

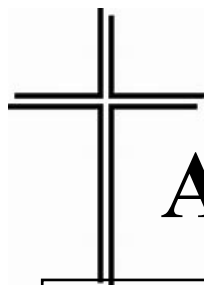
TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1342 PROSPECT ROAD
ASHTABULA OH 44004
www.trinityashtabula.org

DECEMBER 2023
NEWSLETTER



A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” Isaiah 40:3





Ashtabula Times

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I sit here at my dining room table looking out my windows to the foot of snow sitting on the ground, I begin to ponder the work needed to shovel my driveway. With the depth of snow and the possible ice underneath, our cars are going to have great difficulty getting to the road. I will have to shovel the concrete to make the driveway clear for the tires to grip and I will have to brush and scrape the cars to be able to get in them and to be able to see out of the windshield where we are going. We are not going to be able to just hop in and drive to work or school, I have work to do before that happens. I must prepare to drive.

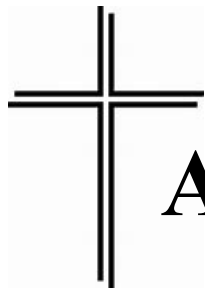
Just as I must prepare the driveway and cars to drive after a blizzard, so too did Israel need to prepare for God's return to them, *in the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD*. I must shovel the snow to make a path for our cars, Israel was called by a voice in the wilderness to make a path for the LORD to return. Being in Babylon meant that if God was to return to them, the road was through the desert or wilderness. But the people were called to prepare the road for God's coming, to shovel the snow so that God has a path. Just as it is with Israel, so too is it with the church. Advent is about shoveling the snow, or making a path, or preparing the road for God's coming to us as Jesus of Nazareth.

In our text from Isaiah, the two main images of roadwork the people are called to do are leveling and smoothing: *every valley shall be lifted up*, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. What are the hills and valleys in our lives that we might need to correct or to level to prepare for Jesus' coming? Have we been praying, studying, worshiping, and serving? Do we have holes in our discipleship or following Jesus' commands? What is rough that needs to be made smooth? We pray but is it always? We study but is it more than we knew a year ago? We worship but is it every Lord's Day, in community and is it every day, in our families? We serve but is it to the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, or imprisoned? The preparations we need to make for the coming of Christ is to start doing what we have not been doing and to do better what we currently are doing: to level/fill and to sand.

Here we come to our problem surrounding Christmas, we think of cookies, presents, decorations and cards as our preparations for Christmas instead of the work of repentance. We have forgotten that Christmas is about *the glory of the LORD shall be revealed*, and all people shall see it together. Christmas is about the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, the Coming of God to his people. This is what the Angels announced to shepherds in the desert with the Glory of God in the skies. God is here among us. This is what we truly need to prepare for and to take this as seriously if not more seriously than hams, trees, and football games. The revelation of God in glory and everyone will see it.

Are you ready? What preparations for the coming of Christ do we need to make? What needs leveled, what needs smoothed, what needs to be prioritized to be ready for the coming of Christ? More prayer, more study, more worship, more service? Maybe even to start doing these things that we have never done, or stopped doing? Now is the time to prepare the road for Christ's coming, but it isn't your driveway that needs shoveled, it is your hearts that need shoveled. Now is the time to prepare, will you be ready? Amen.

In Christ,
Rev. Mark



Ashtabula Times



2023 per capita is \$36.50

REPORT FROM TRINITY'S SESSION

On Wednesday November 15th Session met. The normal business was carried out, including:

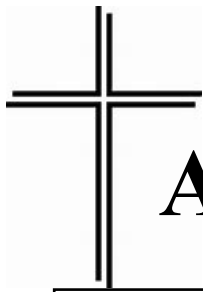
- Approval of minutes of October session meeting and October Congregational Meeting.
- Approval of the financial reports.
- Approval of minister's report which included:
 - ◊ Bible Studies are Wednesday at 10 at East Side and Thursday at 7 at Trinity.
 - ◊ Rev. Mark listed his calls and visits.
 - ◊ For his continued education, Rev. Mong has enlisted personal coaching services.
 - ◊ Rev. Mong has been serving as Vice-Moderator, Moderator, and Chair of the Coordinating Cabinet of the Presbytery. He began as Vice-Moderator July 1st.
 - ◊ There will be a meeting on October 30th via zoom with attendees from the Presbytery to discuss the future of Presbyterianism in Ashtabula County
 - ◊ He will begin a New Officers Class for both Churches in December.
 - ◊ New officers will be ordained during worship on December 24th.
 - ◊ A group of ministers and Rev. Sharon Core will meet to begin a discussion concerning the future of Presbyterianism in Ashtabula County.
 - ◊ Rev. Mong will be on vacation December 25- January 1st.

Committee reports were approved and included:

- Worship & Music:
 - ◊ December worship will be at Trinity.
 - ◊ Kathy Fassett will find ushers for December.
 - ◊ Hobart Shiflet will serve as liturgist in December
 - ◊ Communion will be served on December 3rd and Christmas Eve. Elders serving will be: Mary Belding, Kathy Fassett, Craig Reiter, and Hobart Shiflet.
 - ◊ Poinsettias can be brought into the church on December 17th.
- Community Outreach:
 - ◊ Christmas gifts for Children and Family Services will be gathered and delivered early in December.
 - ◊ We continue to gather goods for Faith Lutheran Food Pantry.
 - ◊ We continue to fill our Blessing Box for Thursdays.
 - ◊ A joint meeting was held November 19th, setting the calendar for 2024
 - ◊ There will be a gathering of women at The Old Mill Winery November 29th at 4pm.
- Property and Finance:
 - ◊ The committee is working on the budget for 2024.
 - ◊ Tree trimming by Brobst Tree Service was completed.
- Deacons: Kathy Depp was thanked for attending.
 - ◊ Deacons will meet Dec. 6th at 4:30 pm.
- The Personnel Committee presented a motion which was passed to increase the custodian's salary by \$.52 to \$11.00/Hour.



Mary Belding, Clerk of Session



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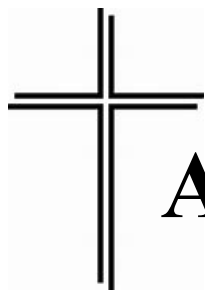
REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX. AFTER CHRISTMAS, BRING THE BOX TO CHURCH TO BE DONATED TO THE FOOD PANTRY IN JANUARY. THESE ARE ONLY SUGGESTIONS. YOU MAY SUBSTITUTE OR REPEAT ITEMS.

- December 1 – box of cereal
- December 2 – peanut butter
- December 3 – stuffing mix
- December 4 – boxed potatoes
- December 5 – macaroni and cheese
- December 6 – canned fruit
- December 7 – canned tomatoes
- December 8 – canned tuna
- December 9 – dessert mix
- December 10 – applesauce
- December 11 – canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 – cranberry sauce
- December 13 – canned beans
- December 14 – box of crackers
- December 15- package of rice
- December 16 – package of oatmeal
- December 17 – package of pasta
- December 18 – spaghetti sauce
- December 19 – chicken noodle soup
- December 20 – tomato soup
- December 21 – can of corn
- December 22 – can mixed vegetables
- December 23 – can carrots
- December 24 – can green beans





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ASHTABULA CHORAL SOCIETY

In December we have 2 additional Messiah concerts that feature the choral selections: On December 2nd, at 6 pm. we will be at Kinsman Presbyterian Church, 6383 Church Street Kinsman, Oh, 44428.

On December 10th, at 2pm. we will be at First Presbyterian Church, 4317 Park Ave., Ashtabula.



We are also singing a couple of selections from Messiah at the Voices of Hope Concert on December 7th at 6 pm at the Conneaut Human Resources Center, 327 Mill St., Conneaut, OH, 44030.

Also, our Applebee's Dining to Donate (for Carnegie Hall expenses) is Thursday, December 14th from 11 am to 10 pm. We will have raffle baskets and a bake sale, to supplement the % we receive from Applebee's.

REPORT FROM TRINITY SCRIP FUND

The Card Makers have made gift-card-holding greeting cards for those gifts you purchase from Scrip.

Cards are available in the parlor before and after church service on Sunday.

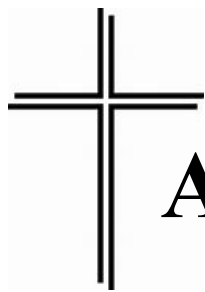
Call or text 440.862.6786, or e-mail at mbelding237@gmail.com if you miss us there.

Please order Christmas gift cards early! Besides our sales to our "regulars", the sales at Christmas time help make this a viable mission. We have been blessed with large orders from Ashtabula County Fraternal Order of Police for their Shop-with-a-Cop, East Side Presbyterian's outreach program, and Faith Lutheran Food Pantry's Christmas Basket. Thanks to our members affiliated with these programs who were contacts assisting with the purchases.

Blessings from Co-coordinators of Trinity's Scrip Program,

Dee Fassett and Mary Belding





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EASTSIDE'S MEETING SCHEDULE

Joint Bell Choir—Sunday, December 3rd, 10th, 17th - 2pm at Eastside

Combined Choir—Every Sunday, 9am at Trinity in December

Worship and Music—Monday, December 11th, 6:30pm

Session—Monday, December 18th, 6:30pm

Knitting Group—2nd and 4th Tuesday of Each Month from 10am—12pm



EASTSIDE'S BIRTHDAYS

Dec. 2 Elaine Robinson

Dec. 8 Rose Booth

Dec. 16 Carol Reinhart

Dec. 18 Joe Burnham

Dec. 22 Len Edgren

Dec. 23 Billy Mong

Dec. 27 Jacquie Quine

Dec. 31 Betty Emery



EASTSIDE'S ANNIVERSARIES

Dec. 14 Arnold and Sandra Brown

Dec. 31 Gary and Jacquie Quine

SHOES! SHOES! SHOES!

In an effort to assist First Presbyterian in a new endeavor, Eastside will collect shoes to help them in reaching a goal of 2500 pairs of shoes. The shoes will be sent to an agency that will sanitize and distribute them in Haiti where they are much needed. The box is located in the Eastside foyer. Shoes collected to date: 176 pairs.

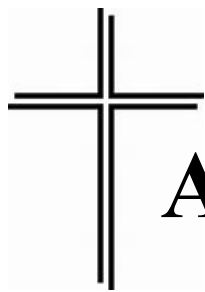
TRINITY COOKBOOKS

Due to unforeseen circumstances the Trinity Cookbooks will not be ready by Christmas. We apologize for any inconvenience this presents and we will have them available as soon as possible. Thanks for your understanding.

PRAYER LIST



John Lockhart, Brad, Arnold & Sandra Brown, George Sabo, Christina Horrigan, George Voytek, John Pildner, Esther Northrup, Missy Tobias, the Hejduk Family, and Wes Breedlove



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FALL AND WINTER WORSHIP SCHEDULE



December 2023

December 3rd	Eastside Congregational Meeting	Trinity
December 10th		Trinity
December 17th		Trinity
December 24th	Sunday Morning Service	Trinity
December 24th	Christmas Eve	Trinity
December 31st		Trinity

January 2024

January 7th		Eastside
January 14th		Eastside
January 21st		Eastside
January 28th	Eastside Congregational Meeting	Eastside

February 2024

February 4th		Trinity
February 11th	Trinity Congregational Meeting	Trinity
February 14th	Ash Wednesday	Trinity
February 18th		Trinity
February 25th		Trinity

EASTSIDE CHRISTMAS GIVING

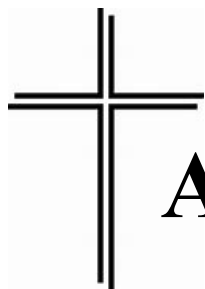
Donations will continue to be accepted through December 10 for the purchase of grocery gift cards for families in need. Envelopes are available by the East Side offering plate at Trinity. They also can be dropped off at East Side during office hours (M,T, and F between 9 AM and 1 PM) or mailed to the church at 3440 Edgewood Drive, Ashtabula, OH 44004.



In addition, along with the Trinity congregation, we have adopted and purchased gifts for 12 children.

Thank you to all who support these worthwhile endeavors to provide a brighter Christmas for those less fortunate in our community.

IF WE EACH DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT!!



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JOINT COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community Outreach met jointly after worship service Sunday, November 19, 2023.



23 sets of linens and 27 blankets were collected for Catholic Charities during the months of October and November will be delivered soon so that they may be put to good use in keeping someone warm during the winter months.

The Blessing Box located at Trinity is utilized often and items will continue to be collected throughout the winter months and beyond.



We have adopted 12 foster children from Children Services. The Christmas tree with all the wishes of the children was hung at East Side. The items have been collected and will be delivered to Children Services on Monday, December 4, 2023.

The mission project committee for 2024 has met and tentatively set a schedule for the new joint 2024 year.

Ladies night out is scheduled for Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. at Old Mill Winery.



If you have forgotten us, you lose nothing...

If you have forgotten Christ, you lose everything.

Byler's Restaurant