

Trinity Times, January/February 2021

### Pastor's Letter

Friends in Christ, In a time of tumult I offer to you the words. This is not a promise for our particular nation, but for God's people. As the Israelites came back from decades of exile, being taken away as prisoners, they returned to their home which had been reduced to rubble. But they had a promise we read in this week's lectionary scripture passage Isaiah 60:

1 Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

2 For darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the Lord will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.

3 Nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn...

19 The sun shall no longer be  
your light by day,

nor for brightness shall the moon  
give light to you by night;

but the Lord will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory.

20 Your sun shall no more go down,  
or your moon withdraw itself;

for the Lord will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of mourning shall be ended.

21 Your people shall all be righteous;  
they shall possess the land forever.

They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands,  
so that I might be glorified.

22 The least of them shall become a clan,  
and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the Lord;  
in its time I will accomplish it quickly.

Jesus was also born into a time of tumult when hope seemed dim and God appeared to be silent. Yet the One who was still in diapers held more power and glory than any ruler of that time.

Jesus is still on the throne and His light shines in our darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

May the Holy Spirit and scripture guide your prayers in these tumultuous days,

Pastor Lindsey Carnes

"A Prayer During National Crisis," from the Book of Common Worship, Daily Prayer edition.

God of ages,

in your sight nations rise and fall,  
and pass through times of peril.

Now when our land is troubled,  
be near to judge and save.

May leaders be led by Your wisdom;  
may they search Your will and see it clearly.

If we have turned from Your way,  
help us to reverse our ways and repent.

Give us Your light and Your truth to guide us;  
through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of the world, and our Savior.

Amen.

### STAR WORDS--Ponder These Words in Your Hearts

There is a new tradition for Epiphany that is becoming a favorite way to start the New Year. It's called Star Words or Star Gifts. The premise is that the magi followed the star to find baby Jesus, bringing their gifts. We are also seeking Jesus, trusting that God can and does use many signs (or stars to guide us closer to the Lord. Every person receives a star word printed on colored paper with a word on it, and is asked to reflect on that word for the coming year.

You are encouraged to hang it up where you are sure to see it every day, perhaps on your bathroom mirror or next to your computer screen. Often when I am visiting in someone's home I will notice a star gift adorning the refrigerator or posted by the back door where it will be seen as people depart and enter their home. Many people keep their star words from year to year; gradually accumulating a virtual constellation of wise words and encouragement displayed as a reminder of God's presence in our lives.

People allow these words to speak to them. They often start by looking the word up in the dictionary so that they are clear on its meaning; we hear the word *grace* all the time, but what exactly does it mean? A word that seemed unclear at the beginning may gain new meaning as the year goes on.

Often the words seem very timely, as if they were indeed designated for the recipient. It is this sense of serendipity and wondering how God might be working through this simple process that keeps people engaged. A woman whose husband recently passed away receives the word *perseverance*; a student off to college turns over her star to read *responsibility*; our music director receives the word *harmony*, much to the delight of the choir.

Like any other gift, star words can either be a gift received with joy or discarded and forgotten. Be intentional about your response to the star word. Will the paper stars be stuffed into a pocket or jammed into the bottom of a purse, never to be considered again? Or will that word be considered an opportunity—a chance to reflect on how God speaks to God's people? What might we learn from one word? What new ideas might evolve, what treasured wisdom might resurface? Epiphany is the celebration of God's presence breaking through to shine as a light in the darkness. Rejoice in the reminder of our generous, giving God—one star at a time.

*Prayerfully receive your star word with a prayer...God, we acknowledge that we are not always ready to receive your best gifts for us. You have given us an Epiphany star word in order that our searching will bring us to you. It is often our habit to turn aside, stumble over, or even reject experiences and encounters that we later understand to have been precious gifts.*

*Help us to be open to the gift that you offer us now through our star words. We acknowledge that we do not fully understand what this word might mean for our faith, but we receive it from you with gratitude and pray that your Spirit will enable us to live into our word with intention and faithfulness. Amen.*

**Thank you** for your words of encouragement and the generous Christmas gift. We are planning to put it towards sending our kids to summer camp again this year. Wishing you all a happier and healthier New Year. Blessings, Pastor Lindsey

## COVID Update

TUPC Session voted to continue to worship fully online through Lent, until the numbers of COVID cases in Genesee County and surrounding communities continues to drop and vaccines become readily available. The church office, staff, and pastor can be reached Mon-Fri 9am-1pm.

## Worship with Trinity Online

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/488551049?pwd=WFpiWis5MW5aeGtZlJFRlhqdUpxZz09>

Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 488 551 049

Passcode: 873251

**Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/TrinityUnitedPC.USA/>

**YouTube** [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjF2cBNiB8tQnV-pjsLEgGQ?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjF2cBNiB8tQnV-pjsLEgGQ?view_as=subscriber)

**Winter Sermon Series**—Encounters with Jesus change us

### (Jan 17) Encounters with Jesus: Redeeming Our Past

(Matt 9:9-13, John 21:15-19)

Have you ever felt unqualified because of your past mistakes? Jesus speaks to Peter and Matthew in a way that reveals God's desire not only to forgive us of our past, but also to redeem it in a powerful way.

### (Jan 24) Encounters with Jesus: Core Identity

(Matt 15:21-28, John 3:1-17)

Jesus challenges the identities of insiders like Nicodemus and outsiders like the Canaanite woman. Where does our value come from? Who do we belong to? Let's be willing to step out in faith and embrace all that God has for us.

### (Jan 31) Encounters with Jesus: Spiritual Healing

(John 9:1-41, Matt 9:1-8)

When Jesus healed the man born blind and the paralyzed man it was not just physical but spiritual healing.

### (Feb 7) Encounters with Jesus: Unbelief (Mark 9:24, Matt 8)

Jesus meets us in our unbelief and can change our story. What we believe about who God is and who we are matters as we grow in our discipleship journeying from unbelief to belief.

### (Feb 14) Encounters with Jesus: One Touch Lasts a Lifetime

(Mark 5:25-34, Matt 9:18-26)

Often "all we can do" isn't enough and one woman's healing came after 12 years with just one touch. God can help lift the load when we turn to Jesus.

### (Feb 21) Encounters with Jesus: Limited Vision

(Matt 9:27-31, Luke 18 & 19)

Jesus can move us from a place of limited vision to being able to see clearly.

### (Feb 28) Encounters to Jesus: Bringing Others to Jesus

(Matt 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12 or Luke 5:17-26)

The paralyzed man's friends brought him to Jesus where he experienced healing. We can't keep this to ourselves.

### (Mar 7) Encounters with Jesus: Closer Than You Think

(Matt 15:32-39, Luke 24:13-25)

Discover how we can have our own close encounter with Jesus, who is perhaps closer than we realize.

**Per capita**—Please mail in your 2021 per capita payment. The amount this year is \$28.76 per member. By contributing your portion of per capita, you free up dollars in our regular budget for the work of our church in the community.

## January Birthdays

8	Malvina Middleton (turned 100!)
9	Marie Barry
13	Glenn Bronson, III
14	Earnestine Moore
16	Joe Dixon
20	Dakota Knowlton
22	Tim Bausack
24	Matt Burton
24	Donna Jones
28	Joyce Topham

## February Birthdays

1	Pat Rice
5	Fred Tumer
8	Helen Sanders
8	Amiliyah McSwain
8	Sesamiliah McSwain
12	Eddie Barney
12	Oluseyi Adigun

## February Anniversaries

10	Barb & Don Wesley
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## Calendar Dates

January 17	Annual Congregational Meeting (on Zoom)
February 17	Ash Wednesday (online)
February 21, 28	Lent (online)
March 7, 14, 21	Lent (online)
March 28	Palm Sunday
April 4	Easter Sunday

**PNC Update:** The Mission Study was approved by the Presbytery COM Transition Team in December. COM Elder Linda Keenan trained the PNC in late December. The PNC began to meet weekly in January and is researching and writing the Ministry Information Form (MIF), which is similar to a church resume and gives pastors searching for a call information about the church.

Please pray for our Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) as they begin their prayerful work: Sharon Auger, Eddie Barney, Allison Bradley, Waldo Bronson, Kathy Henderson, Chris Lyttle, and Barbara Shackelford

## Matthew 25 Update: A Season of Blessing Others First

**Angel Tree Update**—This year we were able to sponsor 20 children from the North End Soup Kitchen. Thank you for adopting each child and being a blessing.

**Mitten Tree and Elementary School Adoption**—The Deacons purchased sweat shirts and sweat pants for the schools before Christmas. The Deacons also dropped off special donations of winter coats, Bomba socks, and 50 cloth masks to each of the schools. We currently have about 100 pairs and mittens and hats ready to donate to Dye, Randalls and Elm Elementary Schools when they are ready to reopen.

**Catholic Charities Homeless Warming Center**—You can still bring chap stick and individually wrapped snacks for the homeless center during the month of January to the church office. Thank you Sarah Circle for leading this effort and encouraging us to care for "the least of these."