

Trinity Steeple Notes

December 2020 News and Notes



Holiday Worship



Though we will be unable to gather publicly this year to celebrate the birth of Christ, Trinity is offering beautiful and meaningful worship opportunities for you to embrace with those you love. In the stress and busyness of this unusual Christmas, be sure to make a space in your schedule and in your hearts to worship at the manger of our Lord Jesus. Broadcast and social media information is on the back page of this newsletter and on our website.

Christmas Eve: We worship gently and quietly this year, joining Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and angels to welcome the birth of our Savior. The service begins with an extended prelude of musical gifts from members and friends of Trinity. For our Gospel Celebration, five of Trinity's children will read the story of Christmas at the creche and then offer simple solos of beloved carols at the Christmas tree. Pastor Alan will preach from the pulpit, which will be adorned with poinsettias. Worship concludes with the Candle Lighting Ceremony to the gentle singing of *Silent Night* and a beautiful duet of *Morning Softly Awakens*. Be sure to have your own candle (flame or battery) ready to hold as we join together on this holy night. As time allows, the service will be followed by Christmas music from our archives. Worship will be available on social media beginning at 5:00 PM and will initially be broadcast at 10:00 PM on December 24 .

Personal Christmas Worship: Pastor Alan is preparing a simple liturgy/devotion for Trinity members who want a participatory worship experience at home (indoors or outside) with those who are close to them. This brief liturgy is informal and adaptable and is being offered as a supplement to our Christmas Eve broadcast and streaming opportunities. We will send this resource via email. Printed copies are available upon request; please contact Rachel Gambone in the church office at (610) 374-4861 ext. 23.

Parish News



The First Sunday of Christmas, December 27

Our beautiful Christmas Eve service will be rebroadcast. Watch it again and remember that Jesus Christ is born for you!

The Second Sunday of Christmas, January 3, 2021

Guest musician, Stephen Williams, Karen Eddinger's teacher, offers Christmas Noels from Trinity's Nave. Read more about this special Christmas gift in the article below.

The Baptism of Our Lord, January 10

Set out a bowl of water as you watch this service, where we will celebrate Jesus' baptism and remember our own baptisms into Christ. In baptism, we are given our identity as Christ's people and made heirs of all God's promises – promises that no pandemic nor anything else in all creation, can ever take away!

Christmas Noels Concert

You are invited to hear a virtual concert of Christmas music for organ and voice as our regular broadcast on January 3 by organist Stephen Williams, Canon for Music Ministry at Cathedral Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, PA, and soloist Ian Murphy, a staff Choral Scholar at the Cathedral. Called "Organ Noels," Stephen has been offering music on Christmas Day since his student days in 1985, and is delighted to continue that tradition this year at Trinity Church, Reading. As per the title, there are always a number of those charming French noels on the program along with other organ pieces that remind us of the importance of Christmas. Ian will sing two settings of 'Ave Maria,' MacGimsey's 'Sweet Little Jesus Boy,' Lauridsen's 'O Magnum Mysterium,' and the beloved 'O Holy Night.' Please do join us as we play and sing of the Christ Child, God's gift to all of us!



Christmas Music



"Lessons and Carols" by Opus One

Virtual Concert—Tickets: \$10—Audience may access the concert from Sunday, December 13 through Sunday, December 27

Opus One presents a program featuring hymn tunes arranged by the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. Selections include Sussex Carol, I Saw Three Ships, First Noel, Coventry Carol, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, and many more! Sacred and secular readings will comprise the 'Lesson' portion of the program. Trinity participants include Pr. Alan, reader, and Rob and Lisa Speece, singers. **FOR TICKETS:** Please visit the Opus One [Website](#) OR go directly to the [Ticket Spice](#) page.

"What Sweeter Music" by Berks Sinfonietta and Vox Philia

The concert will be broadcast Sunday, December 20 at 4:00 pm at www.berkssinfonietta.org or www.voxphilia.org. Berks Sinfonietta and Vox Philia join with local choirs to celebrate the Christmas season in "What Sweeter Music," a virtual concert streamed on Facebook and YouTube. Works include David Willcocks' gorgeous setting of "Away in the Manger," Josquin's Renaissance masterpiece, "Ave Maria," and movements of Vivaldi's famous "Gloria."

Christmas Music



Trinity connections include David & Tama McConnell, Deborah & Peter Graf, Tate Dewalt & Rachel Himes-Dewalt, and David Himes & Amy Stewart-Himes. Viewing is free and available to all. Vox Philia asks for donations equaling our normal ticket costs (\$15/Adult and \$5/Child). We will give all revenue to Family Promise of Berks County.

Parish News



Selections from *Messiah* by Reading Choral Society

Available for free online beginning on Dec. 20, 4:00 PM on the Society's [YouTube page](#). Enjoy RCS's free virtual presentation of this seasonal favorite by G.F. Handel. Selections include beloved solos and choruses "And the Glory of the Lord," "O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion," and a joyous rendition of the "Hallelujah" chorus. Trinity connections include Pat McMahan, Matt Hayes, Fred Opalinski, Rachel Gambone and Darryl Jeffries.

Keeping Christmas Amid the Coronavirus

A year ago at this time, it would have been inconceivable that we would not be gathering with our congregations on December 24th to hear the Christmas story. The only thing more inconceivable, however, is gathering together inside for a worship service that by its very nature endangers those in attendance and risks spreading the virus that has already taken the lives of nearly 300,000 US citizens and more than a million of God's children.



*Silent Night,
Holy Night*

Trinity is one of many congregations who have committed to keeping Christmas differently this year, celebrating the advent of God's love enfleshed in the Christ child via digital means, through small socially-distanced gatherings across the season, and by encouraging and equipping our members to celebrate Christ's nativity in their homes both joyfully and safely. More importantly, we believe the decision not to gather inside our sanctuaries this Christmas Eve out of regard for the health and safety of our neighbors is in keeping with spirit of the One whose birth we celebrate, the One who declared that he "came not to be served, but to serve" (Mt. 20:28) and instructed his disciples to "love one another, just as I have loved you" (Jn. 13:34). If we can do that, then the strange silence of this night will be holy indeed.

Parish News



Live Worship Update

We continue to follow the metrics established by Vestry in November, requiring two weeks of low to medium risk levels for Berks County before we return to limited public gatherings. Current trends indicate that we will be unable to resume live public worship this year, and we are not taking registrations at this time, but that does not prevent us from worshipping, loving, learning, and serving as the people of God at Trinity. Our staff is working very hard to nurture and support our congregational faith and life, and members of Trinity have been so faithful in their loving outreach to one another and to the world God loves. We are blessed! Thanks be to God!

Midweek Prayers and Bible Reflections

Midweek prayers, including the names of those who are sick or struggling, are provided by email and mail each week, along with wonderful Bible reflections prepared by Pastor Phyllis Wolkenhauer. If you are not receiving this spiritual resource, double check your spam folder or contact Rachel Gambone in the church office, who can help resolve any issues.



Learning Ministries Day 2021 is Going On-Line!

Plan to join us **Saturday January 23, 2021** when our keynote speaker will be Dr. Barbara Rossing, author of "The Rapture Exposed." Dr. Rossing will speak on "Journeys Through Revelation," and a number of workshops will be offered as well. Click here <http://nepasynod.org/documents/LMD-2021-workshops.pdf> for a list of the scheduled workshops. [Register Now!](#) **Deadline is January 15.**

Parish News

Congregation Meeting Report (not official minutes)

Trinity's December 13, 2020 Congregation Meeting was held via Zoom due to the ongoing pandemic. The meeting was called to order by President Jen Mazur. The Vestry-proposed budget for 2021 was presented by Treasurer Franki Aitken and was approved. Budgeted income of \$779,705 includes: a 4.7% reduction in member offering; a reduction in the General Endowment draw from 6% to 5.2%; and 50% (\$47,900) of the PPP forgivable loan (the remaining 50% will be included in the 2022 budget). Budgeted expenses have been reduced by 7% to \$732,059, while maintaining benevolence at current levels. To be fiscally responsible, the PPP loan forgiveness income was not absorbed into the budget but has been budgeted as a surplus.



New Steeple Notes Publication Schedule

Epiphany Season Steeple Notes will be published the week of January 10 and will cover the Epiphany Season through Transfiguration Sunday (and Valentine's Day), February 14.

Lent Steeple Notes will be published the week of February 7 and will cover the season of Lent through March 21.

Holy Week & Easter Steeple Notes will be published the week of March 14 and will cover the remainder of March and the month of April.

Time sensitive information between publication dates will continue to be provided by email and US Mail.

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Warren Tobias Bequest

Trinity has received an advance payment of \$100,000 to the General Endowment from the Estate of Warren Tobias. Warren and Martha were faithful and loving members of the congregation and this gift will enable their faithfulness to continue to support the church's ministry for years to come. We thank God for their generosity and for their life among us. To remember Trinity in your own legacy planning, talk to your attorney or ask Pastor Alan to put you in touch with an ELCA Gift Planner, who can help you think about lasting gifts.



Word in Season Devotional Booklet Available

We have copies of the little devotional book, Word in Season. We are happy to mail you a copy. Call or email Parish Secretary Rachel Gambone at rgambone@trinityreading.org or (610) 374-4861 ext. 23.

To the Beautiful People of Trinity,

I am so blessed to be part of the Trinity family. Thank you for the cards, phone calls, and most of all, the prayers. I would not be writing this were it not for all the prayers. I came through a trying time on the wings of prayer. Please know how much I appreciate all of you. Blessings and Peace,

Janet Clemmer



Broadcast Schedule

December 2020—January 2021

All of our programs listed below can be watched on Comcast Channel 190 (in the Reading Hospital, Channel 80) or online at any time at www.trinityreading.org or on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/trinitylutheranchurch.



For those who would like to worship with other Trinity friends, we will host a **Facebook live Christmas Eve worship at 5:00 p.m.** (The traditional time of our family worship service.) You don't need to have a Facebook account to access the live stream of our recorded service.

Thursday, Dec. 24, 10:00 PM - Christmas Eve Prelude and Worship

Sunday, Dec. 27, 6:00 PM - Christmas Eve Prelude and Worship

Wednesday, Dec. 30, 4:00 PM - Christmas Eve Prelude and Worship

January 3, 7:00 PM - Christmas Noels featuring organist Stephen Williams and vocal soloist Ian Murphy

Sundays

6:00 PM - First Friday—
Non-Verbal Clues in Interpersonal
Communication

6:30 PM - MFT Jacqueline Wilson,
piano & organ

***January 3, 7:00 PM - Christmas Noels**

Other Sundays, 7:00 PM: Trinity Worship
Service

Wednesdays

4:00 PM: Trinity Worship

5:00 PM: Music from Trinity—

Jacqueline Wilson, piano & organ

5:30 PM: First Friday—Non-Verbal Clues
in Interpersonal Communication

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