

DECEMBER

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TRINITY
C H U R C H

Note from Our Lead Pastor

Surprise! The work day is over. You get home late again. Knowing your family is waiting to go out for your birthday dinner, how do you explain yourself? How can you make amends? Something is off as you walk up to the door. Lights are out downstairs. Oh well. They must all be upstairs getting ready. So, you boldly walk in, flick the light and you almost have a heart attack when family and friends shout, "Surprise!" When you get your feet back under yourself, the room stops spinning, and your heart rate returns to normal, you look around and there is food, laughter, love, joy, and a spirit of celebration. Surprise!

Christmas is not a surprise. December 25th, right? Yet each year, like birthdays, Christmas has an element of surprise: fresh, new, exciting. The incredible story of God, who came down out of heaven to live with us is always a surprise. Us? Did He have any idea what He was getting into? Look at the mess we are. The issues of everyday life. The big things that happened because we didn't listen to Him. The simple joys we have completely missed out on. Our brokenness. The world we have helped, and we have hurt. Surprise! Jesus is still born for you and in you through the Holy Spirit. Despite all the brokenness and messiness of life, Jesus' birth is a dynamic truth worth celebrating every year.

The repeated surprise of Christmas leads to expectations. We all have them. A Christmas tree? As I'm writing this November 15th, some of you already have dragged your trees out and decorated them. We haven't even overeaten on Thanksgiving and experienced the bloated post meal and pie euphoria. Turkeys are breaking tree ornaments. The chair you moved to place the tree means there isn't enough seating for all the family now. It's a mess. Holidays are colliding and it is a wreck. And now, expectations?

Trees, stockings, lights draped over everything outside, wreaths, cookies, pies, snow, paper chains, baking, popcorn strings, gifts, family again, wrapping, candlelight in the windows, did I mention pies? Expectations abound. Family traditions come alive. Ugly sweater competitions, office parties, you name it. Surprise!

Sit down. Take a deep breath. Close your eyes. Surprise! The clear message of Christmas is that Jesus loves you. He came from heaven to earth to be with you and show you how dearly you are loved. On the cross, Jesus gave it all for you. Surprise! Despite your messiness, despite your brokenness, despite your failures, Jesus was born for you. He loves you. And Jesus came to assure you that you are accepted for who you are. He gives you hope for EVERY part of your life. You are forgiven, and you have His authority to forgive others.

Christmas Eve we will celebrate this surprise. We will sing the words dear to us. We will hear the story of the birth. We will wrestle with expectations. Yet, we will leave with confidence in acceptance, hope, and forgiveness. Come. Bring your one. Find new joy in the surprise!

Your Pastor and Friend,



Note from Our Associate Pastor

Unexpected Group Experiences

When we began a men's discipleship group with a new format last November, I came into it with a particular set of expectations. As we wrap up the first year and begin the second, I am amazed at the unexpected ways God has worked in this group.

- Expected: we would have a committed group of guys who showed up regularly and had intellectual conversations about a Bible passage.
- Expected: we would share surface details about events and activities in our lives but not get to peer into each other's hearts.
- Expected: we would know more information about each other but not get into deeper topics of life, faith, and family relationships.

I am thrilled that God showed up and did some unexpected things.

- Unexpected: one group quickly became two.
- Unexpected: casual acquaintances became deep friendships.
- Unexpected: factual Bible conversations have become authentic experiences of Bible application and life transformation.

In it all, God is drawing us closer to his heart, closer to knowing his love for us, and closer to living the obedient life he created us for.

Reading Cloud and Townsend's book, *Making Small Groups Work*, I can relate to many of the transformational experiences the authors describe. As I reflect on my group experience through the lens of the book, I realize how deeply God is using my men's group experience to make me who he created me to be. That might be the most unexpected surprise of all.

Are you ready to find a group? Your experience will differ from mine, but I know God will show up in exciting and unexpected ways. The next page will show you the way or you can catch me on a Sunday morning, send me an email, or give me a call. I'd love to help you connect with others to experience God's unexpected work in your life.

Pastor Dave

Connection Groups

WHY THEY MATTER

Kim Norblade's thoughts:

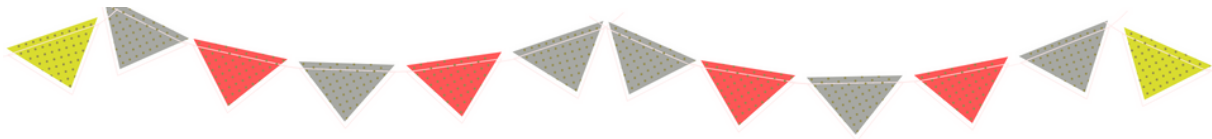
1. I look forward to connection group meetings, and honestly miss our "off-meeting" weeks. I appreciate the personal relationships we have developed across multi generations. I found my eyes searching the crowd upon entering the church just like you would if you were meeting family.
2. We pray together, study together, eat together, and service work together.
3. We encourage each other during tough times and celebrate joyous events.
4. It's hard to explain, but our connection group is a special relationship. Group members are people who we can count on!

I love living my Connection Group life. I wish everyone had a chance to experience the blessings that come out of meaningful relationships with the support of our Lord Jesus Christ and the words of the Bible.

Jeff Norblade's thoughts:

Connection groups are an amazing opportunity to learn and share from one another. Not only do we talk about Bible Lessons, but we also share life lessons and life skills. Connection groups provide a unique, non-threatening opportunity for everyone to read the Bible and share our understanding and put these passages into our daily life. Jesus worked in small groups sharing meals, lessons, prayer, and serving others. Jesus leads by example, so we are trying to follow his guidance by "Connecting People to Christ."

Find your Group or Course
WWW.NEXTSTEPS.GUIDE



TRINITY CAFE CRAFTS

Christmas Edition



Personalized Hot
Chocolate Gift Mugs
DEC 15TH | 8:30-10:30
\$10 per person (a Trinity
Café drink included)
Register at
www.nextsteps.guide

Isaiah 40:8 Bible Study Group

NEW STUDY BEGINS 11/27/22

Interchanging verse-by-verse studies with topical ones, this group dives into God's word to learn what He is saying to us. Studies completed include: Corrie Ten Boom's, A Picture of Forgiveness; The Seven I Am's of Christ in the Gospel of John; The Full Armor of God - An in-depth study of Ephesians 6:10-20. This group also focuses on projects to shine God's glory, and serve our holy God in the community. One such project is the coordination of gifts for Open Door Mission. Details on page 6.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR PARTICIPANTS?

As an extension of the Advent sermon series and devotional called, The Expected One, this group will spend four-weeks taking a deeper look at the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus' first coming and what that means this Advent season. You'll find this group in Connection Room 2 at 9 a.m. on Sundays.

*Save
the
Date*

REACH ONE MORE

Six-Week Course | Wednesdays @ 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
January 11 - February 15

You have identified your "one." You care for them and want them to join you in a lifegiving relationship with Jesus Christ. But, how? Reach One More is a six-week course is for you! Remove troubling barriers, develop new perspectives, and gain practical, repeatable concepts to help your one become more engaged with Jesus.

Register at www.nextsteps.guide

Serving Others

FOLLOWING JESUS' LEAD

Our mission focus for December is to serve the basic necessity needs at **OPEN DOOR MISSION** and needs of families through **TRINITY LITTLE MIRACLES.**

Select a bell ornament from the tree in the Commons. Shop for the item(s) on your bell. Bring your unwrapped gift item, with bell taped on it, to Trinity Church and place it near the tree.

Participate through December 18.



Merry Christmas, Church!

I am so grateful for this time of year and the joy we can find in celebrating the birth of King Jesus. It is my hope that we find our joy in Jesus, and that we live with an expectant heart for Him to show up in our lives, daily. I encourage you to take some time this season to follow along in our series bible reading with Trinity Kids!



Kayla Florom

Children's and Family Minister

kflorom@trinitylife.org

402-513-8231

SAVE THE DATE
December 9 | 6-9 p.m.
CHRISTMAS
CAMP OUT

December 4-10

Jesus is **God's plan.**

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Luke 1:1-5 | Luke 1:6-17 | Luke 1:18-25 | Exodus 30:1-6 | Exodus 30:7-10 | Isaiah 11:1-9 | Isaiah 11:10-16 |
| An angel appeared to Zechariah | | | | | | |

Add a little bit of body text

December 11-17

Jesus calms **our fears.**

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Luke 1:26-38 | Luke 1:39-56 | Luke 1:57-66 | Luke 1:67-80 | Isaiah 35:1-4 | Isaiah 35:5-10 |
| An angel appeared to Mary | | | | | | |

December 18-24

Jesus makes everything **new.**

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Matthew 1:1-6a | Matthew 1:6b-11 | Matthew 1:12-17 | Matthew 1:18-25 | Isaiah 43:1-7 | Isaiah 43:8-13 | Isaiah 43:14-28 |
| An angel appeared to Joseph | | | | | | |

December 25-31

Jesus is **God's love** for everyone.

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Luke 2:1-12 | Luke 2:13-21 | Luke 2:22-39 | Luke 2:41-52 | Hebrews 1:1-4 | Hebrews 1:5-14 |
| An angel appeared to the Shepherds | | | | | | |

The heart of TRINITY KIDS is to equip parents to walk alongside their children as they learn and experience the love of Jesus.

Sundays
9:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Stop in the commons to use our secure check-in. Your child wears their name tag and parents receive a tag to pick up their child after worship.

At Trinity Kids, children through grade 5, engage with Jesus through kid-designed worship, fun small groups, engaging activities and friendship building.

Parents are able to worship without distraction.

Grades 6-12



TRINITY STUDENTS

Hey Church! November was a great month for Trinity Students!

It's been so exciting seeing how God has been working in Trinity Students this semester. One of our big goals this year has been to give students more leadership and it has been AWESOME! We've gotten students involved on our weekly worship teams, we have students welcoming others on hospitality team, students are leading games, and some are even getting ready to give the message! In the last month, we've had two different students preparing. They started by working through a process on Bible Interpretation, and then used what they learned to share a meaningful passage of scripture to the rest of the group, unpacking the importance of that passage.

As we head into 2023, we can't wait to see how God continues to use our students to bring others to Him.

Thanks for supporting Trinity Students!

Wednesdays* 6:45-8:15 pm

Enter through the NE door ↗

Open gym, video & board games, Trinity Store, and Food starts at 6 pm

**When Papillion La Vista School District is not in session, Trinity Students does not meet.*



Chase Florum
Student and Family Minister
cflorum@trinitylife.org
402-281-2499

Registrations and event
details are found at
www.nextsteps.guide



TRINITY CHURCH IS GENEROUS

Our Tithes and Offerings
Connect People to Christ!

GIVING IN OCTOBER

Offering Entries = 492

of: Donors = 213 | New Donors = 1 | Recurring = 82

Source: Electronic Giving = 288 | Cash & Checks = 204

Total Gifts Received = \$105,868

General Fund: \$71,819

Go Vision Appeal Fund: \$28,885

All other giving*: \$5,164

*includes Trinity Relief Fund, Papio Creek, Memorial, IT Fund, Trinity Kids, TK Mary Kamara, Little Miracles, Stephen Center

SEPTEMBER ENDING BALANCES

General Fund: \$ -64,391

Building Fund: \$ 40,310

Endowment: \$ 329,938

GO Fund May 2021- April 2024

Received as of 11/21- \$677,129

56% of our \$1.2 million goal

from 2409 donations

1861 from pledges | 548 from non-pledged

General Fund 2022

Received as of 11/21 - \$744,276

85% of our \$878,584 goal

from 4153 donations

1664 from pledges / 2489 from non-pledged

Partner in the good work God is doing through Trinity Church

Give in person or by mail:

Checks payable to Trinity Church at
848 Gold Coast Rd, Papillion NE 68046

Give in worship:

Locate the black offering boxes in the
back of the Chapel and Worship Center.



To give electronically

- Use this [link](#)
- the QR Code
- trinitylife.org/giving

AMONG OUR PEOPLE

Happy Birthday Trail Blazers (80+) Years

- 12/03 - Ed Niemann
- 12/10 - Eugene Ellefson
- 12/22 - Carol Gates
- 12/28 - Otis Carr

Happy 50+ Anniversary

- 12/11/64 - Dale & Caryl Horton
- 12/19/64 - Jim & Shelly Petersen
- 12/22/68 - Jim & Nancy Thomas
- 12/23/56 - Otis & Marlene Carr
- 12/27/63 - Tom & Beverly Vitamvas

Health & Healing

- Arlyn Montgomery
- Tom Tomanek
- Jody Duffy

Sympathies to

- 11/09 - the Tom & Sarah Waldman family on the loss of their daughter, Anne.

OUR VISION:

A place to belong and become who God is calling us to be.

OUR MISSION:

Connecting People to Christ

OUR STRATEGY:

Love God | Grow Community | Serve Others

A Four-Week Series during Advent

◆ —◆
EXPECTED
◆ —◆

Plan | Purpose | Problem | Promise

Recapturing the wonder and awe of God's plan for people through the gift and grace of Jesus.

To enrich your advent season with the anticipation of the coming Christ, purchase your Advent devotional,

The Expected One, from Trinity Cafe. Cost is \$10.

Also, engage with Trinity Church on Facebook during Advent.

We have some special things planned.



Christmas Worship

A Travelers Christmas

Wednesday, December 21 | 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24

2:00 | 4:00 | 6:00 | 8:00* p.m.

***Chapel service**

Childcare for kids 4 and younger at 2 & 4 p.m.

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 25 | 9:00 a.m.

Online Only

Subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#), Trinity Papillion, for livestreamed services

**Church Office is closed
Monday, December 26**