

Good News!

JANUARY
2010

TRINITY UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH
658 Grand Avenue, Waukegan IL 60085-4156

Volume 17
Issue 1

Join us for worship

Don't Fear — Sunday, December 20:

during 9:30 a.m. Worship with Cookie Fest in Larson Hall

This year's Christmas Program is entitled "Don't Fear,"
after the angel Gabriel's catch phrase.

What was it like to read Luke's Gospel when it was brand new?

Join us on Sunday to find out!

Blue Christmas Worship — Sunday, December 20, 4:00 p.m.

A service where loss meets hope

Where isolation dissolves with community

Where "...light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not
overcome it." John 1:5

Christmas Eve — Thursday, December 24:

4:30 p.m. Family Candlelight Worship
with Communion & Special Children's Message

9:30 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Worship
with Communion

Lessons & Carols — Sunday, December 27, 9:30 a.m.

From Pastor Rich

I've often said I'm especially humbled as a preacher during the Christmas season, for many of our favorite carols have such powerful messages – made even more distinct when you know some background of their composers.

A favorite holiday book of mine is Stories behind the best loved Songs of Christmas, written by Ace Collins. I'd like to relay the story shared there behind one of my favorite carols, "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."

In 1849, a Unitarian minister from Wayland, Massachusetts, was writing a Christmas Eve message for his congregation. As Dr. Edmund Sears worked on his sermon, he was a troubled man. Though it would be another decade before a civil war tore the United States apart, the debate over slavery, compounded by the poverty he saw in his own community, had all but broken the man's spirit. He desperately searched for words to inspire his congregation, but he was having a problem lifting even his own spirit above the depressing scenes that surrounded him.

Sears, then thirty-nine years old, had been educated at Union College in Schenectady, New York, and at Harvard Divinity School. Though the Unitarian church was known for not exposing the divinity of Christ, Sears preached the divine nature of Jesus in his weekly sermons. He believed that Jesus was the Son of God and had died on the cross for man's sins. He also believed that every Christian should be involved in reaching the lost, helpless, and poor.

In his community Sears was a force of caring in a world that seemed to concern itself little with the traumas of the hungry or the sick. His burden for the helpless forced him to reach out each day to those Christ called "the least of these." Yet as he worked on writing an uplifting Christmas message, it was the poverty and hopelessness of the people he touched in the slums that sickened his heart and blocked his progress. He must have wondered how he could write about the light of the world when the world seemed so dark.

As Sears struggled, he thumbed through his well-worn Bible. In the second chapter of Luke, the minister was touched by the eighth and ninth verses: "And there were shepherds living in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." After considering the miraculous nature of that long-ago moment, Sears picked up his pen and jotted down a five verse poem he called "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."

Today Sears Poem turned carol is considered joyful and uplifting. Yet when first delivered, its audience probably saw it more as a charge or challenge than the story of a miraculous birth in a faraway land. While the minister wanted his congregation to celebrate Christmas, he also wanted them to reach out to the poor, to address the nation's social ills, and to consider what they could do as individuals to best reflect the spirit of Christ in their daily lives. In other words, he wanted to see people look to heaven and understand how God needed them to serve man in his name. Nowhere was this message more obvious than in the poem's second verse, one that has been discarded and all but forgotten. Here are all the words, with the forgotten verse in italics:

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to men from heavens all gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world hath suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not the love song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife, and hear the angels sing!

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

O ye beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow;
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
Oh rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing.

(From the Pastor, continued)

For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time
foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own the Prince of
Peace, their King,
And the whole world send back the song which now the
angels sing.

Sears in his simple poem managed to point out that God, in the form of a child, was entering a world that sorely needed his help. He wanted the congregation to hear the cries that he did. I think you'll agree it seems equally appropriate in this day and age.

On a side note: during WWI American troops sang this carol throughout France during the holiday season, and twenty five years later U.S. troops took the song back to the front lines of WWII, and entertainers such as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore performed it in U.S.O. shows throughout the Pacific and Europe. For homesick soldiers, no words seemed to voice their own prayers of "peace on Earth" as well as those penned by Edmund Sears a century before.

We'll sing this beloved carol again Christmas Eve. In the midst of our celebration, may we not forget those "...beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low." May we pass along the hope and light we have received in our lives.

In Christ;
Pastor Rich



Council Highlights

Trinity United Church Council met on Tuesday, December 15, 2009. Highlights of the meeting follow:

- Nancy Bjerstedt and Linda McCulloch offered to research origins of special funds.
- Council approved the proposed 2010 budget to be presented to the congregation at the January 31, 2010 annual meeting (subject to completion of worksheet income figures).

The next Trinity United council meeting will be held **Tuesday, January 12th at 7:00 PM** in the Library/Conference Room. Members and guests are welcome to attend.

January Lessons & Themes

The following information is provided for your personal study and reflection:

January 3

CHRISTMAS 2
Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm 8
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:15-21

January 10

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD
Isaiah 43:1-7
Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 17

EPIPHANY 2
Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

January 24

EPIPHANY 3
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

January 31

EPIPHANY 4
Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30

Next Movie Night – What’s “UP”

Join us **Saturday January 16** at 6:30 p.m. for our next movie night, featuring “Up,” the acclaimed animated feature from earlier this year which has great feeling, warmth, and humor. Bring a treat to share. As always, admission is free and all are welcome!

Annual Meeting Scheduled

Trinity’s annual meeting has been scheduled for the last Sunday in January, **January 31st**, immediately following our 9:30 a.m. worship. Please attend this important meeting in the life of your church.



Notes from Josh

When I was trying to dramatize the first two chapters of Luke for this year's Christmas program, it didn't take me long to settle on the title "Don't Fear." It's been frequently observed that, whenever angels appear in the Gospels, they seem to scare people out of their wits. Belatedly realizing their effect on humans, the angels then offer words of consolation like "Don't fear," or "Do not be afraid." Luke the Evangelist must have thought this angelic message was pretty important, since he put it in the mouth of Gabriel three times during those first two chapters.

Soon after Jesus is born in Luke's Gospel, Gabriel quits his pattern of frightening and consoling people. Perhaps those who see God revealed in the infant Jesus learn to encounter God's majesty without fear. Later in the Gospel, Jesus takes over the task of telling folks not to fear. Throughout Luke 12, for instance, Jesus tells people not to be afraid of their death or material needs. It's a powerful message for Advent, and also for January's time after Epiphany, when we celebrate God made manifest in our midst and consider what we should do with that revelation.

The wonderful Lutheran preacher Mary Hinkle Shore offers these thoughts on her "Pilgrim Preaching" blog:

"To those sent out in Jesus' name: the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is greater than your visions of being tongue-tied when you attempt to give an account of the hope that is within you. It is greater too than the experience of being ridiculed when you manage to offer such an account. Do not be afraid."

"Do not be afraid even of death, or of a world turned upside down by resurrection. The risen Lord keeps saying what he

said before, 'Do not be afraid...' God is with us for good.

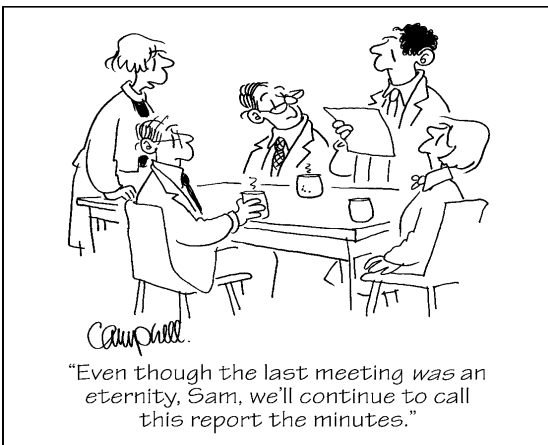
When our Epiphany lessons and hymns show us "God in flesh made manifest," they also provide valuable lessons for living without fear. One way is through observing our baptism. When we are "buried with [Christ] by baptism into death," we daily learn to "walk in newness of life" (Paul's words to the Romans). Another way is through working together as the Body of Christ, as Paul explains so beautifully in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. When we worship together as Christ's body, we focus not just on our own worship needs but on the needs of our fellow church members. We need not fear unfamiliar hymns or liturgies (for example), because in Christ they can lead to new, even more meaningful worship experiences. When we're all in this together, *with Jesus*, what is there to be afraid of?

Of course, we still become afraid. Life seems to continually oscillate between the fear of our immediate circumstances, and the comfort of God's eternal promise. Somewhere the fear is inseparable from the comfort. Nowhere is this more beautifully expressed than in the hymn "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which I'll persist in scheduling on the Sunday nearest MLK Day. Its words offer excellent advice when celebrating Epiphany, working for social justice, and all the rest of the year:

*Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on, till victory is won.*

THE WORSHIP & MUSIC TEAM MEETS **TUESDAY, January 5th** at 7:00 P.M.

January 'Toon



Church Work Day

All are welcome to participate one Saturday each month. Come for as short (or as long) as you are able. Work Day this month is **Saturday, January 2nd** at 9:00 a.m.

The Property Team meets **Tuesday, January 5th at 7:00 p.m.** as a part of the Resource Team.

Circle Schedule

Abigail Circle meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, January 19th at 7:00 PM.

Deborah Circle meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, January 19th at 7:00 PM

Rachel Circle meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, January 20st at 7:30 PM

Rebekah Circle meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, January 13th 1:00 PM

Sisters of Eve meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month, January 5th at 7:00 PM

JANUARY CIRCLE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Visitation — *Rebekah*

Service — *Deborah*

Clean Kitchen — *Sisters of Eve*

Older Adult Group Meets at Haines Museum

The next meeting for Trinity's Older Adult group will be **Thursday, January 21** at 1:00 p.m., when they will meet at the Haines Museum in Bowen Park, 1917 North Sheridan Road in Waukegan. Please join us for a tour and refreshments afterwards.

Simply Giving

Simply Giving is a program that allows your offering to be electronically withdrawn from your checking or savings account on a weekly, semi-monthly or monthly basis. You don't have to worry about missed offerings or catching up when you are away. Simply Giving enrollment forms are available from the church office. Please consider Simply Giving as a way to make your giving more consistent and convenient.

**Trinity United
COOL Food of the Month:
Rice**

Waukegan Women's Club Luncheon & Meeting

Trinity United Women will serve a luncheon for the Waukegan Woman's Club on **Monday, January 4, 2010** at 12 Noon in Larson Hall. Many Women of the E.L.C.A. members contribute to this activity. Though there is no general meeting in January, circle meetings resume this month.



HEALTH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Carole Johnson, RN, BSN

Volunteer Parish Nurse

Phone: 847-623-1197

carolejohnson3@sbcglobal.net

5th Annual Finnish Celebration

Sponsored by St. Mark's Travel Club

Sunday, January 17, 2010

Luncheon 11:00 a.m.

Finnish food & music & great entertainment

Tickets or information call:

Helen Ostman 847-244-6638

Judy Shales-Reinier 847-746-2436

Adults \$15, Children \$7

Table Grace of the Month

Here's a new table grace for you to try this month to offer you a fuller prayer life.

Thanksgiving After Meals

We give You thanks, Almighty God, for these and all the blessings which You have bestowed on us, You Who live and reign forever and ever, through Christ our Lord. Amen
— Catholic —

Great Thoughts from Martin Luther King, Jr.

On excellence:

“If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven played music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.”

On repentance:

“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.”

On character:

“I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

On courage:

“We must build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear.”

On hope:

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”




Directions for Living

An anonymous wise person penned the following directions for living without bringing pain to others or oneself:

“You will never be sorry — for thinking before acting, for hearing before judging, for forgiving your enemies, for being candid and frank, for helping a fallen brother, for being honest in business, for thinking before speaking, for being loyal to God and the church, for standing by your principles, for refusing to participate in gossip, for holding your words when tempted to demean another, for not entertaining impure or hateful thoughts, for sympathizing with the afflicted,

For Trinity Kids



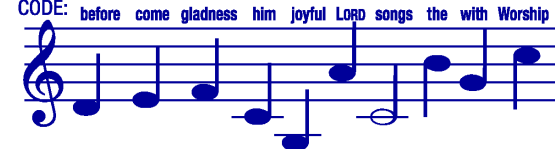
Just for KIDS

Make a joyful noise

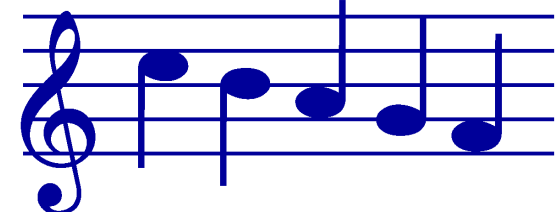
People often gather with noisemakers to celebrate the promise of a new year. Be thankful and joyful for the many blessings in your life.

Using the musical note code, write the words of Psalm 100:2 (NIV) in the correct order below.

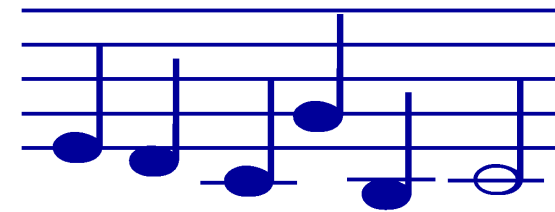
CODE: before come gladness him joyful Lord songs the with Worship



the _____ ;



_____ .



Answer: Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

January 18



Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Sunday School Class Resumes
Sunday, January 5, 2010.

*We mourn
with you*



Sympathy and prayers are extended to the family and friends of **Hazel Moore** who died December 5, 2009. Hazel was a faithful member of Trinity for 98 years. A funeral service was held at Trinity on December 11 presided by Pastor Grudt.

ThankYou!

I want to thank everyone for the phone calls, cards, visits and good wishes during my recent illness. — Carol Fisher

TEN LESSONS FROM THE ARK

Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark.

1. Don't miss the boat
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high ground.
7. For safety sake, travel in pairs.
8. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. When you're stressed, float a while.
10. Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

Submitted by Bonnie Oldfield

January Birthdays

Barthelman, Doris	1/2
Piat, Gladys	1/3
Oldfield, Bonnie	1/4
Rautanen, Charlotte	1/8
Gehrt, Sophia	1/9
Conaway, Kristine	1/11
Porthouse, Thomas	1/11
Salmi, Aldyne	1/11
Blomquist, Virginia	1/13
Sanderlin, Yoko	1/15
Gehrt, Elisa	1/22
Simcox, William	1/22
Smith, Jason	1/23
Calix, Pablo	1/29
Hombres, Geraldine	1/31

A Prayer for the New Year

Eternal God, thank you for bringing us once again to the threshold of a new year. Help us dedicate each day of 2010 to following your will for our lives. Guide us, Lord, in all our decisions and actions, day by day and hour by hour. Help us accomplish all that you desire for us to do, until our mission on earth is finished. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Let Us Know...

If you or a loved one is sick or hospitalized and would like Pastor Rich to visit and/or would like to be added to the prayer list, please call the church office. Because of privacy laws, hospitals do not always contact churches — sometimes they do, sometimes they don't. Please let us know how we can help.

**February
Newsletter Deadline is
January 14, 2010**



TRINITY UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH
 658 Grand Avenue
 Waukegan IL 60085-4156

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Trinity United Lutheran Church
658 Grand Avenue, Waukegan IL 60085-4516
Office 847-623-1197
Email: TrinityULC@aol.com
Website: www.TrinityULC.org
 Fax 847-623-0970
 Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. — 3:00 p.m Monday—Friday

<p>WORSHIP SCHEDULE Sunday 9:30 a.m. (Communion — 1st & 3rd Sundays) Sunday School 10:45 a.m.</p> <p>ADULT BIBLE STUDY 2nd & 4th Sundays — 11:00 a.m. Thursdays — 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>OUR VISION Trinity United Lutheran Church will be a welcoming faith community where all are invited to experience the transforming love of God through Jesus Christ.</p>

MINISTRY STAFF
 Richard A. Grudt, *Pastor*
 224-610-9702
pastorgrudt@yahoo.com
 Joshua Langhoff, *Director of Music Ministries, Organist & Choir Director*
 Lea Langhoff, *Bell Choir Director*
 Judy Salyer, *Administrative Assistant*
 Carole Johnson, RN, BSN, *Volunteer Parish Nurse*
 Allen Layburn, *Custodian*

GOOD NEWS!

Trinity Prayer Chain

Did you know that Trinity has a "Prayer Chain"? When you have a prayer request, you may contact one of the members of the Prayer Chain. That person prays, and then passes the information on to the next member on the list until it makes a complete circle. If you would like to become a member of the Prayer Chain, please contact Betty Nelson (847-662-4560). Current Prayer Chain members are:

Diana & Ken Endress
Pastor & Virginia Blomquist
Betty & Ed Nelson
Gladys Piat
Bonnie & Terry Oldfield
Carol, Terry & Brian Fisher
Donna & John Hansen

Trinity United Council & Officers

Bernard Ben-Carew Sr.	Ben Gehrt
Nancy Bjerstedt	Marilyn Hall
Desiree Cole	Linda McCulloch
Joe Cole	Diana Knoble
Ken Endress	Allen Layburn
Carol Fisher	Judy Salyer

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Vice President: Nancy Bjerstedt
Secretary: Judy Salyer
Treasurer: Karen Varsek
Financial Secretary: Liga Minejevs & Judy Salyer