

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

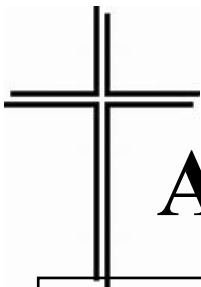
January 2025
NEWSLETTER



“Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness
because of mine enemies; make thy way
straight before my face.

Psalms 5:8





Ashtabula Times

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

As I sit here in my office on a gloomy Christmas Eve morning, the bulletins sit ready to be read. The bells wait on the tables ready to be played. The candles wait to be lit, and the pews wait to be filled. The decorations are hung, the sermon has been written, and all things wait in silence for the hum and joy of another Christmas Eve Candlelit service. Everything for the moment is calm and waiting in expectation.

Perhaps then as I sit and review my to-do list, wondering if I have forgotten any chore and wondering if the sermon needs any more polishing, I can relate to what Mary did that first night of motherhood so long ago, *Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart*. The Shepherds had left with an out-of-the ordinary story about lights and angels, recognizing this newborn baby as God's long-awaited Messiah and she stored all these things and turned them over in her heart. I find myself storing up not just another Christmas Eve but another year and turning over the times and seasons of 2024.

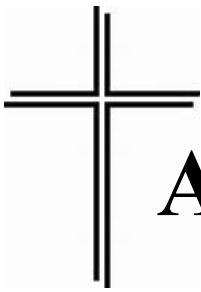
What a year and what times have we had! We have had new beginnings adding another church to our community of faith, and we have said goodbyes to long-standing pillar members. We have had to compromise on worship arrangements, and we have added new energy and new excitement to our Outreach partnerships. We have studied and learned, and at times struggled and wrestled with new problems. But perhaps the greatest learning of mine is that of a single verse of scripture, for all my work and investing in merging and meshing communities, *unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain*. Unless God meshes and merges, I work to no effect. Unless God protects this community, my work is empty. Unless God gathers and encourages, my words and actions are in vain.

But God has done everything God promised and more. When we look over everything that has happened, we can see the faithful actions of a faithful God. God is still working, rescuing and leading his people. God is still here and still for God's people. This is why I sit in the silence of an empty church, storing and pondering another year and like the Apostle, *giving thanks in all circumstances: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*. I am floored at how 3 groups of people can become knitted together stronger than any quilt. I am astonished at how differences can be worked out and flabbergasted at how new energy can be released into tired and frustrated hearts. I am staggered at how God overcomes barrier and roadblock to see God's will done. I am stunned, like Mary, at the new things God is doing, and I will never stop giving thanks to God for you and your willingness to try new things.

No sooner than I think of all the good things God has done this last year, I also begin to contemplate the tasks that God has prepared for us this coming year: new mergers and new decisions and new collaborations. We certainly have come far but still have more journey to make. Paul is right when he wrote, *not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own*. We are not there yet, but still must press forward as the runner keeps putting one foot in front of the other until Christ returns, and that means a new faithfulness on our part. God is still faithful to us; will we grow in faithfulness back to God?

In a few hours, we will sing, pray and worship our faithful God who became flesh. The waiting and expectation will turn into presence and joy. In a new year, we will face and discern what the will of our faithful God is. The challenge will be for us is how we meet God who meets us in Jesus of Nazareth? Thankfulness in all circumstances, pressing forward to meet Christ who made us his? Courage and collaboration? Faithfulness and fearlessness? Hope and Wonder? Let us make this season, a season of faithfulness for the faithfulness of our God; and then every day of 2025 will be Christmas day. Alleluia and Amen.

Rev. Mark



Ashtabula Times



2025 per capita is \$40.00

REPORT FROM TRINITY'S SESSION

Session met December 18th and the normal business was carried out including:

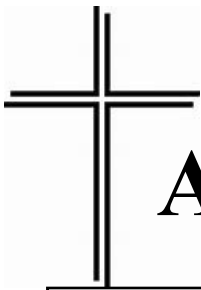
- Approval of minutes from Nov. session meeting.
- Approval of financial report for November
- The clerk's report included
- Requests for use of the building:
 - * A new 12-Step group will meet on Fridays from 6:30-8:30pm
 - * The Lysiak family will use the Fellowship Hall on Jan. 4.
- The Minister's report included:
 - * A spreadsheet of his calls and visits.
 - * Next Town Hall Jan 8th at first Pres' fellowship hall.
 - * A four month worship calendar was approved.
 - * Encouraging Elders to communicate with congregation about the merging progress.
- Committee reports
 - * Worship and Music
 - * Met with East Side and First.
 - * Community Outreach
 - * Christmas gifts were delivered.
 - * Property and Finance:
 - * The committee presented the budget for 2025 which was approved.
 - * Deacons:
 - * Louise Skarlinski represented the deacons.
 - * They meet with East Side's deacons.
 - * Presbytery: A report was given and PWR will meet via zoom in January.



Mary Belding, Clerk

REPORT FROM TRINITY'S PROPERTY & FINANCE

- The final bid from HAVE for the HVAC project is \$37,375. We have entered into the agreement with HAVE and CEI will schedule their portion of the project to begin in early spring 2025
- Contact Beth Dougherty if interested in volunteering to assist with the 2024 financial audit. We will meet at Trinity Saturday, January 25 at 9:00 AM.



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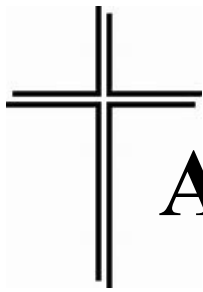
REPORT FROM EAST SIDE'S SESSION

Session met in December carrying out the normal business including:

- The meeting opened with prayer.
- The Minutes were reviewed and approved as amended.
- The Treasurer's Report was reviewed and approved.
- Pastor's Report:
 - * Bible Studies continue.
 - * Reviewed visitations.
 - * Town Hall Meeting is January 8, 2025, at First Presbyterian Church.
 - * Deadline for the Newsletter is December 16, 2024.
 - * Vacation is scheduled from December 25, 2024, to January 1, 2025. Pulpit Supply, December 29, 2024.
 - * Officers from all three churches will be installed on December 15, 2024.
 - * Discussed the winter worship schedule for all three churches, schedule was approved by session.
- The session approved the budget for 2025.
- Buildings and Grounds: Rental for the Mance will be \$1,220. plus utilities.
- Outreach: collecting money for grocery gift cards through December to be given out in January. Collecting mittens, hats and gloves.
- Personnel: still collecting for employees Christmas gifts.
- Worship and Music: Poinsettias will be at the church on December 15, 2024. They were purchased from Maples Mercantile.
- Committee Reports from East Side are due by January so Nora can prepare the Congregational Report.
- The meeting was adjourned and closed with prayer.



Cathy Burnham, Clerk



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EASTSIDE'S MEETING SCHEDULE

Session—Monday, January 20th, 2024 at 6:30pm
 Knitting Group—2nd and 4th Tuesday from 10am—Noon
 Yes You Can Crafting Group—Mondays, 9:30am-Noon
 Worship and Music—January 13th at 6:30pm



EASTSIDE'S BIRTHDAYS

1st Rev. John Gehring-Anders
 17th Nora Giangola
 18th Pam Headman
 20th Charlene Woodburn
 22nd Marty Burnham
 23rd Ruth Best
 15th Cathy Burnham



EASTSIDE'S ANNIVERSARIES

There are no Anniversaries

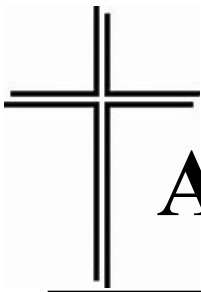
TOWN HALL

All three Ashtabula City Churches will be meeting on Wednesday, January 8th at 6:30pm in First's Fellowship Hall to continue the storytelling and discernment of our future life together. Members and friends of all congregations are invited to attend the meeting to share experiences and ideas about meshing together.



PRAYER LIST

Genny Wallace, the Family of Joyce Shellhammer, Aaron, Jim, Mike Kenny, Berniece Boggs, Jim & Rose Booth, Jim Johnston, Courtney Wetzal, Jodi Westover, Randy Woodard, Ruth Allen, Peg Loyd, the family of Michelle Fetters, Elias and family, Ed and Pat Strock, Charlene Woodburn, Mike and Marge Denning, and Charlene Woodburn



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JOINT COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community Council did not meet in December.

Adult hats and mittens delivered to G.O. Ministries and the youth items will go to Kid's Only.



Reverse Advent Calendar items will be delivered to Faith Lutheran Food Pantry in January.

The Christmas giving offering will be tallied and used to purchase Giant Eagle grocery cards for Kids Only. These cards will be distributed on a "as needed" basis throughout 2025.

Christmas thank you to all of the employees of East Side and Trinity. Thank you to all who contributed to their Christmas cash! Their cards and cash were given out on Christmas Eve.

Thanks to all for taking a tag, purchasing a gift, and returning it to the church for the 12 adopted Children Services Foster Children. With the inclement weather and church being canceled all the gifts were still provided on time per our commitment with Children Services. THANK YOU!!!

Our next meeting will be following services at First Presbyterian Church on January 19, 2025.

UPCOMING ITEMS OF INTEREST:

NEW IDEAS... We are looking for "new" ideas from the Congregation for Mission projects for the upcoming 2025 & 2026 year. There will be a subcommittee of Community Outreach to establish the projects the churches would like to participate in as we join our churches together. Please give us your ideas or volunteer to meet with this committee to plan our future mission projects.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program)

For information visit ashtabulagiveback.org or contact

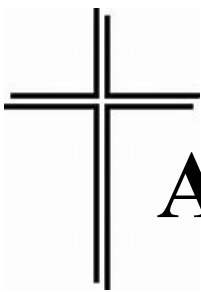
Stephanie Blessing – Americore – 440-670-9125 to volunteer

G.O. Ministries

Breakfast at First Baptist Church M-F – Feeding homeless 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Pam Bloom and Edie Makynen, Co-Chairs





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WINTER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Liturgical Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Anthem</u>
1/5/2025	Epiphany	First	Special Music
1/12/2025	Baptism of the Lord	First	Special Music
1/19/2025	2nd Sunday in O.T.	First	Special Music
1/26/2025	3rd Sunday in O.T.	First	Special Music
2/2/2025	4th Sunday in O.T.	East Side	3 Church Choir
2/9/2025	5th Sunday in O.T.	East Side	3 Church Choir
2/26/2025	6th Sunday in O.T.	East Side	3 Church Choir
2/23/2025	7th Sunday in O.T.	East Side	3 Church Choir
3/2/2025	Transfiguration Sunday	Trinity	TBD
3/5/2025	Ash Wednesday	Trinity	TBD
3/9/2024	1st Sunday of Lent	Trinity	TBD
3/16/2025	2nd Sunday of Lent	Trinity	TBD
3/23/2025	3rd Sunday of Lent	Trinity	TBD
3/30/2025	4th Sunday of Lent	Trinity	TBD



All Services are at
10am



**We are the
Church
Together!**