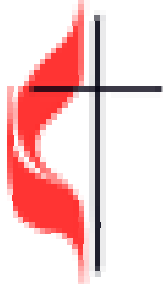


# THE TIDINGS

Vol.9 Issue 11  
December 2011



## Trinity United Methodist Church

-Called by God—Creating Hope— Connecting People—Changing Lives

### *Waiting for Christ*

James expresses encouragement in his letter to the early church that they would wait for Jesus' return with patience. Here is the way he puts it:

*"Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You must also be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near."*

James 5: 7 - 8

James must have picked up on some signs of impatience amidst this fledgling community of believers. Waiting can be a real problem! Ask any parent who has ever loaded the kids in the back seat to head off on vacation. Barely out of town one begins to hear the question, "Are we there yet?" Ask any elementary school teacher about the most difficult times of year to keep the students' attention and they will give you two answers... #1 – the days between Thanksgiving and Christmas break, and ...#2 – the days just before summer vacation. Waiting done the wrong way can become a complete distraction to accomplishing anything.

Maybe that's the reason James put such emphasis in this letter on his belief that faith should be exemplified through good deeds. Had he witnessed these early Christians accomplishing very little? Perhaps they were driven to distraction with such an emphasis on

the imminent return of Christ, ...or on the other hand, maybe they had become quite lethargic, not unlike many today, in the delay of Christ's return. Either way, his instruction was the same - get busy with the Lord's work of caring for those who are in need! Put your faith into action.

How are you doing with waiting these days? The season of Advent is meant to be an opportunity for us to gain a new understanding about the value of waiting the right way. I like what Henri Nouwen said about waiting... "To wait patiently means to allow our [suffering] to become the purifying preparation by which we are made ready to receive the joy which is promised us." Nouwen believed that we do our best waiting by constantly awakening ourselves to the presence of God especially as we interact with others throughout our day.

Have you ever tried to purposefully wait? I was reading a devotional book recently that suggested it would do us good during Advent to find the longest rather than the shortest line at the grocery store and get in it occasionally in order to be more intentionally present to the other people around us who are also waiting. I haven't tried that yet, but just the idea of it makes me smile. I plan to give that an effort sometime soon.

May God bless you in your waiting – not simply for Christmas but for Christ!

Grace and Peace,  
*Bill*

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### *Love in Any Language*

As we become immersed in the splendor, joy and anticipation of the season of Advent, we prepare for the coming of the Christ child anew in our midst. The writers of old would praise God that he comes among us with a holy presence which provides. In graphic language they proclaimed that “God pitches his tent in our midst” and “God tabernacles among us.” Truly, as we look forward to the great “Festival of the Incarnation”, we seek to be saturated by God’s infinite “agape” love which saves and inspires. God empties his steadfast love (“hesed”) and amazing grace upon us and within us through the magnanimous gift of his Son Jesus Christ.

Within the attraction of God’s love, we are pulled gently into a closer walk with our Lord through the highlights and pitfalls of our spiritual

journey. Our faith pilgrimage is adorned by the awareness of so great a LOVE during these holy seasons. Indeed it is a LOVE for all – a LOVE in any language.

*“Love in any language,  
straight from the heart;  
Pulls us all together,  
never apart.*

*And when we learn to speak it,  
all the world will hear,  
Love in any language –  
fluently spoken here!”*

*(Sung by Sandi Patti)*

Yes! Christ the King is coming! All praise to the Ruler of all Nature, Savior, Redeemer – The one for us – for all eternity. Let us be open to alter our lives that others may know that Love is fluently spoken here – in us – throughout Trinity Church.



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## ***United Methodist Women***

-Sarah Bob Arthur  
arthurmc@cox.net

Trinity United Methodist Women is made up of two circles: Loving Faith, which meets the third Tuesday morning at 10 am and the Wesleyan Circle which meets the third Monday evening at 7 pm.

The United Methodist Women is a strong mission arm of Trinity. In 2011 members have given \$3483 to mission. This includes the pledge to the Women's Division where the money goes to help children, youth and women in the United States and abroad and money for the Vashti Center in Thomasville, Volunteer Medical Clinic, Ronald McDonald

House, Camp Wings, Food Pantry, Hinton Mission trip, Agape Ministries, Emmaus table and Cherished Children.

In addition to monetary contributions members read from the Reading Program – selected books on Mission, Social Action and Spiritual Growth, attend mission studies, programs on spiritual growth as well as learn more about local ministries.

This organization is open to all women at Trinity, and we invite you to become a part. Contact Sandy Whipple, 953-4212, or Sarah Bob Arthur, 953-3242.

### *Agape Fund – Help Needed*

“The Agape Fund” is a special means through which we assist people in our community who are in some way dealing with a situation of critical need. Your contributions help to keep this a viable ministry here at Trinity. It is our tradition to receive a love offering on communion Sundays. Gifts may be

given at the altar rail in any of our morning worship services. Thanks to those of you who already give regularly to this important ministry. For those who would like to begin helping out with the Agape Fund, we encourage you to make these contributions over and above your regular tithe. Checks may be made payable to Trinity UMC and marked for “The Agape Fund”. Thanks for helping to share the love of Christ in a very tangible way with people in need.



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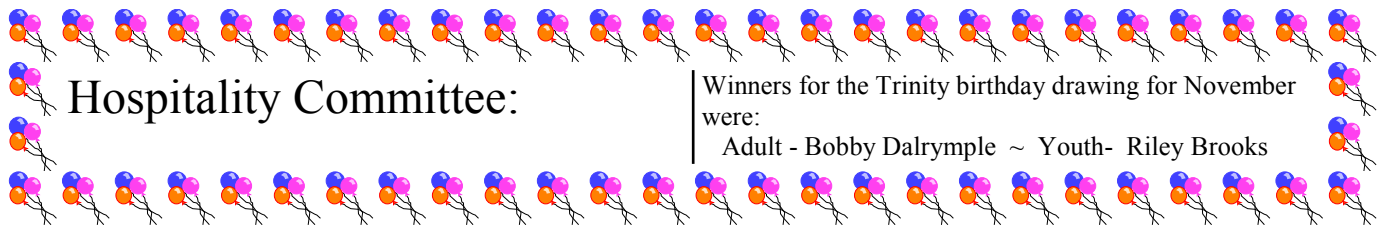
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# Missions Committee

*Thank you to everyone who helped our church raise funds to support the following missions during 2011.*

- Baldwin State Prison*
- Wilcox State Prison*
- Cub Scouts*
- Greathouses - Salt and Fresh Water*
- Greathouses (personal expenses)*
- Covenant Care*
- Margaret Bagwell (Seminary)*
- Joyce Payne Ministries*
- Venture Crew 247*
- Venture Crew 566*
- Kelsey Alligood (UGA Wesley Foundation)*
- Mike Nakayama (UGA Wesley Foundation)*
- Baldwin State Prison*
- Wilcox State Prison*
- Jamaica*
- Miller Elementary*

*Total for 2011 = \$10,125*



**Hospitality Committee:**

Winners for the Trinity birthday drawing for November were:  
 Adult - Bobby Dalrymple ~ Youth- Riley Brooks

# Christmas Presents Tradition

Donnie Powell  
-dd66rsb@cox.net

Jesus was getting excited about his upcoming birthday. At this early age, he had already learned that he would get special attention, special food and PRESENTS—he really enjoyed presents—the more the better. He had learned to drop hints of what he would like to get and found that the hints often paid off—though he had dropped hints for several years about getting a pony, still he had no pony yet. Maybe this year—he figured if he kept asking and asking, he would eventually get a pony—he was very persistent. Perhaps he would bring the pony up at supper after his program at the Synagogue. He enjoyed practicing for the program which included singing, reciting Psalms and other scripture verses with girls and boys his own age. He had a pretty good singing voice but one cute little girl really had a beautiful singing voice—and he noticed more and more lately that she was very, very cute—especially when she smiled at him. The program was a success, after which he took his seat with his family and his brothers and sisters all mobbed him with hugs—being a big brother did have some extra rewards.

At supper after the program, he was preparing to bring up the pony again as he watched his little sister. For some reason she did not like to eat much of anything. His mother would tell little sister “you must taste these vegetables at least a little.” As Jesus watched, little sister got a small amount on the wooden spoon and raised it to her mouth, stuck out her tongue and barely touched it and promptly replaced the spoon on her plate, saying “I don’t like it”. Jesus cracked up laughing, momentarily distracted from his pony campaign. He was getting his thoughts in order when his Mom said to little sister, “here is a cup of soup, you must taste it.” This time she stuck the very tip of her finger in the soup and touched the tiny drop to her tongue and shook her head. Again Jesus almost fell out of his chair laughing. He realized his sister was very good at obeying the exact letter of his Mom’s orders. He also realized it just wasn’t the right time to bring up the pony—maybe tomorrow night. He could not stop laughing.

The next day as he was again thinking of his birthday and watching his little sisters and brothers, he suddenly realized they were not very excited about his birthday. Then he had a great idea—he would tell his parents to get the pony for ALL of them—not just for him. He would share his present with his brothers and sisters. So that night at supper he launched his best arguments saying, “if I got a pony for my birthday, sisters and brothers could ride him too—I would gladly share him. A pony would keep them busy all day and out of your way, mother, and we would get exercise and fresh air and, and...” He was interrupted by the yelling and clapping of his brothers and sisters. He heard them say, “and Jesus will let us play with all his new presents—yeah yeah”. Jesus said, “what, wait, what, now wait....” but he was out numbered and drowned out. Then his brothers and sisters leaped up and ran out of the room shouting “yeah for Jesus’ birthday, yeah for Jesus’ birthday”.

Jesus looked at his Mom and Dad and said, well I had not planned that “my presents would be their presents” but I guess that’s the way it will be. Say, do you think you could maybe get them a present or two on my birthday—that way I’ll get a few minutes enjoyment from my presents before the little ones grab them. And besides, I love to see their eyes light up when they get presents. Mary smiled and said, you know that is a very good idea—presents for everyone on your birthday—what a great idea.

And it came to pass that the tradition of giving presents to everyone on Christmas was started.

+++++

Footnote: One of our grand-darlings, Rylee had a program at school after which her little sister Haven gave her a big hug. At a Wednesday night meal, Haven actually tasted the food with the tip of her tongue and the tip of her finger to her tongue. It was very funny. I wanted to weave the program and the tasting into the story—helped me picture Jesus doing a “normal boy things.”

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# Finance Forum

-Mike Hatcher  
mksrocket@cox.net

Our financial results as of the end of November 2011 were as follows:

	<u>November</u>	<u>YTD</u>
General Fund Mo Budget Need:	\$ 66,232	\$ 699,173
General Fund Receipts:	\$ 53,016	\$ 656,833
General Fund Expenses;	\$ 52,356	\$ 660,878
<b>Net Result</b>	<b>\$ 660</b>	<b>\$ (4,045)</b>

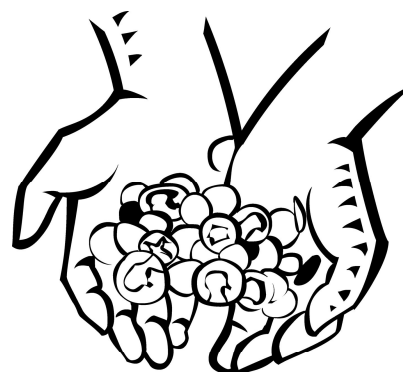
Looking at the data above many will conclude that Trinity is doing fine financially. I would concur that we are actually in the “black” this month and only slightly in the “red” for the year so far. However, the real story is in the first line above. What it says is that we are over \$42,000 below the planned budget for this year. In other words, had our expenses gone as they were expected this year, we would have had to either stop certain activities and/or let some of the paid staff of the church go.

In fact, we are not yet “out of the woods” on this issue. The receipts for the month of November were the lowest we have seen for any November we have on record and have only been this low once or twice in any month on record. Keep in mind that for the past three years the months of October, November, and December have been the time when we got back on track to meet our budget figures. Many of Trinity's budget expenses are “fixed” and serious short-falls can only be met by closing buildings, turning off services, or removing employees if the contributions don't materialize. It bothers me to bring such news forward month after month but I can not do otherwise. In spite of this and many other efforts to keep the congregation informed and up-to-date on Trinity's financial health, we still hear folks say they were unaware of these problems or issues. I ask you all to prayerfully consider what you can do to help. More money is not the only answer.

The finance committee worked very hard this year to put together a budget that met the goals of the church

but also one we felt could be achieved. That required a lowered expectation of income for the second consecutive year and the beginning of a planned four year reduction in paid staff. The church council has approved the 2012 budget with these factors included. The four year plan also has provisions for re-attaining our 100% commitment to the conference apportionment, however, that is contingent on meeting both the contribution goals and reduced staffing costs. If this year's trend continues into next year, the budget will have to be reassessed and more reductions included.

Thank you again for your continued support and faithfulness to Trinity and to the work to promote and expand God's kingdom. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, comments or suggestions.



*Tithes and offerings*

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## ***Our Church Family at Home***

-Uplift these friends in your prayers and with cards and phone calls

### **Church Home for the Aged**

2470 Hwy 41 North  
Fort Valley, GA 31030

Gladys Rissmann  
Jewel McGarity

### **Summer's Landing**

608 Kimberly Road ~ 31088

Margaret Poole, Apt. 1B  
Sam Hendry, Apt 66

### **Antebellum Grove**

1010 S. Houston Lake Rd. 31088

Lois Turner ~ Rm 132

### **Carlyle Place**

5300 Zebulon Road  
Macon, GA 31210

Roger Fulling  
David and Sunny Reed

### **Carlyle Place (cont)**

Edith and Russell Moye

### **Homebound**

Billie Curry  
320 Bernard Drive ~ 31093

Shirley Matthews  
421 Woodland Drive ~ 31088

Mae Kincaid  
319 Oakview Square ~ 31093  
Jim Kincaid—Dublin VA Hospital

Ruth Wehrmeyer  
111 Pearce Drive ~ 31093

Billie Meaders  
109 Ginny Drive ~ 31093

Continue to update this list by emailing [theunderwoods1@cox.net](mailto:theunderwoods1@cox.net)

## ***Deployed Active Duty Military***

Phillip Ferris (Afghanistan—Fran and Jim Botkin's nephew)  
Ryan Hall (Saudi Arabia) son of Ron and Donna Hall  
James Easterling—(Afghanistan)  
Jeff Dorsey (Afghanistan) nephew of June and Eddie Underwood  
Troy Maskell - grandson of Nancy and Bill Birdsell  
Stephen Kelly (Afghanistan) son of Connie and Ken Adkins  
Jason Thaggard (Iraq) nephew of Shelby Snow  
MSGT Carey Rissmann—son of Ken and Kathy Rissmann  
Brandon Smith (Afghanistan) Grandson of Pat Smith  
Phillip Price Lewis—Grandson of Grace Harmon

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