



## Holy Trinity United Methodist Church

# The Sail

**Our Vision:** *"To love God, uplift people, inspire hope, and grow disciples of Jesus Christ in our community and everywhere we go!"*

**December, 2023**



### ***"Welcome Joy!"***

Joy is often a companion to many other emotions. We can feel joy in addition to feeling many other things at once: grief, anticipation, excitement, disappointment, exhaustion. Perhaps many of us live with the myth that joy is not something we deserve – or that it is wholly out of reach. But our joy is rooted in the truth that we belong to God. Can you connect yourself to that deep truth? You *deserve* to feel joy – fully. The world needs your joy, even if you are weary. Our joy is better when it is shared.

This year's Advent theme – *How Does A Weary World Rejoice?* – is based on a line in the familiar Christmas song "O Holy Night." This Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a "thrill of hope" in our hurting world. We will welcome joy – even and especially if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort. In this weary world, may we find many reasons to rejoice.

Advent begins on Sunday, December 3 and continues through Sunday morning, December 24. Here's a brief overview of the series:

### ***How Does A Weary World Rejoice?***

**December 3 – We Acknowledge Our Weariness** – As Advent begins, we start by acknowledging the weariness, grief, rage, and hopelessness we carry – and we also affirm that we are made for joy. This week we will hear the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, how they battled infertility and lived many years steadfast in their faith. The angel comes to Zechariah with a promise of good news, but he can't fully receive it, and he is cast into silence for the duration of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Sometimes weariness can harden us and prevent us from living fully. This will be a day to ask "how long?" and plead for restoration.

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## Pastor Chad continued...

**December 10** – *We Find Joy in Connection* – In community, our joy expands. When we can't rejoice, we can carry each other's joy. That is what Elizabeth and Mary do for each other. Through the words of the prophet Isaiah, we hear God speak tender words of comfort; this is the comfort we can give to and receive from each other during this season.

**December 17** – *We Allow Ourselves to Be Amazed* – After Elizabeth gives birth, her neighbors and family celebrate with her. When it comes time to name the child, Zechariah affirms the name given by an angel and by Elizabeth. In that moment of affirming the promise, Zechariah's speech is restored. Everyone is filled with awe. How often do you allow yourself to be amazed? Wonder is all around us – do we recognize it?

**Thursday, December 21 (7:00pm)** – *A Worship Service for the Weary* - For those who have experienced loss, the joy of the holiday season can often feel elusive and out of reach. As a result, churches around the world have adopted the practice of having a "Blue Christmas" or a "Longest Night" service during the Advent season. These services are designed to provide space for prayer, reflection, and remembrance amidst the twinkle lights and holiday hustle and bustle. This night, bring your grief and your weariness. Bring your fatigue, and allow yourself a quiet space to reflect and draw near to God. May you find peace in your journey.

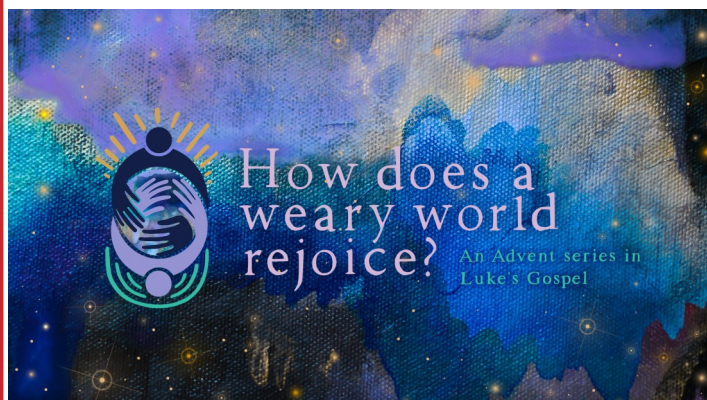
**December 24 (9:30am)** – *We Sing Stories of Hope* – On this Fourth Sunday in Advent, our Chancel Choir will sing "stories of hope" through the cantata, *Let Heaven and Nature Sing Gloria! A Worship Celebration for Christmas*. Come and hear the story of Christ's birth through song and narration, and lend your voices to familiar Christmas music.

**December 24 (5pm and 10pm)** – At these Christmas Eve services, we will hear the familiar and yet always new story of Christ's birth. The 5pm service will include a "Pop-Up Christmas Pageant," familiar Christmas carols, and the traditional candlelight closing. The 10pm service will be a more traditional service with a Christmas message, carols, Communion, and candles.

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I hope that you will join us for worship this Advent and Christmas season. We worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30am – in person and online. Christmas Eve services will be held at 5pm and 10pm. Remember, ALL are welcome, so bring family and friends!

Blessings,  
Pastor Chad



## Inclusion Starts With I

By Carol Ottoson

As we move into the end of the year and the holiday season, family traditions, especially around food, come to mind. Most of us come from an immigrant background, and recipes from our cultural heritage may still make their way to our tables and to our celebrations. **Our Inclusion focus for December is One Table/Cultural Awareness.** Our tradition of communion in church actually comes from the One Table tradition during Jesus' time. The bread and the wine that Jesus shared with his disciples during what we now call the Last Supper were actually an integral part of the Passover tradition. **We would like to invite all of you to attend and hopefully participate in our One Table Coffee Hour right after church on Sunday, December 17th.** We invite you to bring a favorite treat that your family may share during the holiday season. It may be from your cultural background, or it may be a family cultural tradition that you have started or perhaps plan to start this year. Please be ready to share recipes and stories. We are all parts of many communities, including the community of our own heritage. We hope you can join us. Remember, Inclusion Starts with I.

### Long Ago, Far Away, Everywhere, and Forever

Sometimes, when I have tried to figure out what “my deal” is (as in, why do I struggle with some things, or what am I good at?) I have turned to a personality test or skills inventory. Depending on where you look you can find tests that are backed with data, or you can find out which character from the TV show *Friends* you are most like, or what sort of cheese you would be. I took a spiritual gifts inventory at a youth retreat that told me that in the body of Christ I am like a stomach, taking in information and experience, digesting it, and sharing the needed things. I liked that one, but most other results I have gotten didn't seem very helpful. 50+ years of living has shown me, more than any quiz, what are some of my more consistent traits. I am curious and kind, and I tend toward experiencing shame and avoiding conflict.

The best and the worst things about me have all been impacted by my decision to center Jesus in my life. Through Jesus' teaching and example, my curiosity has found a purpose and direction, and my kindness has been emboldened. Jesus rebukes my shame, telling me it has no hold on me, and embraces me whole-heartedly, flaws and all. I still don't love conflict, but I know that in Christ I do not need to fear and can speak up. Deciding to follow Jesus transformed my life; I am the same person, but with a new center, purpose and direction that have helped me through all that life has brought me. For thousands of years, people have been finding this to be the case. With the tremendous strife, anxiety and a pervasive sense of doom in the world, why does it seem the culture is drifting away from Jesus, rather than toward traditional faith practices such as church attendance, and Bible study?

Part of the answer is that spiritual disciplines are hard, and people are tired. It is hard to get up on time for church, or to push yourself to read about Jesus when there is a game or a reel to play right at hand. Another part of it is, I think, that we have lost a sense of wonder. If God is everywhere and in everything, does it matter where we are on Sunday morning or Wednesday night? If Jesus loves everyone then doesn't that make his love kind of mundane? How can we prioritize something that

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feels both long ago and far away, and also everywhere and forever, when there are so many life and death concerns happening right now in our world, demanding our attention and resources?

This is gravely important, so I am borrowing words from Dallas Willard in *The Divine Conspiracy*:

*“Yet, in the gloom a light glimmers and glows. We have received an invitation. We are invited to make a pilgrimage—into the heart and life of God...The major problem with the invitation now is precisely overfamiliarity. Familiarity breeds contempt. People think they have heard the invitation. They think they have accepted it—or rejected it. But they have not. The difficulty today is to hear it at all...God's desire for us is that we should live in him. He sends among us the Way to himself [Jesus]. That shows what, in his heart of hearts, God is really like—indeed, what reality is really like. In its deepest nature and meaning our universe is a community of boundless and totally competent love...Jesus' enduring relevance is based upon his historically proven ability to speak, to heal and empower the individual human condition. He matters because of what he brought and what he still brings to ordinary human beings, living their ordinary lives and coping daily with their surroundings. He promises wholeness for their lives. In sharing our weakness he gives us strength and imparts through his companionship a life that has the quality of eternity. He comes where we are, and he brings us the life we hunger for.”*

Relying on little lifts from TikTok, a bottle of wine, or a shopping binge to recover from daily weariness or the horrors on the news is no way to grow in our one life, or find direction to become fully who we are created to be. Recovering our identity as a beloved child of God is not an empty aspiration; it is a sacred quest that brings power, and with it joy, peace, hope and love. But WE have to take action; WE have to respond to the invitation. Then we need to keep going. Do we need to renew practices we have let slide? Do we need suggestions on how to start? Reach out to us—your community—for ideas, suggestions, and opportunities. Help us to help you. Let's start this Advent season approaching the stable together with a new sense of wonder and gratitude, ready to shed our weariness and rejoice. Let's begin the New Year preparing to grow.

Lynnette Dobberpuhl  
Children, Youth & Family Coordinator

## December Mission of the Month



Loaves & Fishes mission is to provide healthy meals to Minnesotans in areas where need is greatest. They are guided by their vision that all people – regardless of socioeconomic, cultural, religious, or ethnic background – deserve to meet their basic needs for food, dignity, and respect.

Loaves & Fishes free meal program was founded in 1982 with one dining site each in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Today, they are providing thousands of meals daily, are present across Minnesota, and are the largest open to the public free meal program in the state. While staying true to their core mission of serving home-cooked meals daily at dining site locations, they have strategically cultivated new initiatives, supported by their expanding food rescue operation and an ever-increasing number of pounds harvested at their own local farm and gardens.

Loaves & Fishes have steadily increased the number of free, healthy meals served to Minnesotans in need. In 2022, they served over 4.6 million meals and are on pace to serve over another 4 million in 2023.



### Christmas Offering 2023



Each year we provide an opportunity for our members and friends to give an extra "gift" to the church through the special Christmas offering. **This year the Christmas offering will be directed to Holy Trinity Ministries** and will be equally divided between the BOM, Memorial Garden, UWF and CYF Ministries. Wherever the donations are used, you can trust that they will be used to help our members, friends, and community members love God, inspire hope, uplift people, and grow disciples of Jesus Christ. Watch for the Christmas letter and offering envelope and be generous with the church in this season of giving. Thank you!

Thank you for donating  
**\$1,196 to R.O.C.K  
(Reaching Our  
Community's Kids)** during  
the month of October as  
well as lots of Mac &  
Cheese and Granola Bars.



Thank you for helping R.O.C.K. provide Power Packs over the weekends to all families who feel they could benefit from these food items.

## Christmas Giving Opportunities

Holy Trinity has adopted five families in our area for CAP Agency's Hope for the Holidays. Please sign up and return the UNWRAPPED gifts by 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 10th. <https://bit.ly/Hope4Holidays23>



Some reminders...

- keep gifts appropriate for the age of the family member
- each child has two gift suggestions, stay within a \$50 range per individual--not per gift (and you can purchase more than the items listed.)
- if you can't find the suggested items please use your best judgment for a substitute or gift card
- gift cards should go in an envelope with the FAMILY NUMBER & NAME of the recipient
- this is a confidential program; both sponsors and recipients remain anonymous
- return UNWRAPPED gifts tagged with name and family number to HTUMC by 11 a.m. Dec. 10.

If all the gift options have been taken, please consider donating wrapping paper, tape, ribbon and bows (no sign up necessary) and/or bringing an undesignated toy for CAP Agency, or a small item for the FISH stocking stuffer collection (fast food and coffee shop gift cards for teens especially desired, also makeup and nail kits, small toys for younger kids.) Stockings are also needed.

There will be labeled boxes outside the sanctuary for each Hope for the Holidays family, for CAP undesignated gifts, and for FISH stocking stuffers.

**ALL ITEMS NEEDED BY 11AM, DECEMBER 10TH.**

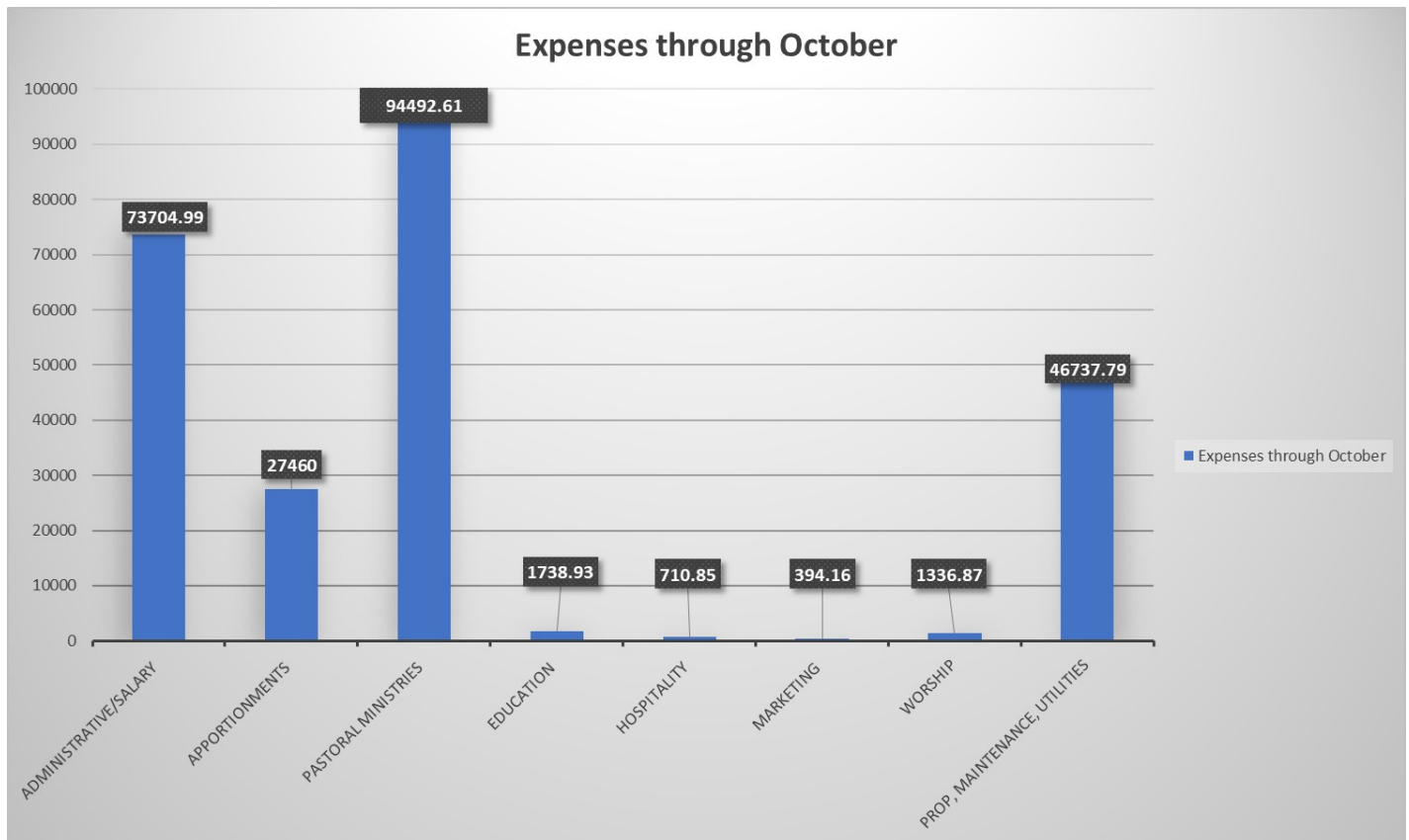


## Core Team and Finance Updates...

The Core Team met on Monday, November 20. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Pledges for 2024 have started out well, we are grateful for new pledges and for increased giving from returning pledgers who have turned in their cards so far. While expenses continue to exceed income, we are monitoring to prevent dipping into the minimal reserves of two months expenses (set in 2022).
- Leadership received an offer from Northland Development to purchase some of the Holy Trinity property, including part of the parsonage land, to build an apartment building. This offer is in the range of market value for land in this area. With input from the Trustees, the Core Team voted to negotiate a non-binding letter of intent with Northland outlining property lines and other expectations. This will allow us to seek authorization from the Minnesota Annual Conference (which holds the title to our property) to further explore this opportunity. A final decision will not be made until the congregation has had an opportunity to discuss the proposal and vote on it at a Church Conference. Proceeds from the sale of property can only be used for capital expenses, although interest can be used for general expenses.
- It is an exciting time to be involved at Holy Trinity, with many outreach events that allow us to connect with the community and grow as God works in us and in the world. We are seeking people interested in greeting at the doors on Sunday mornings, and being involved with our Trustee team (care of property and facilities), Finance, Missions, Staff-Parish Relations (employment and staffing), Inclusion Team (welcoming all), and Core Team. If you are interested in participating or would like to nominate someone you feel would be a good fit, please contact Pastor Chad.

The next Core Team meeting will be at 6:30pm, Monday, December 18, 2023.



This month, I wanted to show a breakdown of our expenses. It may be hard to read, but it was the best I could do with the space provided. I am working on the 2024 budget. I think it is safe to say that we have turned the corner. We continue to look at ways to cut our expenses. But so many items are out of our control. Pledges are stronger than they were at this point one year ago. I thank you for all you give to the church, and that goes far above and beyond the pledges we receive. -Patrick Rasmussen



United  
Women  
in Faith

## United Women in Faith CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Wednesday, December 13 at 12:00 noon

-Charlie's on Prior-



3950 Green Heights Trail SW, Prior Lake

Lunch at your own expense.

**Reservations required – by December 6**

Please contact Sharon Dougherty by email at  
sdsrdougherty@gmail.com  
or call/text at 612-280-2103.

*If you have any Christmas stockings you no longer use (used or new), please consider bringing on Dec. 13 so we can give to FISH Network Executive Director Bethany Tjornhom for a project she does to help those in need during the holidays.*



Holy Trinity's United Women in Faith learned all about the **FISH Partner Network** from Bethany Tjornhom, Executive Director (pictured left), at their November Gathering. Families and Individuals Sharing Hope or FISH, is a network of the faith community, government, non-profit/service groups, and businesses working together to meet the needs of those in our communities of Scott County. Big Local Impact!

## Bible Study



## Lakefront Bible Study

December 5 & 19

from 1:00-2:30pm

Lakefront Plaza Commons Room

The group is currently studying the book *Beatitudes From the Back Side* by J. Ellsworth Kalas. This book is available on Amazon.

This is a non-denominational group. All are welcome!

Call Barb Bollinger with questions at 612-670-1847.



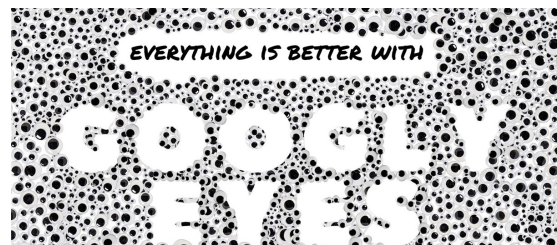
The Feed My Starving Children Event on November 4 was a huge success! Thank you to all who participated.



Please submit your 2024 pledge card to the church office if you haven't already done so. We have received 49 pledges to date.

## Saturday, December 2 at 10:00AM

Come and help decorate the church sanctuary for Christmas!



## The Event - Saturday, January 20, 1-7pm Messiah Church, Plymouth

Youth grades 6-12 and leaders are invited to join us for The Event - Saturday January 20, 1-7 p.m. (come having had lunch.) The day will include a couple great talks by Catie Levenick that encourage us to always be "on the lookout" for all the opportunities God puts before us to love and serve others. You'll have some time for church group discussion, a real-life game of Clue offered by Tony Ducklow of Youth Ministry Land, a service project, and music! Pizza dinner provided to wrap up our time together.

Cost for The Event is \$30/youth participant (adults are free). Contact Lynnette to register by January 14.



# December 2023

Holy Trinity UMC

(952) 447-2990

office@htumc.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>  10:00am Decorate Church for Advent
<b>3</b> 9:30am Worship/ Live-Stream  10:30am I-Team Meeting	<b>4</b> 9:30am AA at the parsonage  7pm Al-Anon at the parsonage	<b>5</b>   1-2:30pm Lakefront Bible Study 7pm CoDA at the parsonage	<b>6</b> 8:30am Moment of Prayer  6:15-7pm 7th/8th Confirmation Class at the parsonage 7pm Choir Rehearsal	<b>7</b>  6pm Veterans AA at the parsonage	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 9:30am Worship/ Live-Stream	<b>11</b> 9:30am AA at the parsonage  7pm Al-Anon at the parsonage	<b>12</b>  7pm CoDA at the parsonage	<b>13</b> 8:30am Moment of Prayer  12:00pm UWF Christmas Lunch 6:15-7pm 7th/8th Confirmation Class at the parsonage 7pm Choir Rehearsal	<b>14</b>  6pm Veterans AA at the parsonage	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:30am Worship/ Live-Stream 10:30am One Table Coffee Hour	<b>18</b> 9:30am AA at the parsonage 6:30pm Core Team Meeting  7pm Al-Anon at the parsonage	<b>19</b> 1-3:15pm Quilters   1-2:30pm Lakefront Bible Study 7pm CoDA at the parsonage	<b>20</b> 8:30am Moment of Prayer  6:15-7pm 7th/8th Confirmation Class at the parsonage 7pm Choir Rehearsal	<b>21</b> 6pm Veterans AA at the parsonage   7:00pm Worship	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:30am Worship/ Live-Stream 5:00pm Worship 10:00pm Worship	<b>25</b> 9:30am AA at the parsonage   7pm Al-Anon at the parsonage	<b>26</b>  7pm CoDA at the parsonage	<b>27</b> 8:30am Moment of Prayer	<b>28</b>  6pm Veterans AA at the parsonage	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:30am Worship/ Live-Stream						

## *Holy Trinity United Methodist Church*



16150 Arcadia Avenue SE  
Prior Lake, Minnesota, 55372

**Worship:** 9:30am (in-person & online)

**Pastor:** Rev. Chad Gilbertson  
(952) 356-4616 [pastor@htumc.org](mailto:pastor@htumc.org)

**Family Ministries:** Lynnette Dobberpuhl  
(651) 492-8188 [kidsandfamilies@htumc.org](mailto:kidsandfamilies@htumc.org)

**Church Admin:** Tina Chant  
(952) 447-2990 [office@htumc.org](mailto:office@htumc.org)

**Church website:** [www.htumc.org](http://www.htumc.org)



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