

The Messenger

January 2024

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What's Inside

New and Noted:

- From our Pastor
- Congregational Meeting
- Stewardship
- From our DOM
- From our DOPM
- 12th Night Party
- Calendar

Social Ministry/Giving

- Good Shepherd Request

Birthdays/Anniversaries

From our Pastor

A new year: 12 Days, plus all the rest

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Blessings to you from the one who was, who is, and who is to come again.

We are now in the midst of the 12 Days of Christmas, and I've been thinking over the last weeks about that song, "The 12 Days of Christmas," and what the true love gifts to the beloved.

I was thinking that if we rewrote the words to that song with God being the true love, what gifts would we recognize that we've been given, or what gifts would we hope to receive?

Once I had the thought, I really went to town, and over the course of the latter days of Advent, I started to see gifts everywhere:

- On a night out with the ladies, sharing food, drink, laughs and, well, the serious discussions about life's twists and turns, I realized we were walking together on the paths as yet untrodden. The gift was in the sharing, which had enormous healing.
- The gift of stories. I was reminded again of how privileged I am to hear your stories about the high moments in your lives and the low ones, and to help bear your burdens.
- The gift of medicine, in all its forms, that binds together our brokenness and gets us back to living life, maybe not in the way we have, but we're still living life.
- The surprising kindness that we weren't expecting: a meal dropped off, a phone call at just the right time, an offer of help in some form or another.



- The gift of song, both the toe-tapping kind that makes you want to get up and dance, and the kind with words that speak something you need to hear.
- The gift of a new day, a new start, a new chance. Every dawn brings the opportunity for something new; a new idea, a chance to heal something or fix something that's broken, a chance to take a risk and do something that you've feared.
- The gift of companions, those people who are close to our hearts every day, whether we are bound by blood or bound by love, or both. And because they're always there, we don't always see the gift. There is sweetness when our eyes are opened.
- The gift of breath. Watching a beloved breathe, or listening to his breathing, took on new meaning after John's medical crisis last January when his heart stopped and had to be restarted. When he came home from the hospital, I was attentive to his breathing and sometimes made the (unpopular) choice of poking him if I couldn't hear him breathe while he slept. He'd wake with a start, and I'd have to say, "Sorry, just wanted to make sure you were still here." You don't realize the gift of a breath until you fear that it is gone.

We ring in a new year, thankful for the gifts we have received and are still receiving. But what if our eyes were opened to the expansiveness of all the gifts we've received not just during the 12 Days of Christmas, but every day?

We can see God's movement in all sorts of ways, as we live into the promise of the God who claimed us and promised to make all things new, even as we are walking a path as yet untrodden.

God's blessings to you as you walk into this new year, with its twists and turns, its joys and sorrows, its beginnings and endings. You don't walk this path alone. You never have.

Emmanuel, God with us.

Pastor Brenda +

Congregational meeting

Our annual congregational meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 28, at 11 a.m. This is the meeting at which we approve the annual budget.

We are planning for the meeting to be a hybrid of in-person and online attendance.

Most of you will join us in person, but we will also provide a way to join us via a Zoom computer link. We will post the link in our Holy Trinity Facebook group, and will also email to many of you. If you have not received communications from us in either of those places and would like to receive the Zoom link, please let Catherine know in the church office.

Stewardship: Commitment cards for 2024

If you have not yet returned your commitment card for the new year, please do so in the first weeks of 2024. It is important for us to receive your cards, because we use them to plan the budget for the coming year. If you have not yet returned a card, please mail or drop one off at the church office as soon as possible so that we can plan adequately.

If you need a card, please call Catherine in the church office.

We thank you for your continued faithfulness in the stewardship of the church.

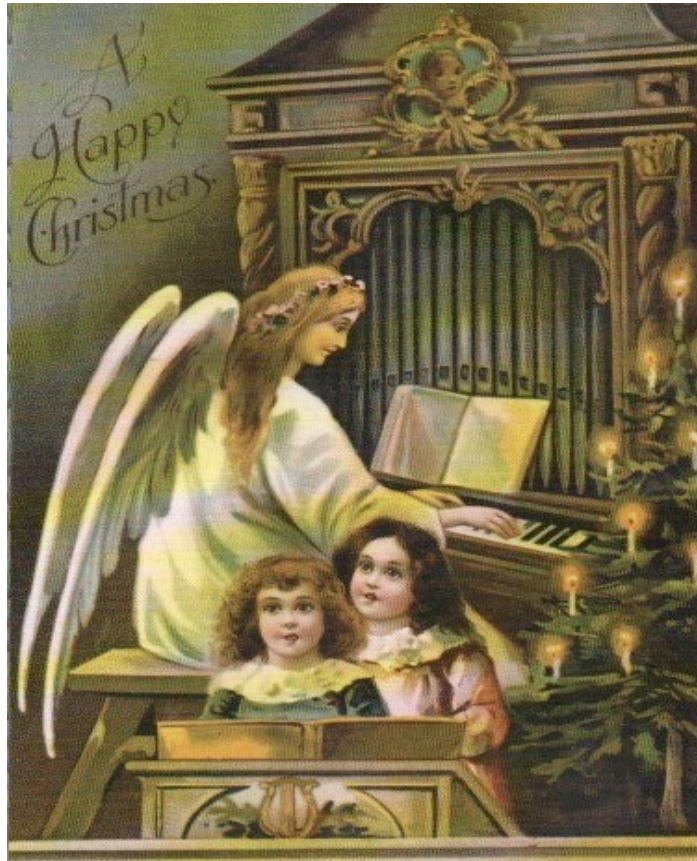
From Our Director of Music



Our wonderful choir at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church rendered four beautiful anthems for Advent by Martin Luther, Johann Sebastian Bach, Jan Sandström, and Paul Manz. Members of the choir also cantored for the Advent Vespers and the afternoon Blue Christmas Service. On Christmas Eve the choir will sing David Willcock's arrangement of the jolly *Sussex Carol* with the text: On Christmas night all Christians sing. In the early 20th century, this text and carol were gathered from various English ethnic groups by the efforts of Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

On The First Sunday after Christmas, which is the last day of the year, the choir will sing *A New Year Carol* by Benjamin Britten. This carol for New Year's Day sings about a custom in which, on New Year's Day, children collect fresh water from a well, and go around with a sprig from an evergreen tree, which they use to sprinkle the faces of passers-by with the water while singing the carol and begging for gifts of food or money. Once again the Celesta, along with the organ, will be used in this Britten carol.

Carols are not just confined to the Christmas season. The word carol comes from the old French word 'carole', which meant a popular circle dance accompanied by singing. There are secular carols such as *Deck the Halls*, *Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer*, and *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. There are also secular Winter, Spring, and Summer carols along with Advent carols, Lent carols, and Easter carols.



From Our Directors of Parish Ministry

Youth Gathering Fundraising Update

As you will recall, 2024 will find a group of our young people heading to New Orleans for the Youth Gathering event scheduled for July (and rumor has it they will be doing so by train -envious yet?). And as you can imagine going there will require some serious fundraising. While more fundraising events are in the planning stages, here are a couple you can put into that new planner you received for Christmas:

Valentines Day Dinner-

On February 11th our “Youth Gatherers” will be hosting a romantic Valentines Day dinner in Brath Hall. They will be responsible for picking the menu, preparing and serving the food, and creating just the right atmosphere for a romantic evening out to chase the winter chill. Look for more information on the “reservations only” event in the coming weeks.

Indoor Yard Sale-

For serious yard sale cruisers, winter can create serious withdrawal issues. To help scratch the communities yard sale itch, our travelers are going to host an indoor yard sale tentatively scheduled for the weekend of March 8th and 9th. While details are still being finalized, the plan is for Holy Trinity members to donate yard sale type items for sale at the event with the proceeds going to help fund the NOLA trip. Any items that don't get sold would be donated to Good Shepherd. So as your thoughts turn to spring cleaning, keep an eye out for yard sale type items that could help our folks out. You get rid of some stuff and they get to eat beignets and muffalettas.

Other Ideas in the Works-

- Setting up a kiosk in the Narthex where congregants can drop off spare change every week;
- Creating a United Way type thermometer to track their fundraising progress;
- “Rent” a Youth Gatherer for a day to do chores around the house;
- “Pay For a Day” program to allow congregants to pay for one student/one day fees

Watch this space for more updates as we move closer to July.



Twelfth Night Celebration

The annual Twelfth Night Party will begin at **7:00 p.m. on Friday, January 5, 2024**. Brath Hall will be festively decorated to celebrate the final night of the 12 days of Christmas and the close of the Christmas season.

You are invited to enjoy music, poetry, the singing of carols, with food and fellowship. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.*

Please fill out the reservation form below and indicate which items you would like to prepare for the festivities. If you need a ride, please make that known. You may call the church at 724-588-8870 or email the church office at holytrinitygreenville@verizon.net.

Plan to come and share in this lovely, moving, Twelfth Night tradition.



Twelfth Night Celebration, 2024

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Needs a ride (please circle one) Yes No

Would like to bring (please circle one) Appetizer Dessert

**Please R. S. V. P. to the Church Office at 724-588-8870
or at holytrinitygreenville@verizon.net**

***If you are more comfortable wearing a mask, feel free to do so during the program parts of the celebration. Should you have any questions, please call Don or Sue at the church office.**

January

Birthdays

4	Linda Batemen Sally Roth
6	Elysa Farrell
8	Billie Hollenbaugh Dolly Lineman
9	Emily Marshall
10	Colin Banco Kelly Gilmore
15	Brycen Miller
20	Darlene Ferguson Lana Mozes
21	Bryce Stubert
26	John Weaver
27	Lauren Upchurch Betty K. Junk Mark Wasser
31	Grant Abraham Helga Marguglio



January Anniversaries

The following members of our congregation are celebrating anniversaries this month. Congratulate them when you see them.

Henry and Ruth Heil	66 years	January 24, 1958
Rusty and Linda Saverino	46 years	January 28, 1978

Happy Anniversary

Good Shepherd January Request

The Good Shepherd Center is our church community social service agency that supports the needs of many in the area.

The Good Shepherd Center's request for Holy Trinity for **January is pasta, pasta sauce or soups and crackers.**

Donations may be placed in the marked box in the cloister or on the table in the office hallway.

Dear Holy Trinity Congregation,

Thank you for your donation of canned fruit for our Thanksgiving distribution. We appreciate your continued support with feeding those in need.

The Good Shepherd Food Pantry
Kelli Mayer



Christmas Gifts

Thank you to everyone who purchased gifts for Bethesda and the Good Shepherd.

You truly helped make Christmas special for all of the children.

Blessings!
Catherine

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Monday - Thursday
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