tues, Dec 10th** Mary Circle 6:30pm
@ Pam Brown's Residence
- Thurs, Dec 12th** Esther Circle 5:30pm
@ Farm House Cafe
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Saturday Book Club

Saturday Sisters Book Club will not meet in December, but our January selection is *Virgil Wander* by Leif Enger. You are welcome to join us for fellowship and our discussion of this book on Saturday, January 18th, at 9am in room 205.

Trinity Methodist Men

The Trinity Men's Group will meet on Saturday, December 28th at 8am for coffee and fellowship. If you are interested in learning more about this group, then contact Steve Gage.

One Service

We will have a single service at 10am on Sunday, December 29th.

Office Closed

The church office will be closed Wednesday, December 25th in honor of Christmas and January 1st.

Don & Millie's Sunday

Eat at Don & Millie's on Sunday, December 22nd from 11am – 5pm and the church receives 20% of your purchase.

Calendar insert

You will find inserted in this month's Beacon a copy of the current calendar for December. Please check the website (trinityalston.org) for the most up-to-date calendar available. Call the church office at 402-331-4054 for more information, or to schedule your event today.