

Tidings



A Monthly Publication from Trinity United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, FL

The Celebration of Advent

by Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, Senior Pastor

The beginning of the liturgical calendar, which we call Advent, comes from the historic Christian celebration of the incarnation – the coming of Christ to the world. During the season of Advent we hear the prophetic stories of the Old Testament and how the Hebrews longed for the coming of the Messiah. Advent allows us to be active in our remembrance of Israel's longing to be liberated and how in the birth of Jesus Christ that liberation came, not only to Israel, but to the entire world.

Advent, from the Latin word *adventus*, invites us to anticipate the second coming of Jesus Christ. As the prophets of old anticipating the coming of the Messiah, so we anticipate the second coming of Jesus Christ when God's Kingdom will be fulfilled. The themes and scripture readings of Advent prepare us for the second coming while commemorating the coming of Christ in the incarnation. The poet and prophet Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the peace that will come in the fulfilled Kingdom of Jesus Christ. "He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them to his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep" (Isaiah 40: 11).

For each Sunday of Advent we light candles to recall hope, peace, faith, and love. These are four key components of our faith. On Christmas Eve we watch as the Advent Wreath shines its brightest upon lighting the Christ Candle – the candle of the incarnation – that an eternal light has come and shines brightly through the darkness – the light of Christ. The reality of our hope in Christ is that this light shines brightly in our future – it shines to remind us of the incarnation and it shines into the Advent of the second coming of Christ!

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Here verse four of "Once in Royal David's City" written by C. F. Alexander in 1848:

*And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.*

You are invited to enter into the scriptural story during this Advent and Christmas season. Our Pastors will be preaching from the scriptures prescribed by the Revised Common Lectionary. They are listed below:

December 3 – First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64: 1-9, Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19
I Corinthians 1: 3-9, Mark 13: 24-37

December 10 – Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40: 1-11, Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3: 8-15a, Mark 1: 1-8

December 17 – Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11, Psalm 126
I Thessalonians 5: 16-24, John 1: 6-8, 19-28

December 24 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7: 1-11, 16, Luke 1: 46b-55
Romans 16: 25-27, Luke 1: 26-38

December 24 – Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9: 2-7, Psalm 96
Titus 2: 11-14, Luke 2: 1-20

December 25 – Christmas Day (no service)

Isaiah 52: 7-10, Psalm 98
Hebrews 1: 1-4, 5-12, John 1: 1-14

By reading and meditating on these scriptures you will be able to enter into the life of the Hebrews as they long awaited their Messiah, sense the comfort of peace, and also develop an anticipation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. You will find yourself in the New Testament story of longing and find that we Christians have a lot in common with our Hebrew ancestors. We long for the Kingdom of God. This is why we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, Come."

Participate in an Advent Study



SUNDAY

ALDERSGATE
12/3 9:45AM RM 301
EXPERIENCING CHRISTMAS
BY MATT RAWL

AGAPE
11/26 9:45AM RM 305
PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD
BY ADAM HAMILTON

SUN SERVANTS
11/26 11:00AM RM 305
THE JOURNEY BY ADAM HAMILTON

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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TALLAHASSEE, FL 32302
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TUESDAY

LAKE TALQUIN ADVENT WITH WIATT
11/28 - 12/19 6:30-8:30PM
INCARNATION BY ADAM HAMILTON
REGISTER BY EMAIL
WAYNEWIATT1955@GMAIL.COM

WEDNESDAY

PASTOR'S DISCUSSION GROUP
11/29 - 12/20 10:00AM
BASED ON ABIDE WITH US ADVENT DEVOTIONAL
ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE ACTION
12:00NOON DOWNTOWN LUNCH AND LEARN
SESSIONS ON THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN FAITH
AND THE UNHOUSED

12/6 ENCOUNTER - FIRST BAPTIST
12/13 EXPERIENCE - FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
12/20 ACTION - TRINITY UMC

Angel Tree for the Community



by Pat & Lyn Bevis, Local Missions Committee Co-chairs

The Local Missions Committee is pleased to again bring you the Angel Tree as an opportunity to bring Christmas to the less fortunate in our communities. We say communities as our Open Hearts Mission in Monticello is participating with members of their community represented on the trees. Also, we have some members of the Madison County Juvenile Justice program on the trees this year, so there are opportunities to spread the love of our congregation to other areas in addition to Leon County.

Return wrapped gifts on December 10th with tags attached for blessing at the altars of all services.

Monticello Opens their Hearts

by Hines Boyd & Betty Messer,
Open Hearts UMC



The Open Hearts UMC logo is original artwork by Ava Corley, a senior at Florida High.

Six months ago, a group of about 40 long-time United Methodists in Monticello found themselves suddenly isolated from their chosen home church by the disaffiliation movement. They believed that United Methodism has it right and that they had simply been left standing by the road—on a faith path they preferred not to travel.

They were still a group of socially close-knit, committed believers. But they had no place to gather for worship and no administrative structure to support the daily activities of an effective church. The same group of 10-12 people who had organized to vigorously oppose disaffiliation immediately turned their attention to finding answers that would allow them to stay together.

The answers came quickly—from two churches. The Monticello First Presbyterian Church said, “You are welcome to meet and worship in our fellowship hall.” And Trinity UMC said, “We will help you with whatever you need!”

A “Leadership Team” of 10 people put together a plan for a new church they would call OPEN HEARTS UMC. Knowing that there were some things that would be difficult to do by themselves, they met with Rev. Dr. Matthew Williams and Rev. Wayne Curry about possibly becoming a mission of Trinity UMC. The Monticello group laid out a weekly service that was intentionally informal and easy to execute with little help from professional staff, yet that was worshipful and connectional.



On May 21, 2023, about 35 members of the estranged Monticello flock met to form OPEN HEARTS UMC. It was the first of their on-going weekly services at the First Presbyterian Fellowship Hall. OHUMC officially became a mission of Trinity UMC on July 23, 2023, when 44 membership transfer letters were accepted into Trinity UMC at a Monticello service led by Rev. Dr. Matthew Williams accompanied by a large contingent from Trinity. An OHUMC member described that emotional service in an email a couple of days later:

“The Healing/Membership Service on Sunday evening (July 23) was a bit overwhelming with over 70 people in attendance, including clergy, staff, and friends from Trinity UMC. The outpouring of love and excitement by all of the UMC people for what we are and what we are doing was huge. The message (from Rev. Matthew) was spot on: God’s got this! The music team that Trinity brought with them was great. The service closed with the prayers of eight (8) United Methodist Ministers. We weren’t the only ones with a few tears...tears of joy for healing and for a strengthened resolve for Open Hearts UMC in Monticello”

Since midyear 2023, Sunday morning average attendance has grown from the low twenties to near 30 worshipers, including a recent contingent from Madison. The worship services are simple but effective. The messages usually come from visiting ministers (many of them retired ministers at Trinity) or former OHUMC Sunday School teachers. Sometimes, the early contemporary service at Trinity is streamed. YouTube is full of diverse, interesting, and inspirational music to lean on. Lots of planned social interaction before, during, and after the service helps maintain group connectivity.

Most of the OPEN HEARTS members are over fifty. They are longtime active church-goers with a discipleship mindset. Many of them are exceptional group nurturers and very committed to local mission work. They know that their small group can't do everything. So, their programs are designed to support the interests and strengths of this membership base. Already, the Nurture Team and Mission Team are very active.

The OPEN HEARTS mission congregation is comforted by the support and safety net emanating from their mother church, Trinity UMC. The services provided by Trinity include:

- Acceptance of the transfer of membership letters
- A reservoir of mostly retired ministers for worship and communion services
- Accounting and depository services for tithes and offerings
- Technical assistance for online services and communications
- Pastoral counseling services, if needed
- Consultation and guidance on church matters

OPEN HEARTS now has about 22-24 regular giving units, most of whom brought their tithes with them from the disaffiliated church. They have developed a budget to support their programming, to pay rent for a facility, and to reimburse Trinity

for administrative support by providing a weekly percentage of their collections directly to Trinity.

Small groups are not new to the Christian Church. Jesus started with a group of 12. Growth in the early Christian Church came almost exclusively from small gatherings for worship. Small groups are extremely effective in supporting the spiritual, social, and often the physical needs of their members. But today, most church growth is coming from mega-churches many with multiple campuses, in part because the business model works in their favor. They can afford the budget to maintain expensive facilities and large staffs, requirements that keep many small churches struggling to survive.

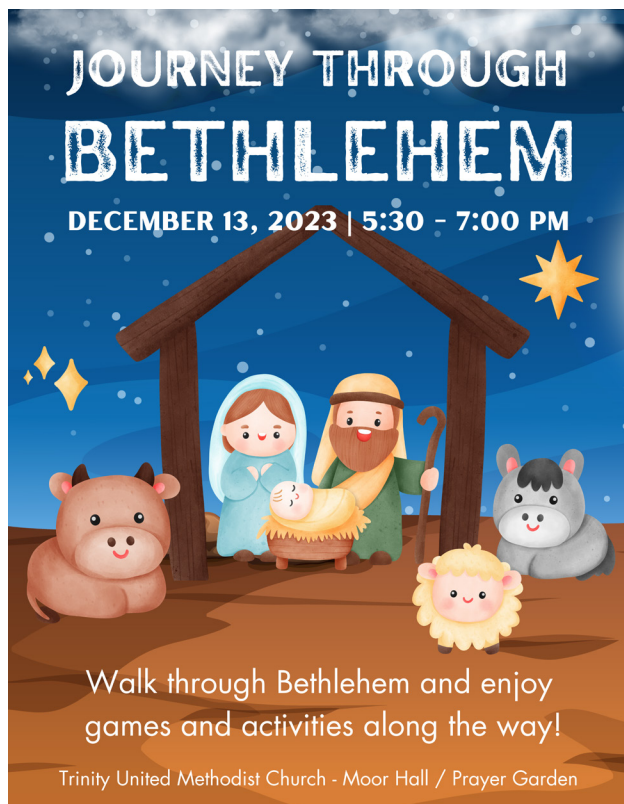
The Florida Conference and other United Methodist conferences are filled with small, often rural churches and, now, disaffiliated groups that are challenged by the business aspects of staying together. Perhaps they should pay attention to the successes of the Trinity-Open Hearts mission that is thriving in Monticello.

In this season of Advent, we are grateful to be able to joyfully live into the future of United Methodism.

Children's Ministry Check-in

by Candace Duclos, Director of Children's Ministries

Trinity's Children's Ministry is in full holiday mode! The month of November was spent learning why we thank God for His many blessings. December is a time we prepare our hearts for the true meaning of Christmas. On Wednesday, December 13th, our NETKids will celebrate the birth of Jesus with a "Journey Through Bethlehem" festival event.



The Children's Ministry is a fabulous place for kids to be themselves, build lasting friendships and grow closer to God. Please join us!



Trinity's youngest shepherds prepare for their role in "Journey Through Bethlehem" on Wednesday, December 13th.



Trinity's Accessibility Build Ministry Volunteers Complete Third Project in Three Months

by Ray Diaz, Accessibility Build Ministry Lead

Imagine that you develop a medical condition which limits your accessibility to the point of using a wheelchair or walker. Aside from the challenge of the medical aspects of your condition, you now face the challenge of getting into and out of your home with minimal assistance and some degree of freedom. For some in our community, hiring a carpenter to build a ramp for a wheelchair or a set of half steps for a walker may not present a financial burden. For others who may not have the means to pay for such construction, the simple freedom of entering and exiting their home is suddenly compromised.

Recognizing this need from members of our community is at the core of Trinity's Accessibility Build Ministry (ABM). This ministry covers the cost of the materials needed to build wheelchair ramps and half steps and then provides the volunteers to do the construction. The average cost of wheelchair ramp materials is \$900, with materials for half steps costing about \$700. Where recipients have the means to cover the cost of materials, our ministry simply provides the volunteers to construct the project. We partner with FL Cares, Inc., a local nonprofit organization with a focus on providing accessibility to all who need it. FL Cares screens applicants, conducts site visits, designs the project, and provides an on-site project leader for each build.

The beginnings of this ministry at Trinity started with my son Daniel Diaz (Refugee Co-sponsorship Team) encouraging me to present the idea to the Local Missions Committee shortly after my wife and I joined Trinity last spring. I had worked with Eric Evans, the FL Cares on-site project leader for over 5 years with another local church and felt God calling me to start this ministry at Trinity. Three months and 3 projects later I am amazed at what we have accomplished with the support of our Local Missions Committee and our dedicated group of volunteers. Recruiting of volunteers has been a joy and has given me the opportunity to meet others in our congregation with a heart for service and helping others. I would be remiss if I did not thank Wayne Curry for his role in helping us to grow our volunteer group which now stands at 21. We encourage every member of Trinity to consider becoming a part of this ministry as a volunteer or through their financial support.

Our first ABM project this September was for a longstanding member of Trinity who needed to improve the access into and out of her home. That project consisted of building a couple of box steps to reduce the step-down height of 2 thresholds in the home as well as a landing and half steps to provide safer entry and exit to and from the interior garage door.



Project number two consisted of building a landing off an existing high porch and adding half steps with a more gradual pitch to ground level. The family in this home had elderly parents living with them who were experiencing decreased mobility and would eventually transition to using walkers. The 10-foot length of the half steps greatly decreased the steepness of the ascent and descent to the porch thus creating a safer means of accessibility for the residents.

Our most recent project consisted of renovating an existing wheelchair ramp, landing and handrails which had deteriorated to the point of creating unsafe conditions for the homeowner who is a Navy Veteran. This was our most labor-intensive project as it required removal of existing deck boards and handrails and replacement with new ones.

In every case, the gratitude expressed by the recipients of these projects was overwhelming, leaving our volunteers with joyful hearts knowing that they have truly been the hands and feet of God in helping others.

We are very excited about growing this ministry in 2024 through the support of our congregation, Local Missions, and Finance Committees. Our goal is to assist more families in our community which need help with accessibility by executing at least one project per month in 2024. If you would like to join our volunteer group or have any questions, please contact Ray Diaz at raydhhs@msn.com. No construction experience is necessary.



*The ABM volunteer team after completing project #3.
Standing from left to right: Ray Diaz, Gary Ware, Rev. Wayne Curry,
Dan Drake, Jesse Colvin, and Traya Hollady
Kneeling: Marti Chumbler and Kelley Olson
In the front: J Fogarty and Russ Mick*

Preschoolers and their Finances

by Stacey Duggar, Preschool Director

As you may know, we are celebrating our 50th year as a preschool and are leaning into the number 50 in everything we do! I asked the children the following question and their answers are absolutely adorable! Here's to wishing all of their purchasing dreams come true!

Q: We are celebrating 50 years; this is a BIG number! If I gave you \$50, what would you do with it?

Helen, 4

I would buy clams.

Cooper, 4

First I would put it in my piggy bank.

My bank is shaped like a train. Then I would take the money and buy a yellow car from Michaels.

Alice, 3

I would buy a baby doll, a big one, from Target.

Elliot, 4

I would buy a Lego set. A huge snow rescue boat with a submarine and other attachments. From Target in Tallahassee, the big one.

Becca, 4

I want a Paw Patrol sky toy and I would give some to my grandpa.

June D., 4

I would go to Home Depot and buy a pumpkin that lights up!

Ethan, 3

I want food; I like "broccolis".

Isaiah, 4

I would get a Yoshi toy from Walmart.

Brody, 4

I would buy an iPhone, I love iPhones. And I would give my mom some because she doesn't have any money.

Benjamin, 4

A house.
(Follow-up question from me: Is that enough money?
Response: YES!)

Zoe, 3

Bread and art stuff from Target, if they have it.



Christmas Eve Services

9:45AM

Contemporary
Christmas Eve Communion
Moor Hall

3:00PM

Vespers Service with
Candlelight
Sanctuary

5:30PM

Family Service
Children's Nativity and Choirs
Sanctuary

8:00PM

Lessons & Carols
Choir and String Quartet
Sanctuary

11:00PM

Traditional Service of Candlelight
and Holy Communion
Sanctuary

Holy Communion served after worship in the Chapel

11:00AM Traditional Worship, Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship | Visit us on the web at www.tumct.org

Save the Date - Meals on Wheels

by Pat & Lyn Bevis, Local
Missions Committee Co-chairs



Trinity will be providing meal packing and delivery for all routes on **Martin Luther King Day, January 15th**. This will require at least 40 volunteers. Please sign up for this opportunity to share a community service project with your family. It is a wonderful way to model service to children as well as spend meaningful time with partners or friends.

Please join the Local Missions Team in this project. Sign up here:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4FA8AE28A7F4C61-46035023-meals>

Memorials

Given to Trinity UMC from October 11 - November 10, 2023

Honorariums:

In honor of **Lynn McLarty** from Judy Levy.

In honor of **Viktor and Yuliia Billa** from Judy Levy.

Memorials:

In memory of **Tommy Guilday** from Kathleen Guilday.

In memory of **George Hanna** from Joe and Gail McGlothlin, Charles and Denise Harris, David Morris, and Diana Ramsdell.

In memory of **Pat Sigler** from Aaron and Ina Fried.

In memory from **Eleanor Smith** from Linda Clark.



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WORSHIP SERVICES

Early Service: 8:30 a.m. in the sanctuary
Contemporary Service: 9:45 a.m. in Moor Hall
Liturgical Service: 11 a.m. in the sanctuary

Contemporary Service and 11 a.m. Liturgical Service are live streamed
Please visit www.tumct.org for viewing links

PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, *Senior Pastor*
Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski, *Associate Pastor*
Rev. Wayne Curry, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

MINISTRY STAFF

Dawn Adams, *Congregational Administrator*
Laurie Atteberry, *Business Administrator*
Ben Armstead, *Sexton*
Viktor Billa, *Organist*
Yuliia Billa, *Director of Music*
Zachary Cramer, *Technical Director*
Candace Duclos, *Director of Children's Ministries*
Sarah Duclos, *Sexton*
Stacey Duggar, *Preschool Director*
Sofia Fernandez, *Director of Contemporary Worship*

Irene Gonzalez, *Director of Youth Ministries*
Melanie Gonzalez, *Office Administrator*
Patti Groh, *Sexton*
Brett Ingram, *Facility Director*
Amy Leach, *Programs Assistant*
Charlotte Mathews, *Sexton*
Alexis McEntire, *Assistant to the Director of Children's Ministries*
Katelin McLeod, *Sexton*
Dr. Nick Quinton, *Director of Discipleship and Adult Ministries*

TIDINGS TEAM

[Melanie Gonzalez](#), *Editor*

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