

# The Messenger

November 2024

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## From our Pastor

### Stewardship: Time, talent, treasure

*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.*

I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray for all things.

As November rolls around in the church year, you can bet that money is going to be a topic of conversation in the church. It's the time of year that we begin preparing a church budget for the coming year; it's the time of year you'll hear temple talks about how the ministry of the church has touched people's lives. We'll talk about being good stewards and sharing with the church what's first gifted to you by God.

First, you should hear how we've done financially this year.

At Holy Trinity, as in most mainline Protestant churches around the U.S., our worship attendance is at about 70-75 percent of what it was in pre-pandemic days. In truth, we have lived with a decline in church attendance for two generations.

But despite the decline in attendance, you provide. Or to be more accurate, God provided. The Holy Spirit worked through you to continue providing financially to the church, include those of you who are still more cautious about your worship attendance. For most of this year, your giving has been slightly ahead of our budget expectations. For all of that, we give thanks to God.

But stewardship isn't just about money, it's also about the gift of talents and time that God has given you. In this area, we have surged over the past year, thanks in large part to the work of our directors of parish ministry, Sue and Don Achenbach. But having said that, we are also mindful that we do not have the number of volunteers that Holy Trinity had 50 years ago, and we are trying to scale our expectations accordingly.



When we talk about stewardship during the month of November, we'll talk about returning to God what we have first been given in all of these areas — time, talent and treasure.

At our Sunday worship in November, you will notice a familiar routine. You will hear temple talks from people about how the ministry of Holy Trinity has been felt in their lives. We'll have a Commitment Sunday when we will turn in our promises for what we can share with the church in 2025. This is important, because it helps us to prepare our budget. But we'll also ask you to think about sharing your time and talents.

Through it all, we'll explore how we live into God's story here in Mercer County, Pennsylvania, and how living into that story asks us to show generosity in all areas of our lives, living into knowing that with God, all things are possible.

So let's live into the grace we've been given, together.

Pastor Brenda +

### A LOOK AHEAD TO CHRISTMAS GIVING

You will have a number of opportunities this year to give the gift of Christmas to those who are in need.

- We'll be receiving a tree with gift tags from the Good Shepherd Center. Please take a gift tag and return a gift that will be given to a child whose family uses the Good Shepherd Center to receive food.
- As in years past, we'll also be receiving gift tags from Bethesda in Meadville, a Lutheran ministry that provides care to children from around Pennsylvania sent to live at the Bethesda Home.
- And our Sunday School will be collecting money again this year for the ELCA Good Gifts program, which provides farm animals, school supplies, medical supplies and more to places that need them. Over five weeks last year, we raised \$1,170.50. With a \$500 match, we were able to purchase \$1,670 worth of items for the ELCA's World Hunger program to disburse to those in need either in the U.S. or globally. We raised enough last year to buy a cow in the Good Gifts catalog. One dairy cow can produce a few gallons of milk each day. Milk provides a calcium-packed source of nutrition for growing children. A family with a cow can also start a small business selling extra milk, cheese, yogurt, butter and more. Thanks to your generosity, we were also able to purchase: school supplies for 10 children, 10 chicks, 5 piglets, 5 goats, school fees and uniforms for 5 girls (in places where education of girls is not a priority), health clinic visits for 10 children, seeds and gardening tools for 2 families, fruit tree seedlings for 3 families. We also stocked a health clinic with supplies such as tests, medicine and vaccines for one week.

## Advent Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer will begin on **Monday, December 2** and conclude on **Monday, December 23** in the choir pews. It begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 8:50 a.m. Please use the rear parking lot door for entry. Take this opportunity for quiet reflection at the beginning of your day as a way of making spiritual preparation during Advent.

# From Our Director of Music



Did you know that our pipe organ has two percussion stops? The Zimbelstern (bell star) was a recent addition to the organ and was given by Henry & Ruth Heil. The organ also has 21 chime tubes that play on the pedal keyboard. The chimes are part of the original Casavant Frères Ltée. organ as installed in 1970. Over the years the cloth cords that hold the chimes deteriorated and the chime tubes fell to the floor. Recently, the cords were tied in place with new chime cords and now work. The chimes are located in the south chamber of the pipe organ against the back wall.



Once again, members of the Warren Brass Quintet joined us for our Reformation Sunday service on October 27th. The members include: Tim Carlson and Derrick Kittle, Trumpet; Jenn Mollenkopf, French Horn; John Shamp, Trombone; and Lauren Zetts, Tuba. They offered works by Vivaldi, Bach, Vaughan Williams, and Bach along with various hymn and service music arrangements. They will be back again on Sunday, June 8, 2025 for Pentecost Sunday.

On the next day, Monday, October 28th, many gathered for our Halloween Celebration. This program featured scary organ music, the singing of Pumpkin Carols, a reading of Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* with sound effects, a Halloween costume parade, and a responsive reading of Poe's *The Raven*. The readers were Rev. Brenda and Don Achenbach. Several people from our congregation decorated the hospitality room where Halloween snacks and drinks were consumed. There were several witches, two deer, the Pope, a Rabbi, a football player, two angels, a devil, Wednesday Adams, Glinda the Good Witch, and the Cowardly Lion. The costumed congregation lustly sang several Pumpkin Carols, including, *Deck the Patch with Orange and Black* and *The Twelve Days of Halloween*. Fun was had by all. This event was part of our Friends of Music Series.



Our next event is with The Thiel College Choir conducted by Brianne Samson on Sunday, December 1st at 4:00 in a concert of Holiday Choral Music.



# From Our Directors of Parish Ministry

**Note: This is the second in a series of profiles of our confirmation students for 2024. This month we will recognize Nora and Gianna, last month we profiled Hailey and Sydney.**

## Confirmation Profile: Nora Taylor

Olympic runner Julie Isphording said: “Run often. Run long. But never outrun your joy of running.” She must be talking about 2024 confirmand, Nora Taylor. Nora runs often-about 35 miles a week; she runs long-a member of the GHS Cross Country and Track (distance events) teams; and her joy for running is unparalleled!

The sophomore’s appetite for long distances encourages her discipline and requires a determination and dedication that she finds valuable in her other adventures. Her love of running goes beyond winning or losing (though she wins a lot). Distance running requires emotional and physical sacrifice and Nora cherishes the camaraderie of belonging to such an exclusive community. And while she hasn’t run a marathon yet (too young), don’t be surprised if she celebrates her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday by running the Pittsburgh Marathon.

Discipline, determination and dedication also describe another of Nora’s passions-dance. For over a decade the award-winning artist has graced the stage in all dance forms but is most enthusiastic about ballet. Appearing in numerous presentations of the classic Nutcracker, (as a mouse, soldier and doll), she is only time away from dancing the Sugar Plum Fairy, a role she will no doubt command someday.

Nora philosophically compares and contrasts her two interests by discussing the “mind-set” each requires for her level of achievement-running commands a “push through” process while dancing involves “quiet reflection” to sense the music.

Discipline, determination and dedication also explain why science is her favorite subject. She enjoys exploring how the “world is constantly changing” and is inspired by the seemingly “never ending challenges”. She relaxes with episodes of the Gilmore Girls and her favorite Bible story comes from Genesis and the story of Joseph. Talk about discipline, determination and dedication.

Nora’s future includes a Health Care career either as a Physician’s Assistant or an Athletic Trainer. Whichever field she chooses, we know that she will be running toward success and we will be cheering at every milestone!





## Confirmation Profile: Gianna Weaver

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?” If 2024 confirmand, Gianna Weaver were to try and answer Dr. King’s question it would take her well past Advent. The mosaic of causes Gianna champions would make a great quilt design like those she helped her grandmother, and the other Holy Trinity quilters create last summer. She loves “thinking about the people who are helped with the quilts” as motivation.

The Sophomore member of the GHS Student Council uses her leadership platform to generously serve meals to area Seniors and Veterans. She is also heavily involved in the local backpack initiative both for Holy Trinity and as a Weaver Family project. And of course, she is usually the first one through the door when her church needs a helping hand.

A steadily improving runner, Gianna is a member of the GHS Cross Country and Track teams and is boosted by the way running can “take her mind off things.” Even with all her volunteer opportunities, she still manages to get in a regular workout as often as possible.

Another of her passions is writing which supports English as being her favorite subject. She also devours mysteries and especially enjoys doing battle with the author to figure out “who done it” before reaching the last page (she often does). Gianna’s future is racing toward teaching special needs children or at the elementary level because “she loves working with small kids.”

She turns to the Book of Genesis for her favorite Bible story, specifically the story of Joseph. She appreciates how he didn’t let jealousy overpower his faith and admires his capacity for forgiveness.

Pessimists see the glass as half empty; optimists see the glass as half full; givers like Gianna see the glass and immediately look for someone who is thirsty. We are betting that there will be countless people having their thirst quenched because of Gianna Weaver and we couldn’t be prouder!



# May these quilts be a blessing to others!

Our quilting group set another record this year, completing 141 quilts and 27 layette sets for Lutheran World Relief.

A lot of love went into creating these quilts, which will be sent to places where they are needed, whether that is someplace in the U.S., or around the globe.

We give thanks to all those who have helped create these quilts this year. We are especially grateful to Bonnie Massing, who has coordinated this work. The quilts were blessed during Sunday worship early in October, packed up by the Sunday School class and countless volunteers, and shipped off to LWR.

May the work that has been blessed by so many hands be a blessing to others.



## HOLY TRINITY GOES TO THE DOGS

We hosted our annual Blessing of the Animals in early October, commemorating the life of St. Francis of Assisi, remembered as a lover of animals. Francis was a friar who took a vow of poverty and who founded the Franciscan order, but who is also remembered for his love of nature.

Every animal that came to worship this year was a dog!

This is always such a fun event, and we're glad to lift up all of God's creatures.



## CHANGES IN NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE IN 2025

Beginning in 2025, we will scale back on our monthly newsletter, and we will instead send out four seasonal newsletters: one at the beginning of Lent that will cover the Lent and Easter seasons, one at the beginning of summer, one in late August before the fall programming begins, and one before Advent that will cover the Advent and Christmas seasons.

We will mail the seasonal newsletter to all members. We'll also print a monthly calendar each month that will be available to pick up in the narthex (and it will include anniversaries, birthdays, and thank you notes!)

Since we started sending out a newsletter through email nearly every week, we're able to make some changes to the printed newsletter to save time and mailing costs.

If you are not receiving the weekly e-newsletter, please let the church office know that you'd like to receive it, and give us your email address so that you can be included in this regularly communication from Holy Trinity.



## November Birthdays

2	Sean Oros
5	Marc Franklin
8	Linda Broadbent
9	Jim Shaffer
10	Marie Riley
13	Olivia Martin-Call
	Sharon VanKanegan
14	Al Meeker
	Warren Roth
15	Zachary Morgan
19	Hailey McKinney
20	Jonathan Oros
24	Lori McEwen
25	Rae Johnson
28	Tyler Martin-Call
30	David Hollenbaugh

## November Anniversaries

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

Joe and Paula Banco      28 years      November 25, 1995

**Happy Anniversary**



**Thank you to everyone who showed up to help with our fall clean up day. The church is ready for winter! Ed Pitcher**

*Dear Church Family,  
Thank you for the love and support you shower on me. We are thankful to have all of you walking alongside us as we navigate our journey in faith. New Orleans was a once in a lifetime opportunity to worship with our peers from all over the country.*

*With gratitude,  
Nora*

*To my Holy Trinity Family,  
Thank you for the continued scholarship assistance as I work toward my degree at Mercyhurst. Also, I was so excited to receive my care package! Especially love the Halloween cups and cute planner. Who knew you could stuff so many goodies in a shoebox? I also greatly appreciate the gift card.  
Thank you so much for your support.  
Sincerely,  
Aubrey Martin*

### **Holy Trinity Hosts Good Shepherd Supper, Monday October 21st**

We would like to thank all of the members of Holy Trinity who contributed to the success of the supper that was prepared at the Good Shepherd Center on Monday, October 21st.

Many of our hands participated in God's work in the preparation of a satisfying meal for approximately 225 clients. Over 17 Holy Trinity members were present at the Good Shepherd Center to prepare, serve meals in-house and to pack meals and deliver food to individuals within the Greenville area. Additionally, a number of members were responsible for providing cookies which complimented the hot meal.

A special "thank you" is extended to Don and Sue Achenbach who coordinated the logistics for contacting volunteers to pack, drive and deliver the meals and to provide delicious homemade cookies for the meal's dessert. It is also noteworthy to recognize Martha Gruber, head of the food service/kitchen at the Good Shepherd Center, who provided wonderful oversight to the cooks, serving line folks, and meal packers, helping us to stay "on point."

It was gratifying to observe so many members of the Holy Trinity family working together in an effective and efficient manner in service to the greater community.

Mike and MaryBeth Bradley

**Thank you**





# Christmas Poinsettias

I would like to

purchase \_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettia(s) at **\$12.00** each. (pink, white or red-circle one)

contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward decorations (greens, wreaths, swags, etc.)

contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward the ELCA "Domestic Disaster Response"



**Deadline for all orders and/or contributions is  
Thursday, December 5, 2024**

Envelope #: \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

To the Glory of God and in Memory (deceased) of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To the Glory of God and in Honor (living) of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To the Glory of God and in Celebration (event) of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

By: Name of Donor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I / We wish to: \_\_\_\_\_ pick up my / our poinsettia following the liturgy on Christmas Day.

\_\_\_\_\_ have my / our poinsettia delivered to a shut-in.

**If you are interested in any of the following, please call the church office. This is on a first come first served basis.**

Altar flowers \$25.00 for each arrangement or a total of \$50.00 for both

Columbarium flowers \$25.00 for each arrangement or a total of \$50.00 for both.

*(As with all flower arrangements, you will be billed directly by the florist.)*

One large Christmas Tree Price will not be known until the tree is delivered.

One small Christmas Tree Price will not be known until the tree is delivered.

*(When the amount of the tree is known, you will be notified.)*

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**Office Hours:**

Monday - Thursday  
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.