

# TRINITY UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

## ***“THE TRINITY OBSERVER” DECEMBER, 2013***

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### **Pay Attention to the Move of God**

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you...thank you and thank you! The past five months have been packed with activity, participation, fear, joy and at times, pure exhaustion. We have been so very fortunate to witness the move of God in our midst. God has called us to come together, pray together, worship together, serve together and fellowship together and the Bible teaches us that where two or more are gathered, God is in the midst!

Prior to the start of the 6-week Stewardship and Capital Campaign Kick-off, Sharron Alexander and I applied for a mission grant from the Synod of the Covenant. Just this past week, I received a check from them to begin work on our new mission project called “The Healing Space” which will begin in the fall of 2014. I will share more details in the months to come. News of this grant came at a time when God knew we needed some encouragement and hope. It’s amazing what we observe when we pay attention. This grant will not only bring hope to its participants, but it has also reminded us that God answers prayers.

Although we have been praying for our capital expenses, God has blessed us with a mission project and the means to carry it out. We prayed for what we wanted, but God is giving us what we need. For the past few years during our June Month of Prayer, we have been seeking God for a mission that might impact the community. A church without a mission focus is one that is struggling to be the church for which Jesus gave his life. Another huge miracle is the formation of our Mission Team chaired by Alysha Fleming. Last month they announced a new mission project initiated by Felicia Shackelford: **Help for the Homeless (Personal Needs Items)**. We

recognize that there are many churches that feed the homeless on a daily basis and places that provide shelter. However, there is a great need for personal items and this project will entail putting together individual bags of personal items to be distributed at shelters, soup kitchens, etc. Please contact Alysha or Felicia for more information.

God is shifting our focus and we are becoming more outwardly focused. God will take care of us as we take care of others. As many of you know, we have over \$214,000 pledged with a capital campaign goal of \$300,000. God is good and faithful. This figure symbolizes the most dollars pledged since we became Trinity United. Again, if we pay attention to what God is doing, we will see that nothing is too hard for God. Let us continue to believe God and trust in his word. Thank you, Lord. We just want to thank you, Lord! You've been so good. We just want to thank you, Lord.

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas  
Pastor Lawson

### **Updates from the Session**

- **Advent Team**: The Worship Team has commissioned an Advent Team to look at new and different ways to incorporate this wonderful season of preparation and anticipation of our Lord Jesus. Beginning the first Sunday of Advent, December 1, 2013 the team will utilize the wonderful and creative ideas developed by this sub-team. Come and see what the Lord is doing and how more people are getting involved in the work of the church and the worship of God.
- **Victory Team**: Twelve members of the church have been asked to serve on the TUPC Victory Team. The goal of the team is to maintain the momentum of the 3 Year Capital Campaign and to continue with our fundraising efforts to pay down the mortgage. We have had two brainstorming sessions and will reconvene in January 2014 to move forward with a few of those ideas. The team is currently in the process of prayer and discernment. Please join us as we meditate on Acts chapters 1 and 2.
- **All Around the World Tasting Experience** – The session approved a new event sponsored by our Youth Group. On New Year's Eve from noon to 4pm, they will host an "*All Around The World Tasting Experience.*"

Please think about what food, historic information and decorations from a country of your heritage or a country that you might be interested in learning about and let the youth team know if you are interested in participating. (Allison Bradley, Sharon Burton, Kathy Henderson and Anthony Lawson)

- **A New Communion Table**: The session has approved the building of a new wooden communion table. The cost to build the table is roughly \$300 including materials. Contributions are welcomed. Currently, Craig Hardy has posted our current marble table on Craig's List and it appears that many people are interested. *Who knew?*
- **Celebration of the Lord's Supper**: We will celebrate the Lord's Supper on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, of Advent on December 8, 2013 and again at the Christmas Eve Candlelight service at 6pm.

### **WORSHIP IN DECEMBER (Advent & Christmas Theme:**

#### **Jesus, the Hope of Life!**

December 1, 2013	Guest Preacher	<i>How do you get ready for God?</i>
December 8, 2013	Matthew 3:1-12	<i>Live Your Authentic Self</i>
December 15, 2013	James 5:7-10	<i>Practice Patience</i>
December 22, 2013	Matthew 1:18-25	<i>Make Up Your Mind</i>
<b>December 24, 2014</b>	<b>Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 6:00pm</b>	
December 29, 2013	Matthew 2:13-23	<i>Jesus is our Hope</i>

### **CALENDAR ITEMS**

#### **DECEMBER**

- First Sunday of Advent – December 1, 2013 (*Guest Preacher*)
- Presbytery of Lake Huron Meeting at Flushing Pres. – Tuesday, December 3, 2013
- Second Sunday of Advent – December 8, 2013 (*Celebration of the Lord's Supper*)
- Annual Reports Due – December 13, 2013
- Third Sunday of Advent – December 15, 2013
- Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 22, 2013
- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – Tuesday, December 24, 2013 at 6pm with communion
- Christmas Holiday – December 25, 2013 (Office Closed)
- Communion Server Training After Worship – December 29, 2013
- All Around the World Tasting Experience – December 31, 2014 from 12 noon to 4pm.

## **JANUARY**

- Office Closed for New Years Day – January 1, 2014
- Office Closed for MLK Holiday – January 20, 2014
- Ordination & Installation of New Officers – January 19, 2014
- Annual Congregational Meeting – January 26, 2014

### **Year End Giving**

As we prepare for the end of the year with holiday giving, remember there are also beneficial ways to give to the church as well. One way might be a **Gift of Appreciated Stock**. You can receive a tax deduction for the stock basis and for the appreciation. When you give stock to a charitable organization instead of selling it, the IRS does not tax the gain. Instead you get a tax deduction. It might be worthwhile to have a conversation with your broker.

A second thought might be to remember Trinity United in your **Estate Planning**. We are grateful for those who make provisions ahead of time in their wills and encourage you to see a professional to make these decisions. Having a will is simply a good idea and can put your mind at ease. To ensure that your wishes are known, make sure they get written down.

**What is Per Capita** Per capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Said another way, it is the glue that holds Presbyterians together. Because every Presbyterian shares in the benefit of the PCUSA's system of government, the expenses associated with coordinating and performing the functions of that system should be shared by everyone as well. Our local presbytery; The Presbytery of Lake Huron collects per capita from its churches, retains its portion to undergird the work of its mission and ministry and sends on the portions for the Synod and General Assembly. Per capita payments for 2013 have not been paid in full. If you have not paid yours, please do. The payment amount for 2013 is \$23.81. Per Capita for 2014 will be \$24.03

Thank you.

This is not included in your yearly giving. It is the responsibility of each member to do so. If you will look in your giving envelope this next year, you will see there is a special separate envelope that says "**Per Capita**". **This is the envelope to use.**

## **THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS**

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

- The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
- Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
- The four calling birds were the four gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke & John.
- The five golden rings recalled the Torah, or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit—Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- The eight maids a-milking were the eight Beatitudes.
- The nine Ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit—Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.
- The ten Lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments
- The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

So there is your history for today. This knowledge was shared with me and I found it interesting and enlightening and now I know how that strange song became a Christmas Carol—so please pass it on if you wish. I print this every two or three years or so, because new people have always come into our lives.

A Merry (Twelve Days of) Christmas Everyone.....



Notes from **Deacons:**

- A big prayer of thanksgiving goes out to you from the Deacons for all of your support during the year. You have supported us with your prayers and your donations. You have graciously donated your time, your money, clothing for our schools, dishes to pass for funerals, Christmas gifts for children and more. You are a true blessing to us.

- If you took an angel from the Angel Tree, the donations need to be returned to church no later than December 8<sup>th</sup>.
- We have a tree set up in the Narthex for the purpose of having donations of hats, mittens and gloves placed on it. We will be donating these to Randels', Elms Road and Dye Elementary schools after the Christmas break is over.
- Please check your food boxes and labels for "Labels for Education" and "Box Tops for Education." Please save and place these in the Ziploc bag on the bulletin board in the multi-purpose room.
- Dates: December Soup Kitchen is December 20 and our December meeting is December 15.

## **Presbyterian Women**

The Presbyterian Women of Trinity currently have two circles, Naomi and Wednesdays of the month and the Parent-Grandparent Circle meets on the "Hats off to Ladies" inviting all women of Trinity to attend. The purpose was to let the ladies know what we do and invite them so they can get involved. We look forward to new members joining our current circles and/or beginning new circles.

December 18<sup>th</sup>: Holiday Lunch at Davison Country Club at noon/Horizon Bible Study (Lesson 11)

January 15<sup>th</sup>: Making Blankets for Chemo and Dialysis patients

February: Presentation of Women's Health by Bobbie Hardy and/or Millie Arbor

March: Book Discussion of I Am Malala, the account of a girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban. The author is Malala Yonsafzai.

April: Master Gardening by Gwen Barney

We made blankets for Chemo and Dialysis patients. We donated blankets to DaVita Dialysis in Davison. As a result, we received \$1,000 for our ministry.

**Naomi Circle**

The Naomi Circle discusses the Horizon Study. The 2013-2014 Horizon Bible Study is *An Abiding Hope: The Presence of God in Exodus and Deuteronomy*. Sharon Auger does an excellent job of presenting each lesson. Ernestine Jackson serves as a substitute and also does an excellent job.



**Property Management  
AMENDMENTS FOR CHURCH USE  
OF THE FACILITY AGREEMENT**

1. As written.
  2. As written.
  3. A member or Friend of the church may use the multipurpose room with no charge for a party of thirty (30) people or less for a four (4) hour period, no more than three (3) times per calendar year.
    - a. The Member or Friend must be part of the planning party and must be present for the entire time and for decorating (if at another time)
    - b. There will be a charge of \$50 for the custodian and \$50 for 2 property team members who will be present during the party.
    - c. A fee of \$20 per hour will be charged if over the 4 hour limit.
    - d. This no fee policy, does **NOT** extend to organizational meetings, or business ventures, unless approved by the Session.
- All the rest of the contract remains and we suggest that #9 be underlined.



**Report on Stewardship Dinners  
Betty Shaw, Facilitator for Stewardship Dinners  
Session, Pastor, and Finance Committee  
November 21, 2013**

Stewardship involves time, talent, and worldly goods. Trinity is on its way through the Stewardship Season with enthusiasm, along with the realism needed to support the church with all three components.

The Finance Committee thanks the congregation for the support of the four Stewardship Soup Dinners held over the last two weeks. There were two to four tables of Trinity people for each evening of good fellowship, good food, good learning, and good sharing of ideas for the future of Trinity.

### **Dinner Fellowship:**

On four evenings, members and guests were seated at tables with 1-2 group leaders for a delicious Soup Dinner contributed by the Stewardship Committee and other volunteers. Members donating food were Sharron Alexander, Jerry and Sharon Auger, Eddie and Gwen Barney, Terry and Margaret Bausack, Greg and Jill Bolduc, Waldo and Beverly Bronson, Sharon Burton, Herman Graham, Shirley Hale, Craig and Roberta Hardy, Jane Harger, Janet Hartzell, Richard and Delphine Holland, Joyce Kettler, Mary Krist, Chris and Cindy Lyttle, Jackie McClellan, Phyllis Scales, Bob and Betty Shaw; Levi and Sue Smith, Helen and Tamara Sanders, Ron and Alice Shirley. (I hope I did not miss anyone!) Everyone stayed to help with clean-up and left saying that the Stewardship Soup Suppers were a success.

### **Group Leaders**

Small group leaders included Charles Atwater, Sharron Alexander, Bob Shaw, Waldo and Beverly Bronson, Jerry and Sharon Auger, Chris and Cindy Lyttle,

### **Stewardship Component:**

The presentation was intended to set the tone for the evening and provide financial information to the church population. Many topics were discussed in small groups, primarily concentrated on the positive aspects of being a part of Trinity, on changes that might enhance the church experience, and other concerns. Desiree Lawson pastor, the congregation and leaders, all met first for prayer, then they moved to the Multi-purpose room. Each table reported back to the total group a summary of the discussions.

### **Recommendation:**

The list below can be referred to existing and/or newly appointed committees to consider merits of the items and possible outcomes.

### **Positive Aspects of Trinity reported:**

Pastor Desiree Lawson-sermons, great message about God

1. People of the Church-multiculturalism, friendliness, and fellowship

2. Church Music-diversity, quality, variety, choir
3. Commitment of the members
4. Handicapped accessibility
5. Coffee Hour Fellowship
6. Bible Study
7. Prayer Chain

### **Changes that might be a part of the future reported:**

#### **Worship Hour Concerns**

1. Length of Church Service – could it, should it be reduced to one hour?
2. Announcements moved to another place that does not interrupt worship, e.g. coffee hour, end of service, or just an announcement that everyone needs to read the bulletin
3. More concern about hearing issues in the sanctuary, especially joys and concerns
4. Possible slips of paper with joys and concerns to be offered like money offering

#### **Physical Plant Concerns**

1. Real time captions would help the hearing impaired
2. Microphone could be taken to each speaker since joys and concerns are not generally heard
3. Sound System needed in the Coffee Room
4. Storage space needs should be addressed
5. Signage could have more appropriate messages.
6. Space Rental needs to be advertised.
7. A real kitchen (not just a warming kitchen) would enhance church activities
8. Consideration for the addition of more parking on the north side of the Church, especially places for handicapped.

#### **Program Concerns**

1. Presbyterian Women's Organization expansion
2. More Family Activities
3. Music Camp for Children
4. Family evenings with international focus, e.g. Safari Night
5. Open House or Festival
6. More involvement by congregation, more people more involved
7. Youth Program with a Youth Leader
8. More mission outreach into the community

**Other ideas:**

1. Memorial Committee to prepare and maintain list of project for which Memorial Funds might be used
2. Website updated
3. Partnership with community schools on projects, e.g. tutoring, choirs
4. Outreach into Shiawassee County –There are no PCUSA churches between us and Lansing
5. Bell Choir performance by an outside groups
6. Visitation to other churches
7. Offers to provide transportation to church services, e.g. Woodhaven
8. Diversity in Coffee Hour –*I do not recall the context for this one, but maybe in food choices?*



**ACOLYTES FOR DECEMBER  
Sydney Graham & Allison Bradley**

**Liturgist for December**

<b>December 1, 2013</b>	<b>Phyllis Scales</b>
<b>December 8, and 15, 2013</b>	<b>Funmi Adigun</b>
<b>December 22, 2013</b>	<b>Alice Shirley</b>
<b>December 24, 2013</b>	<b>Various People</b>
<b>December 29, 20</b>	<b>Alice Shirley</b>

**DECEMBER 24, 2013 @6:00PM  
Trinity will be holding a Communion  
And Candle Light Service On Christmas Eve.  
Please come and join us for the most wonderful  
night of the year!**



## BIRTHDAYS

Jean Lyttle.....7<sup>th</sup>

Mary Krist.....15<sup>th</sup>

Jerry Kamrath.....18<sup>th</sup>

Griffin Henderson.....18<sup>th</sup> (Child)

Caroline Scott.....18<sup>th</sup>

Marcus Lomax.....19<sup>th</sup>

Herb McClellan.....25<sup>th</sup>

Robbie Hardy.....26<sup>th</sup>

## ANNIVERSARY FOR DECEMBER

Sandy & Joyce Topham.....9<sup>th</sup>