

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

DECEMBER 2011

Getting Ready

[John the baptizer] went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Luke 3:3-6

Perhaps you've seen some of the bumper stickers, God is Coming, Look Busy or this one that I particularly like, God is Coming, and boy is she mad. They're funny and they make you think. They also have a lot of truth to them. (Though here I'm not going to get into an exposition of why and how God is beyond gender.)

The meaning of Christmas is the incarnation, that God becomes one of us and in the best translation of the Greek, "pitches his tent" among us. Immanuel; God with us. Friends, this is good news! But it is also quite radical and world changing. As much as we cutesy up Christmas-time in making it about our holiday celebrations of gifts and food and decorations, it's really about the actions of God in coming to us. So let me ask you this, if you knew that God was going to show up at your place, stop over for a visit with you, what would you do to get ready?

People during the times before Jesus were really quite similar to us in that they too had hopes and fears. Although their daily activities and overall concept of the world may have been a bit different from ours, they still yearned for lives and a world of peace and wholeness. Like us, they lifted up their faces towards heaven and asked how long. "How long will things be as they are? God, we need you to come and make things right."

Did they really think God heard their prayers? Do you?

While the rest of the world was interested in the places of power and prestige—in the year of Emperor Augustus, Quirinius, and Herod—God answered their prayers. But not in the ways that anyone expected. Not in the grand and glorious but in a feeding trough in a barn in a village in the outskirts of nowhere. God entered the world in the baby Jesus. And a course had been set; God began to make things right. Not only in the world, but in each of our hearts as well.

The Christmas song has it right, "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."

As that baby grew God was at work stirring up the people of God to prepare themselves, to get ready. Once again, it wasn't in what people expected. It wasn't in a beautiful cathedral or a somber temple; it wasn't from a gifted preacher or even someone you'd invite over for coffee. It was in John the baptizer. John went throughout the wilderness and told people as they got ready for God, they themselves were to change their ways, to turn around, to be changed. "You want God to change the world? Then get ready to be changed yourselves! And start doing it today. Repent. Turnaround. Change. And be made different, new."

Two Thousand years have come and gone and in many ways things are still the same. The world still needs to be made right and people are still crying out to God. But the good news is that God is with us. Oh, it is a mystery how that is, yet we still proclaim it: Christ has come. Christ is here. Christ will come again.

In this season of Advent as we wait for the Christ child to come again and be reborn in each of our hearts and for God to make all things right, for God to change the world and

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**Our vision is
to help
people find
New Life in
Jesus Christ!**

to change us, we also get busy ourselves. But our busyness isn't about holiday preparations, shopping, etc. No. Our preparations are of the kind that John the baptizer called us to. We are preparing the way of the Lord into our lives. Therefore, we wait. We wait for God to change the world. But we also wait, and in the process, we begin to change ourselves—to repent. And still we pray, Come Lord Jesus!

May this season of Advent and Christmas be a time of remarkable change and glorious rebirth.

In Christ's Grace and Peace, Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas/Fröhliche Weihnachten,

Pastor Tom

Pastor's Advent Open House

Pastor is once again inviting the congregation to come and celebrate the season at the parsonage on Saturday, December 17th from 7 pm to 10 pm. Enjoy festive holiday food—including Pastor's famous Christmas tamales—and fellowship with your church family.

Sunday School Christmas Lunch Celebration

The Sunday School is hosting a Christmas celebration for the whole church on Sunday, Dec. 18, during the coffee hour after the service. The children will present a Christmas program. We'll have lunch for everyone and celebrate the birth of Jesus as a church family. All are heartily invited.

Linda Schiefer

Candlelight Service

Our annual Candlelight Worship Service will be held on Sunday December 18 at 7:00 p.m. Members from the Colonial Church of Bayside will again be participating. Come and join us and bring a friend!

Advent Bible Study

-While We Wait: Living the Questions of Advent

This Wednesday and continuing through the Wednesdays of Advent we will gather together, share, and study and work with some of the questions that many of us may have journeying through Advent. Focusing on texts and persons often associated with Advent such as Mary, Zechariah and Elisabeth, and the Magi, but also on ones not often thought of like Tamar and Ruth, we will have the opportunity to process some of our own thoughts and questions. What ever your experience with bible study, all are welcomed and encouraged to come!

Belonging—New Members Class

Following the Fellowship Hour after the worship service during the Sundays of Advent, any person interested in learning more about what it means to Belong at Trinity—belonging as a member of the church, belonging to Christ, belonging to God—are encouraged to attend the four Sunday sessions. Each one is approximately one hour. And even if you have “belonged” at Trinity for some time, you are still welcome to come share and learn more.

Christmas Flowers

Please use the insert provided to place your order for Christmas flowers this year. The order forms need to be received by the church office by Monday Dec. 12th. We appreciate you helping us to adorn our church during this special time of the year. As always, you are welcome to take your flowers after our Christmas Celebration on December 25.

Weihnachten

Markt und Strassen stehn verlassen,
still erleuchtet jedes Haus,
sinnend geh' ich durch die Gassen,
alles sieht so festlich aus.
An den Fenstern haben Frauen
buntes Spielzeug fromm geschmueckt,
tausend Kindlein stehn und schauen,
sind so wundervoll beglueckt.
Und ich wand're aus den Mauern
bis hinaus ins freie Feld,
hehres Glaenzen, heil'ges Schauern!
Wie so weit und still die Welt!
Sterne hoch die Kreise schlingen,
aus des Schnees Einsamkeit
steigt's wie wunderbares Singen.
O du gnadenreiche Zeit!

Joseph von Eichendorff
1788-1857

This poem describes the wonder of this Holy Season: the quiet streets, the festively decorated windows, the children's anticipation, the peace and stillness of the countryside under a canopy of twinkling stars. All nature joins in the rejoicing at this blessed time.

2012 Offering Envelopes

Next year's offering envelopes have arrived and are in the narthex. Anyone who does not already have envelopes and would like them for 2012 should please contact the church office. We appreciate it when you use your offering envelopes since it helps us provide you with an accurate record of your contributions for tax purposes.

Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service

On November 20, the local Clergy Association sponsored an Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Service at Trinity Lutheran Church in Middle Village. Trinity Reformed Church was one of the participants, and we appreciated the support of our members who attended this service.

Please be mindful of the following members and friends of our congregation in your prayers:

Sister Kaethe; Margarethe Roth; Janet Roth; Martha Bauer; Frederick Dalm; Groezinger Family; Philipp & Hildegard Febel; Laura Kurtz; Helga's grandson Nicholas; Trudy Mische; Alona; Debra Meraglia; Jon Reeverts; Eleanor Rizzo; Donna Dowd; Steven Chin; Doris Church; Chloe Holland-Anderson; Andrew Stoneman; United Presbyterian Church, Ridgewood and Pastor Henry Fury; Juergen Schroder; Joyce Silver; Fritz Reif; Maritza Garia Castro; Xiomara and Jason; Reformed Church in America, Queens Classis, and Regional Synod of New York; Dave & Char Alexander, RCA missionaries in Taiwan; Doug Leonard, RCA missionary in Oman; Peter Mark Trautmann, The Navigators at NYU; Leonard and Linda Schiefer, Gideons International; Pastor Tom and the Consistory.

Stewardship and Finance Report

<u>Expenditures for Month of:</u>	<u>October 2011</u>
Personnel Expenses	\$5780
Utilities	\$ 806
Ministry/Supplies	\$ 296
Maintenance	\$ 95
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	\$ 130
Other Disbursements	\$1863

Total Expenditures \$8,970

<u>Receipts for Month of:</u>	<u>October 2011</u>
Weekly Envelopes	\$5728
Weekly Plate	\$ 135
Benevolences	\$ 369
Memorial Fund	\$2310
Special Offerings	\$ 239
Other Receipts	\$2288

Total Receipts \$11,069

Cake and Rummage Sale

With much love and lots of help, the Ladies Aid/Frauenverein conducted another very successful cake and rummage sale. The effort raised \$ 1,513.40 for our church. Many thanks to those who helped in this endeavor.



Worship Schedule for December

December 4, 11, 18, 25 – Regular Worship Schedule
10:00 a.m.

December 18 – Candlelight Service at 7:00 p.m.

- Communion will be celebrated on December 4
- Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Prayer Meeting Sundays 9am Junior Church Sundays 10am <i>Their Daily Bread Collection 1st Sunday of each month</i>				1 UPC Soup Kitchen 4:00 pm N/A Mtg. 7pm	2 UPC Soup Kitchen 4:00 pm	3 N/A Mtg. 7pm
4 Worship Service with Communion 10:00 am Second Sunday of Advent <i>Belonging: New Members Class</i>	5 N/A Mtg. 7pm	6 Al-Anon 7:30pm	7 Advent Bible Study 7:30 pm	8 N/A Mtg. 7pm	9	10 Couples & Friends 4:00pm N/A Mtg. 7pm
11 Worship Service 10:00 am Third Sunday of Advent <i>Belonging: New Members Class</i>	12 Consistory Meeting 7:30 pm N/A Mtg. 7pm	13 Al-Anon 7:30pm	14 Frauen- Verein/ Ladies Aid Christmas Party 1:00 pm Advent Bible Study 7:30 pm	15 Tamales making 7:00 pm N/A Mtg. 7pm	16	17 Pastor's Advent Open House 7pm-10pm N/A Mtg. 7pm
18 Worship Service 10:00 am followed by Christmas Pageant & Luncheon Fourth Sunday of Advent <i>Belonging: New Members Class</i> Candlelight Service 7:00 pm	19 N/A Mtg. 7pm	20 Al-Anon 7:30pm	21 Advent Bible Study 7:30 pm	22 N/A Mtg. 7pm	23	24 N/A Mtg. 7pm
25 Worship Service 10:00 am Merry Christmas	26 N/A Mtg. 7pm	27 Al-Anon 7:30pm	28	29 N/A Mtg. 7pm	30	31