



# Trinity Today

Vol. 23, No. 12

December 1, 2021

## Advent, Christmas & New Year's at Trinity!

Trinity Downtown is located in the center of the most diverse city in the United States. For example, Houstonians speak over 145 different languages and more than 1/3 of our residents over the age of 5 speak a language other than English at home. The diversity in these culture groups extends even into how they prepare for and celebrate Christmas.

This year our Advent theme is "Christmas Around the World." Our pastors will be looking at the many different ways people celebrate Christmas. Every day during Advent the focus will be on a different country. On Sundays, you'll be able to join us for live or on demand worship and hear about some of the many ways people prepare for and celebrate Christmas. During the week, a devotional video will premier every day leading up to Christmas featuring one of our pastors touching on a passage of Scripture and what Christmas is in another country.

Though the preparations and celebrations of Christmas may differ from place to place and people to people, the reason for the celebration remains the same...it's Jesus' birthday and we celebrate God's Son who came to save us.



### CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE

**Christmas Eve**  
4:00 & 6:00 p.m.

**Christmas Day**  
9:00 a.m.

**New Year's Eve**  
6:00 p.m.

# Casa 'de Oracion's More Love at Christmas: In Search of Treasures Gift Card and Toy Drive

Trinity Downtown has a wonderful opportunity to help support our ministry partner, Casa 'de Oracion, as they help share the love of Jesus at Christmas time. Casa will be hosting a special Spanish language Christmas outreach event on December 12 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Entitled *In Search of Treasures*, local families are invited to hear the sharing of the Christmas story, while enjoying great food, music, and Christmas gifts for the children.

We need your help and ask that you consider the following Christmas gifting opportunities, as together we connect with the children and families of our local community.

- Donate Walmart, Target or Amazon gift cards in \$25.00 denomination. Gift Cards may be dropped off at the church office or put in an envelope marked **Casa Christmas** and then dropped in the offering plates or boxes on Sunday morning.
- Donate new, unwrapped toys and leave them in the collection boxes in the gathering space and foyer. Christmas gifts will be for boys and girls ages 2-15.



Casa hopes to distribute to local families 100 gift cards and 150 children's gifts. All gift cards and gifts must be received at church by 2:30 p.m. on Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup>.

In the name of the Prince of Peace,  
Matt Meier, Director of Discipleship

## Poinsettia Donations

We have ordered poinsettias (\$10.25 each) to adorn our worship area on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. If you are interested in donating a plant(s) which may be taken home with you after the Christmas Day service, please order in one of the two ways listed below.

- Complete the form [online](#) and submit your payment by mailing a check earmarked for poinsettias to the church office or submit payment [online](#).
- Write your dedication(s) on the Poinsettia order form available at the Welcome Center. Insert your check and form in the envelope provided and place in the Poinsettia box.

There is no limit on the number of poinsettias you can order. Deadline to order poinsettias and have dedication included in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day online service folders is Wednesday, December 15.



# Pastor Dorn's Christmas Movie Bible Study

Looking for a different Bible study this Christmas? Do you like Christmas movies? Then this could be the Bible study for you!

In *Christmas with the Kranks*, Luther Krank is fed up with Christmas, so when he has the chance to skip it, he does. This year he won't buy a tree, host a party, or put up any elaborate house decorations. If you too sometimes feel like skipping Christmas, join Pastor Dorn in a lively Bible study of *Christmas with the Kranks*. Over three Sundays we'll be watching the whole movie which has many relevant illustrations of what we face as Christmas approaches. Pastor Dorn will guide the discussion and point to Bible passages where God speaks to the joys and challenges of the Holiday Season. There will be fresh-popped popcorn provided! Topics include:



- Reaching out to neighbors
- The meaning of community
- Motivations that drive our choices
- Being alert to the struggles of others as Christmas approaches
- Joyful giving without expectations

Bring a friend and join us in getting ready for Christmas. The class will meet in Pastor Dorn's office (Rm 123) on December 5, 12, and 19 at 10:15 a.m.

## One Service

**Sunday Morning  
December 26 at 9:00 a.m.**

**Sunday Morning  
January 2 at 9:00 a.m.**

**This year on December 26 and January 2 we will have only one morning service. Also note, there will not be Sunday School or Adult Bible Study on these two Sundays.**

# Blood Donor Sunday

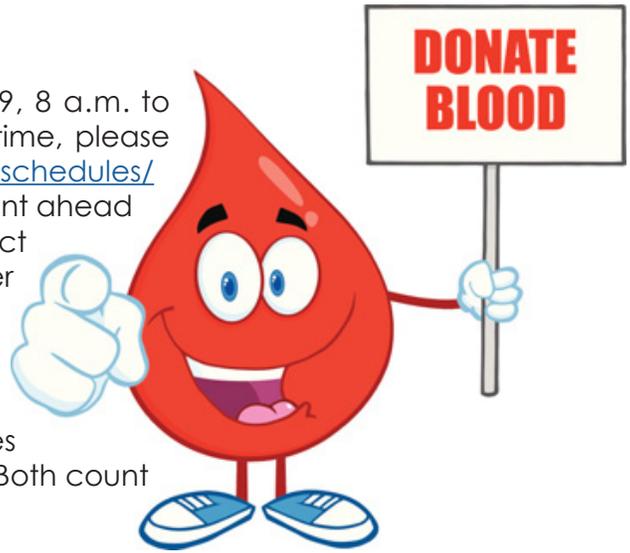
Our next Blood Donor Sunday will be held January 9, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the gym. If you would prefer a special time, please sign up online at [https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/338574](https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/338574). While scheduling an appointment ahead of time gives us an estimate of how many donors to expect and the Blood Center sends out the appropriate number of workers; an added bonus is we take scheduled appointments prior to walk-ups.

We look forward to a very successful drive. Double red cell and combination whole blood and plasma machines will be available for those wishing to donate that way. Both count for two donations.

Save time with the DIGITAL DONOR APP. The App makes it easy to find a blood drive, schedule your donation and answer the CFL Express Pass health history interview before you arrive.

REMINDER!! The minimum donor age requirement to give blood is 16 years old with a parent's permission. Weight must be 122 lbs. (still 110 lbs. for 17 and older) and in general good health.

REMEMBER: one unit of blood can save as many as three lives as it is broken down into three components – red blood cells, platelets and plasma.



# Homeless Christmas Dinner/Shoebox Gifts

For a number of reasons it has been decided that we will change direction and discontinue this event. It would appear that the gentrification of the neighborhood around Trinity has caused the number of folks receiving sack lunches to decline in the last couple of years. The number attending the Christmas dinner in 2019 was down significantly from 2018.

In addition to supporting the sack lunch ministry, if you want to further support the homeless population that come for a sack lunch, we would **suggest donating new socks (white preferred), gloves, stocking caps, jackets** that can be given out on cold days upon request. Because of the

lower turnout in 2019, we had a supply of cold weather items that we gave out in 2020 but that supply was completely depleted. Ninety-five percent of those coming for a sack lunch are male adults and require a large or extra-large size. A marked box will be located in the foyer where you may place your donation. Or if you prefer, you may make a monetary donation to the sack lunch ministry for winter clothing.



While we are discontinuing this event, a new Christmas event is announced (on page 2) where you may support our Spanish ministry partner, Casa 'de Oracion's plan to host a family event on December 12. They are asking for donations of gift cards and toys for children for that event.

If you support either or both of these giving opportunities to share the love of Jesus, we thank you in advance.

*Donations for Homeless*

# News from the Congregational Assembly

At the Congregational Assembly held on November 14<sup>th</sup>, voters elected Jim Baccus and Chris Sonneborn as Elders on the Governing Board. Marie Munier and Ross Krueger were selected for two non-Elder Governing Board positions. David Jenthro, Curtis Knisley, John Menke, Josh Rodriguez, George Sacaris and Elizabeth Stoerkel were elected to serve as the 2022 Nominating Committee.



**Jim Baccus**



**Chris Sonneborn**



**Ross Krueger**



**Marie Munier**

Pastor Dorn led the meeting participants in expressing their heartfelt thanks for the service of the two outgoing Governing Board members, Kim Davis (as outgoing Chairperson) and Delvin Dennis.

The Governing Board report focused on the opportunities that God has placed in Trinity's path to share the Gospel with our community that is suffering from the impact of the COVID pandemic and offered thanks to the Lord for the financial health of our congregation.

Voters approved the 2022 Ministry Financial Plan which calls for spending \$2.25m for ministry operations next year. This compares to budgeted spending of \$2.17m in 2021 and \$2.25m in 2020. 2022's budget includes \$229k allocated for our mortgage payments for the Education Center. These mortgage payments are fully offset by rental income from LEAH.

Voters also approved a plan to initiate a series of "mini" capital campaigns over the ensuing years aimed at upgrading, refreshing and repairing our facilities. The initial capital campaign will focus on the Sanctuary and adjacent restrooms and is projected to cost \$500k-\$750k.

The meeting participants enjoyed BBQ prepared by the Holy Smokers, and brisket sales raised over \$1,200 for the Harms-Behnken Mission Fund.



# Finance Corner - December 1, 2021

...we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35b ESV

Dear Supporter of Trinity's Ministry:

As year-end approaches, we celebrate together the Advent of our Lord, and anticipate His coming again. This is also a busy time of year for financially-related news, including:

- Thanks to your generous contributions, through October 31<sup>st</sup>, our tithes and offerings were almost exactly on budget and our expenses were 0.6% lower than our budgeted expenditures.
- Our weekly attendance in October averaged 349, with online attendees comprised 42% of our worship attendance. The resumption of in-person Sunday School had a big impact on our Bible study attendance; in October we had an average of 208 participants each week!
- At the Congregational Assembly on November 14<sup>th</sup>, voters approved the 2022 Ministry Financial Plan which calls for spending \$2.25m for ministry operations next year. This compares to budgeted spending of \$2.17m in 2021 and \$2.25m in 2020. 2022's budget includes \$229k allocated for our mortgage payments for the Education Center. These mortgage payments are fully offset by rental income from LEAH. Our operational debt was fully paid-off earlier in 2021.
- 2022 Home Treasury Commitment Cards were mailed to members and supporters in October. If you've not had a chance to return your card, please be in prayer asking God to guide your thoughts on what He would have you give to Trinity in the coming year. You may drop your 2022 pledge into the offering plate during any worship service, complete an online version of the pledge card by clicking [here](#), or mail your pledge card to the church office at:



Trinity Lutheran Church  
Attn: Contributions Manager  
800 Houston AVE  
Houston, TX 77007

Trinity recently received \$200+ in contributions from Amazon Smile in response to those in our congregation that have asked Amazon to donate a portion of their purchases to us. As you do your holiday shopping [online](#), please consider participating in this opportunity to bless our congregation.

**amazon**smile

**You shop. Amazon gives.**

The end of the year is traditionally a time when non-profit organizations, ministries and churches look forward to receiving a higher-than-normal level of contributions, and Trinity Downtown is not an exception. As we celebrate Jesus' birth together, please remember that Trinity depends on your continued generosity to fund our ongoing ministries.

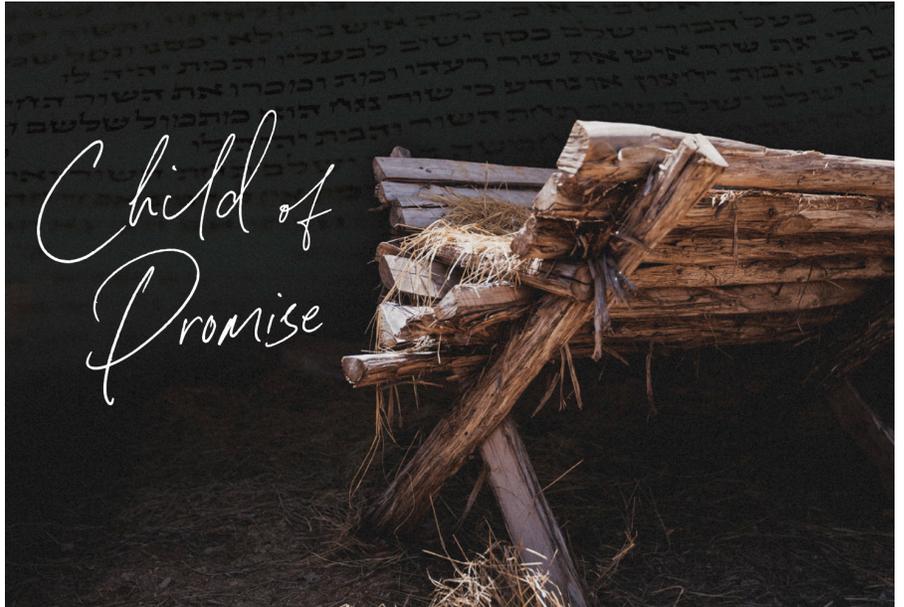
It is an honor to watch what God is doing as He continues to work in and through us to build His Kingdom!

Joyfully Joining Jesus alongside you this Advent season,  
Ron Lacy, CFO

# Advent Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries—Child of Promise

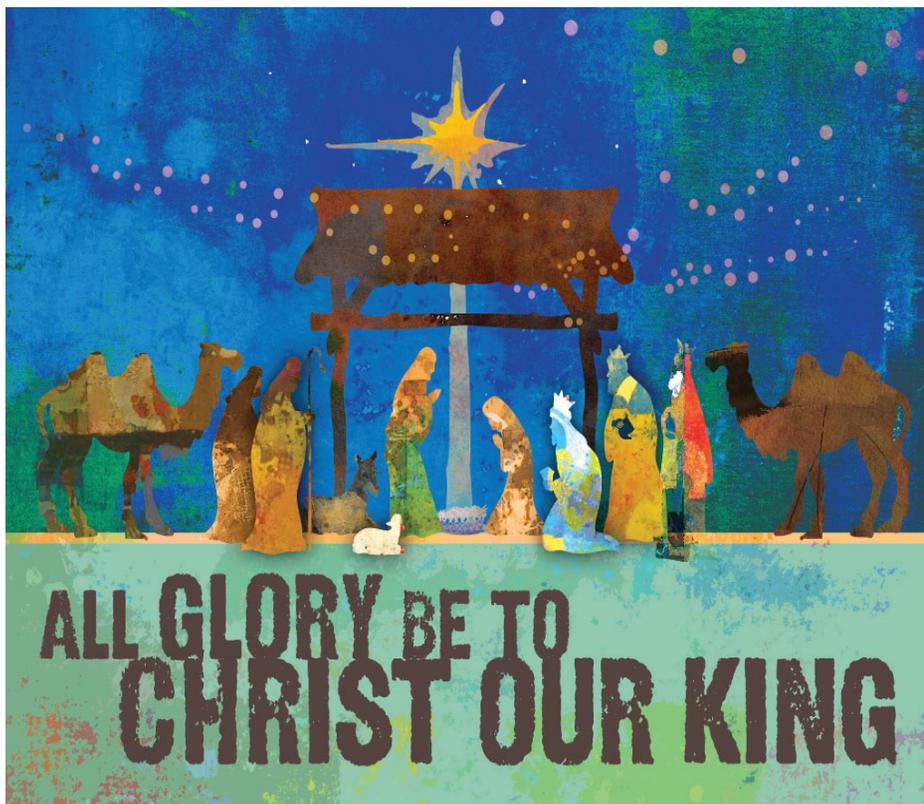
The birth of the Savior is celebrated again this year in *Child of Promise*, a joyful look at the miracle of Jesus' birth. From the beginning, foretold in Genesis and proclaimed throughout the Old Testament, God announced the coming Messiah to a wayward world. In Jesus Christ, that promise was fulfilled.

Each year Christians reflect on the hope God offers the world at Christmas. Born unto us—God's Son, our Savior—Jesus is the fulfillment of the Father's promise to send a Redeemer. Announced beforehand by the prophets, in the Christ Child we have the



forgiveness of our sins and the hope of life eternal. This God has given to us in His *Child of Promise*.

Daily Devotions from LHM will help strengthen and encourage your faith as you do the same for others. Printed copies are available or have them delivered right to your [inbox](#), [podcast the audio devotional](#), access them on your mobile device through the [FREE app](#), or listen with [Spotify](#), [iHeart Radio](#), [Alexa](#), or [Google Home](#). Perfect for personal reflection or to share with family, friends and congregations, these seasonal meditations will help prepare you to celebrate the true meaning of Advent.



## 2021 GOVERNING BOARD

Jim Baccus (Elder)

Kim Davis (Chair)

Cindy Deere

Delvin Dennis (Elder)

Thomas DeVries

Pastor Michael Dorn

Tim Grady (Elder)

Cassandra McGarvey

Dan Krueger (Vice-Chair/  
Elder)

Janet Mueller (Secretary)

Cynthia Roney

*Minutes of the Governing Board are available to our members at the Welcome Center.*

# Hey, Trinity Families!

Our youth and children's ministry is going well! We had some great, successful events in November! Turkey bowling and crafts for kids ministry and Nerf wars for youth! We also have 15 registered for National Youth Gathering in the summer and potentially 5 more students and 2 more chaperones! God is SO GOOD! Currently we are aiming to raise \$25,000 to go towards costs associated with the National Youth Gathering. Please read our brochure below and consider investing in our youth! You won't regret it!



## Trinity Youth Ministry Annual Stock Subscription

### INVEST IN OUR YOUTH

The youth at Trinity Downtown are pleased to announce a renewed opportunity for you to make an annual investment in their lives, with as little as a \$50 contribution.

### WHAT CAN \$50 DO?

Have you ever wondered what \$50 can do for youth ministry at Trinity?

- \$50 can cover an entire day of meals for one student at a National Youth Gathering allowing them freedom to experience worshipping with 25,000 other youth.
- \$50 can cover a tank of gas to take students to a retreat where they grow in faith and community.
- \$50 can cover lunch with lay leaders who are investing in students
- \$50 can cover supplies for ministry events that foster new relationships.

### INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

By investing in the Youth of Trinity Downtown you are investing in shaping and forming faith of students between 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, who are growing in their roles within the body of Christ. Did you know that so far within a month of announcing registrations, we have 15 youth committed to attending the National Youth Gathering this summer? These students are dedicated to and excited about growing in their faith!

Our hope is to take 20 students and 5 chaperones. To accomplish that we need to raise \$25,000.

This year your initial investment will go towards all costs associated with the National Youth Gathering. Any investment beyond this initial goal will be designated to specific youth ministry programs and opportunities!

By buying a single share at \$50 you will receive a signed group photo and thank you note from Haley Davisson. By buying 2 shares (\$100) you are invited to join the annual shareholders dinner, are added to the quarterly youth ministry update list and the chance to learn about the students you are investing in. You will hear the stories of changed lives and build relationships with these amazing students as they show their gratitude for your support! **Shareholder benefits are annual and must be used within the year. The shares you purchase today provide benefits through 10/31/2022.**

### HOW TO PURCHASE

You can pay by check (payable to Trinity Lutheran Church, memo line: Youth Annual Stock Subscription) after services or give directly to Haley Davisson. You may also pay using a credit card at <https://www.trinitydt.org/online-giving/>.

### SHAREHOLDER BENEFITS

**Orange Shareholder** = invest \$50 (1 share)

- Signed Group Photo
- Thank you note from Haley Davisson

**Bronze Shareholder** = invest \$100 (2 shares)

- All the perks of being a Bronze shareholder, +
- Shareholder's dinner.
- Youth Ministry Quarterly Updates

**Silver Shareholder** = invest \$250 (5 shares)

- All the perks of being a Bronze shareholder, +
- Trinity Downtown T-shirt
- Come alongside NYG students and receive prayer partner updates during the gathering

**Gold Shareholder** = invest \$500 (10 shares)

- All the perks of being a Silver shareholder, +
- Get a National Youth Gathering Coffee Mug
- Opportunity to pre-submit questions to be asked at the shareholders dinner.

**Teal Shareholder** = invest \$1000+ (20+ shares)

- All the perks of being a Gold shareholder, +
- 1 mutually agreed upon service project before 10/31/22!
- Handwritten thank you notes from youth expressing their thanks.

Your contributions can make a real difference in Trinity Downtown's ministry to our students by helping provide a place and a program that can build their faith for a lifetime!

# Coping with the Holiday Season's Stress

We are entering the holiday season filled with special events, all of which come with their own set of (high) expectations. Many of us will gather with our extended family, which means we may be confronted with talking to our family's "crazy uncle" or meet a new Significant Other that we don't know anything about. You might be walking through this season grieving due to the loss of a close friend or relative who passed away during the last twelve months. Or, you might feel lonely because you are NOT going to be surrounded by family and friends during a time when "everyone else" will be busy going to family-related events.



## Handling the Holidays

So, each of us will be dealing with our own expectations of what the holiday season SHOULD be, and our fear that we won't measure up. So, what can we do to enjoy the season? How can we make space for feeling the joy of Advent and the wonder of God's grace? Here are a few tips:

1. Don't try to juggle it all. Don't be afraid to say "no thanks" to events that don't really interest you; pace yourself so that you can participate in the gatherings that have special meaning for you.
2. Get organized; make a list of the gifts you want to buy and the goodies you want to bake.
3. Eat healthy. Enjoy the holiday treats, but consider getting smaller portions.
4. Volunteer or make a special gift to a ministry that you know is doing God's work in our community.
5. Find time to laugh at the silly things that happen.
6. Consider creating a "holiday journal" to record the good, the bad and the ugly.
7. Write a thank you note to someone who has done something to warm your heart.
8. Use unexpected delays as a chance to breathe and relax.
9. Develop a gift budget so you won't be surprised when your credit card bills arrive in January.
10. Give yourself permission to feel what you feel. Your feelings don't define who you are, and probably don't accurately reflect how much God loves you.
11. Take time to get a broader perspective. Intentionally set aside time to worship our Lord and thank Him for the wonderful gifts He's given to you this year.
12. Don't be afraid to reach out to Trinity Downtown's Stephen Ministry if you need to talk to someone.

Stephen Ministers are commissioned members of our congregation who have received 50 hours of specialized training to equip them to provide Christ-focused, **highly confidential** care and prayer support to people experiencing a crisis, facing a challenge or simply going through a tough time.

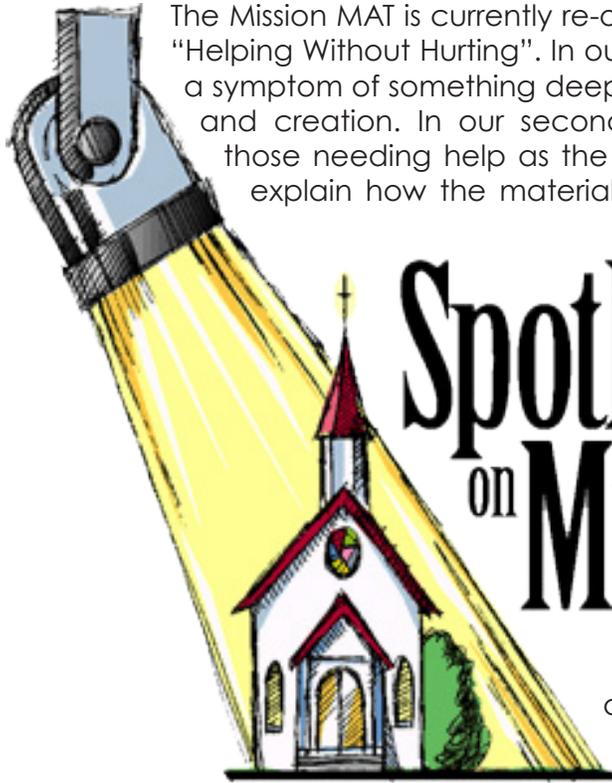
Following their commissioning, Stephen Ministers also commit to a continuing education program aimed at sharpening their caregiving skills. Trinity Downtown's Stephen Ministers meet twice a month to study a variety of relevant topics.

**Trinity Downtown's Stephen Ministry would love to come alongside you during this stressful time that masquerades as the holiday season.** Perhaps you or a loved one are struggling with the after-effects of COVID, an ongoing illness or loneliness, and you want to ask for God's comfort and healing. Or maybe you're facing a difficult and potentially life-altering decision and you need God's direction. Or, you've received a real blessing from the Lord for which you want to offer sincere thanks.

If you'd like to learn more about how our Stephen Ministry could provide a listening ear and caring heart for yourself, a loved one, friend, neighbor or co-worker (inside or outside our congregation) please speak with one of our pastors, or reach out to Ron Lacy at [rlacy@trinitydt.org](mailto:rlacy@trinitydt.org) or 713.229.2970.

# The Dynamics of Ministry for Poverty in a Broken World

From the book, "Helping without Hurting in Church Benevolence" by Steve Corbett and Brian Finkert, Section III



The Mission MAT is currently re-orienting itself to the concepts found in the book entitled, "Helping Without Hurting". In our first article, we discussed how material poverty is simply a symptom of something deeper: a breakdown in the relationship with God, self, others and creation. In our second article, we distinguished those seeking to help from those needing help as the materially non-poor vs. the materially poor. The authors explain how the materially non-poor can unintentionally negatively impact the materially poor by providing relief in situations that really require development.

## Spotlight on Missions

In this our third, and final, article on the book, we explore the responsibilities and constructive actions that can be taken to address the causes of material poverty.

Many churches respond to the needs of the materially poor by simply "writing checks" or handing out cash or material resources directly. A participatory approach looks to the recipient to take some

actions to improve their situation, even if not all aspects of the situation are within their power to change. There are several caveats that must be taken into account, including the mental state and possible life-threatening conditions that the recipient is experiencing. For those

that have no desire to change, enabling them to persist in sin by providing handouts of food, clothing, or shelter is not loving. Rather, the loving thing to do may be to allow them to feel the burden of their choice in hopes that this will trigger positive change. Poverty cannot be solved without the transforming power of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

An individual or family experiencing material poverty may face challenges that are beyond the scope of what our church can realistically and effectively address. In these scenarios, connecting them to another ministry or resource that can address those challenges can be a powerful way of strengthening our mission work. Trinity Lutheran Church Downtown has developed a Community Resource Directory that includes churches and Christian organizations that are seeking to be "ambassadors of reconciliation", as well as services provided by other non-church entities. These resources are referred by the Stephen Ministers and where homeless meals are distributed. The authors recommend that individuals and churches blessed with financial resources, like Trinity Lutheran Downtown, should direct financial giving to organizations that pursue gospel-focused participatory development. The needs of these organizations are significant as this type of approach is time intensive. We should do our utmost to connect to and support these ministries rather than starting something redundant.

So how can we institute a poverty alleviation mission program that embodies these principles? Ministry happens where you are. The task is about giving encouragement, problem solving with the person not for them, helping them develop an accountable action plan, praying together for each other, and connecting the person with appropriate help. One of the key skills needed in a support team is the ability to identify and mobilize other individuals and ministries to be involved in the reconciling

work. The Mission MAT is beginning the process of exploring 2022 initiatives. Under consideration is mission participation with the following organizations:

Ysleta Lutheran Mission in El Paso  
LINC Ministries  
Orphan Grain Train

The scarcest resource to meet needs is not money, it is people who are willing to walk with materially poor people over time. We need to understand that, in addition to giving our money, we must "spend" ourselves on behalf of the hungry and oppressed (Isaiah 58:10).

If you would like to invest your time, talents, and resources to help us build a path to more effective Mission ministries, please join us at our next Zoom meeting on Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. Please contact Pastor Dorn ([mdorn@trinitydt.org](mailto:mdorn@trinitydt.org)) to obtain the Zoom credentials.

## Thank You For Another Successful Food Drive

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, Trinity Downtown held its annual food drive to provide canned goods and nonperishable food items for those in need from our community. Along with items collected by the children at LEAH Downtown Academy, several loads of food were taken to the St. Joseph Food Pantry that provides groceries to those in our neighborhood. We are blessed to partner with St. Joseph's in feeding the hungry.

Thank you to Steve, Tana, and Zachary Bell for coordinating this annual event. We are incredibly grateful for their service. Special thanks to all of Trinity Downtown and LEAH Downtown Academy families for contributing to the food drive with such generosity and thankfulness.



For urgent prayer requests, please call:  
Lil Hohle - 346.207.7442

# Tips for Toddlers from LDA

Choices are a big deal. Most of us like to have a choice or say in the matter at hand. For young children, too many choices can be overwhelming and create a pattern of behavior that makes them think they always get to make the decisions in your household and even in life. You know the scenario...the child wants milk in the purple cup instead of the green cup you picked out. No big deal, you make the switch. The child wants to wear blue shorts instead of the red shorts you laid out for them. Again, you make the switch because life is short. "Let's not sweat the small stuff." Be careful! While we want to give children the opportunity to practice making appropriate choices, we also need to guide them in healthy expectations and patterns of choice making. Let's face it, as adults, we don't always get to experience our preferred choice. Children won't either. Life is all about give and take, taking turns, and merging and lane changes. Help your child be OK with not always getting to make the choice. You will likely avoid a few tantrums along the way and help your child cope with disappointment in their future. Additionally, limiting the number of choices they get to make each day will help your child not to be overwhelmed with decisions they are not yet equipped to make.



We are blessed to be able to provide children with so many wonderful experiences and activities through the LEAH Schools-Trinity ministry partnership.

The children enjoyed story time with a scarecrow, pumpkin races, fall activities, and a petting zoo during our Harvest Festival.



The Food Drive provided a wonderful experience of sharing God's love and His provisions with others.



The students and families of LEAH Downtown provided more than 50 gift boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Our students are learning that it is a blessing to give as well as to receive.



*Kathy*      *Christian*      *Vivian*      *Nomi*      *Lila*  
*Jessica*      *Niddle*      *KARA*      *Karen*  
*Amida*      Merry Christmas from      *Desiree*  
*Dasana*      LEAH Schools Downtown Academy  
*Cassandra*  
*Kaitlin*      *Shorese*      *Sarahai*      *Kioshi*      *Guadalupe*      *Bree*  
*Victoria*      *Nelly*

# Children, Youth and Adult Bible Studies

Please consider joining one or more of our Bible studies. It's a wonderful way to begin a new spiritual discipline. Virtual login information is available on Trinity's website [www.trinitydt.org](http://www.trinitydt.org). Children and youth classes are in person unless indicated otherwise. Adult classes are either virtual, in person or hybrid.

## **SUNDAYS - CHILDREN** (10:15 - 11:15 AM)

**Nursery** (Infants - age 2) - Room 234

**Kingdom Quest 2 & 3 year olds** - Room 233

**Kingdom Quest 4 & 5 year olds** - Room 232

**Kingdom Quest 1st Grade - 4th Grade** - Kingdom Hall (basement)

**Casa 'de Oracion Spanish** (all grades) - Room 209

## **SUNDAYS - YOUTH** (10:15 - 11:15 AM)

**Foundations 56** (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades) - Room 207

**Confirmation** (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades) - Room 208 - Hybrid

**High School** (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades) - Underground (basement)

## **SUNDAYS - ADULT**

### **Beauty in the Eye of God**

Led by Thomas DeVries and Anthony Flaviani - 10:15-11:15 AM - Room 206 - In Person

Consider the philosophical, religious and social implications of choosing the line where absolute truth ends and subjectivity begins. Perhaps there is more of God that is true in our world than millennia of Western thought would have us believe.

### **Christmas with the Kranks - Christmas Movie Bible Study**

Led by Pastor Michael Dorn - 10:15-11:15 AM - Room 123 - In Person

See description of class on page 3.

### **Exodus**

Led by Pastor Paul Dorn - 7:00-8:00 PM - Virtual

The book of Exodus will lead us through the pivotal event in the history of God's dealings with His people. The deliverance from Egypt and the covenant God made with Israel is the event which the prophets held in the memory of the people as they called them to repentance and faith in God, their Savior. The Old Testament exodus points us to the New Testament exodus, the deliverance, which God won for us through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89192043843>

### **Joining Jesus on His Mission**

Led by Pastor Jose Flores of Casa 'de Oracion - 10:15-11:15 AM - Room 211 - In Person

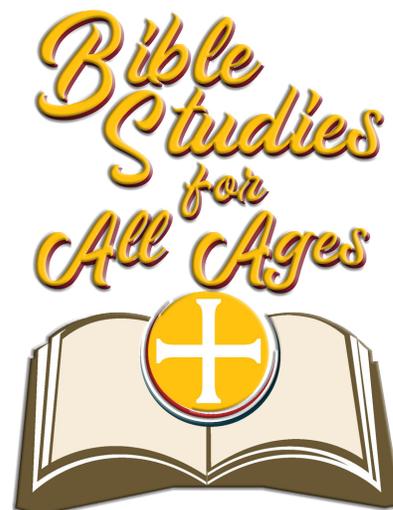
Participants are encouraged to join this study using the book and videos for *Joining Jesus on His Mission*. Written and produced by Trinity's deployed missionary, Pastor Greg Finke, *Joining Jesus on His Mission* is a simple, powerful, and practical book that will move you and your tribe from merely thinking about being everyday missionaries to launching. You will feel both relief and hope as you gain insights into how to recognize where Jesus is already at work in your everyday world and join Him.

This is a Spanish-speaking Bible study opportunity.

### **The Bible Alive ... God In Action**

Led by John Reisig - 10:15-11:15 AM - Room 124 - In Person

In this study, each Sunday offers a single stand alone topic. The material covered each week will provide a meaningful experience for regular participants, visitors to Trinity Downtown, and for those simply looking to get back into a routine of attending Bible study. The single topic format insures that no one will be lost or feel behind during the study, and will feel welcome and encouraged to attend at any time. Bibles will be provided and utilized each week. Providing historical context to the scriptural message, and modern application of His word, the Bible will "Come Alive," and show that God has been working throughout history, and is still working today out of love for His people.



### **The Word Became Flesh: John**

Led by Jim Cleary - 10:15-11:15 AM - Room 205 - Hybrid

Join us as we look through the Beloved's gospel, describing what an intimate relationship with Jesus looks like. This will be a fast-paced, discussion-oriented class, with lots of opportunities for questions. The class is geared to all, from new believer to seasoned disciple.

### **Questions Jesus Asks**

Led by Bill Fischer - 10:15-11:15 AM - Room 201 - Hybrid

This study follows Jesus' teaching method of asking questions rather than always answering them directly. Doing this helps the person He is speaking to understand Him and His ministry better.

## **TUESDAYS - ADULTS**

### **Your Strong Suit: Women's Bible Study on God's Armor (Women's Study)**

Led by Karen Maynard - 10:00-11:30 AM - Room 205 - Hybrid

This verse-by-verse study of the armor of God details the incredible protection that God has provided to His children. Even though we may not like discussing spiritual warfare, it is necessary because it is real. Spiritual warfare has the potential to rob us of peace and security only to leave behind doubt and unrest. But God offers protection to us – HIS protection. Journey through this study as we learn about the battle, our enemy, our armor and our place in God's army. But most importantly, we come to know the rock solid truth that God has provided everything we need to proclaim ultimate victory.

### **Joining Jesus on His Mission - Virtual Bible Study for Young Adults**

Led by Maddie Meier - 7:15 PM on every other Tuesday - Virtual

Young adults are encouraged to join this virtual study using the book and videos for *Joining Jesus on His Mission*. Written and produced by Trinity's deployed missionary, Pastor Greg Finke, *Joining Jesus on His Mission* is a simple, powerful, and practical book that will move you and your tribe from merely thinking about being everyday missionaries to launching. You will feel both relief and hope as you gain insights into how to recognize where Jesus is already at work in your everyday world and join Him. Books are available in the church office and can be obtained by emailing Matt Meier at [mmeier@trinitydt.org](mailto:mmeier@trinitydt.org).

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/92015984452?pwd=ZUh4dnNTT3lzdVnQNTVmQWcwNDBKdz09> Meeting ID: 920 1598 4452, Passcode: zGND4G

## **WEDNESDAYS - ADULTS**

### **The Mighty & The Mysterious: A Study of Colossians (Women's Study)**

Led by Mary Oliver - 6:30-8:00 PM - Hybrid

New Christians in 1st-century Colossae were not all that different from Christians today. They, too, struggled to understand who Jesus is, how Jesus alone reconciles us to God, and why things aren't perfect in the Church.

In St. Paul's letter to these Christians he had never met, he doesn't say they should stop asking hard questions. He doesn't tell them to stop searching God's Word, to stop seeking spiritual wisdom, or to stop striving for unity within the Church. Instead, Paul focuses on their questions and struggles on the Gospel of the mighty and mysterious God: the same God who created the universe revealed Himself among us and reclaimed us as His own through His Son, Jesus.

Walk with author Heidi Goehmann through God's Word to the Colossians. Though many things will remain a mystery until we see our Savior, this six-session Bible study will help readers discover that God fills them right now in every way, through the mighty and mysterious Body of Christ, the Church.

### **Virtual Midweek Spiritual Check-in**

Led by Jim Cleary - 7:00-8:00 PM - Virtual

## **THURSDAYS - ADULTS**

### **Sonrise Bible Study**

Led by Pastor Donald Black - 7:30-8:30 AM - Virtual

The virtual study discusses the Scripture readings assigned for the following Sunday. The class is open to men and women. For more information, contact Pastor Black at 713.229.2917 or [dblack@trinitydt.org](mailto:dblack@trinitydt.org).

# Greetings from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis!

It is the beginning of Thanksgiving week as I write this, but it will already be Advent by the time you read this. I am certainly ready for a bit of a break, but I am trying to see and appreciate the pace of this semester as a blessing. Despite going into the semester expecting an easier time, I quickly loaded my schedule up, as noted last month. Instead of having an easy pace of assignments that could be finished with plenty of extra time to spare, I feel like everything has been finished just in time. But everything has been finished so far. And that is a blessing. Not to mention the fact that this teaches me to be more realistic about ministry and the rest of life. My perfectionist tendencies often drive me to spend more time on things than are probably necessary. This is undoubtedly a manifestation of my sinful desire to be my own provider and master. I am often reminded to live in the tension between the responsibilities of my vocations and the grace given me in Christ.



**Chuck Ridley,  
Seminary Student**



We also often speak of the tension between the 'now' and the 'not yet'. That is, the tension of the two realities we live in – the reality of Christ's complete Lordship over all creation now and the reality that we do not yet see this reign of Christ in its fullness. This is a tension that is prominent in Advent as we remember the first coming of Christ to us (the birth of Jesus as a human being) and look forward to His second coming to make the 'not yet' realized in the 'now'. Some of you may be struggling greatly, and you can't wait for Jesus to come back, if it will only change your present situation. Others of you may be feeling pretty good with life and wouldn't mind if Jesus delayed a bit longer. Either way, I encourage you to take up the practice of praying that Jesus return quickly (cf. 1 Cor. 16:22b, Rev. 22:20b).

I think this is a good practice to help us remember our dependence on our Lord to restore all things. As I hear about more conflict in our nation and the whole world, I am confronted with the inadequacies of the solutions posited by so many people. We are each inclined to think that we have the right answer, the right solution. If only they would just do it my way. Yet, if we are careful, I'm certain that each of us would find that our solution serves some personal bias we have. Even when we think we're doing what's best for everyone, we would undoubtedly do harm to others. Perhaps even more so when we abstract our neighbor and try to take a consequentialist approach to life – seeking the greatest good for the greatest number of people – do we find bubbling up in our hearts and minds reactions to the problems around us which are no better than the problems themselves. It's easy to sink to the level of "fight fire with fire", but we know that this solution simply burns the world and everyone in it. Left to ourselves, we would simply destroy ourselves. "But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2:16b) Ultimately, without denying our responsibility according to our vocation, we must confess our limited ability and look to Christ to return and bring peace and wholeness.

Until then, we continue to gather to hear God's story and be made part of it as it becomes part of us. We prepare for



**I was told that I needed to include a photo of William in each newsletter. Here's a recent one of him smiling at his mommy.**

the Lord's return by proclaiming His death and resurrection. And we live out our various vocations in relation to those around us. This may seem mundane – even boring. But that feeling is probably more a reason to repent than to seek to live otherwise. As Christians, our lives are determined by our Lord Jesus, not by the consumerist and materialist culture in which we live. Instant gratification and ever-increasing demands for dopamine hits may be the order of the day for our Western culture, but this is not the way of the cross on which our Lord leads us. Let us turn and rethink what discipleship looks like – what it means to confess Christ in this world.

*"But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. <sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup> For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as Your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:2–6, ESV)*

In Christ,  
Chuck Ridley

## Trinity Ladies Circle Ministries - December 2

The Christmas gathering of the Ladies Circle will be held in the Mary/Martha Fellowship Hall at 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 2.

Following the business meeting, a program of Christmas music will be presented by the Cypress Falls High School Chamber Choir under the direction of Deidre Douglas. A covered dish potluck luncheon honoring October, November, and December birthdays will be served at the conclusion of the choir's program.

Members are encouraged to bring to the meeting unwrapped gifts for the Christmas outreach ministry of Casa 'de Oracion, our LINC ministry partner. Price range of toys should be from \$15.00 to \$20.00. Gift cards in the amount of \$25.00 to Walmart, Target, or Amazon are also welcomed. (See related article on page 2.) Pray for the recipients of the toys/gift cards that they may know JESUS, the greatest gift.



Persons wishing to donate gifts but unable to attend the meeting on December 2 may bring them to church by Sunday, December 5. Members, spouses, and guests are invited to participate in this gathering for inspiration, fellowship, and good food.

For additional information, please contact Trinity Garrett, president, at (c) 281.300.5660 or [tgarett@trinitydt.org](mailto:tgarett@trinitydt.org).

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*Merry Christmas  
and a Blessed  
New Year!*

In Christ,  
Your Trinity Staff



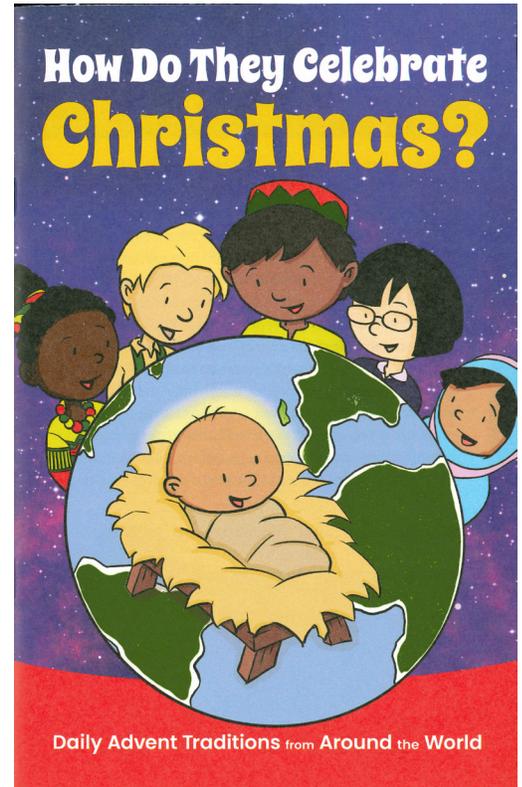
# “How Do They Celebrate Christmas?” - Advent Devotions/Activities for Children

*How Do They Celebrate Christmas* introduces children to the Christmas customs and traditions celebrated by children all over the world as we all prepare for Jesus' birthday!

Families will make new connections with children in other countries and learn to say “Merry Christmas” or “Happy Birthday, Jesus” in 24 different languages. Each day of Advent, read and reflect on the ways that kids around the globe celebrate Jesus' birthday. Each devotion ends with a prayer that people all over the world will know the joy of Jesus at Christmas and always!

In addition to the devotion book, an Advent Chain activity is available. This festive chain grows and grows throughout the season as children learn Christmas traditions and customs from around the world. Beginning on the first Sunday of Advent, cut out a link of chain from this sheet and add it to the previous day's link. At the end of the season, a colorful chain is yours to string around the Christmas tree or hang in your child's room.

A limited number of devotion booklets and Advent Chain activity pages are available in the foyer and gathering space for families with children.



<b>How Do They Celebrate Christmas?</b> Advent Chain	<b>Wales</b>	<b>Around the World</b>	<b>How Do They Celebrate Christmas?</b> Advent Chain
	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Argentina</b>	
	<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>The Czech Republic</b>	
	<b>Germany</b>	<b>China</b>	
	<b>Iraq</b>	<b>Greece</b>	
	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Italy</b>	
	<b>Venezuela</b>	<b>Japan</b>	
	<b>Haiti</b>	<b>Mexico</b>	
	<b>Kenya</b>	<b>The Netherlands</b>	
	<b>Ecuador</b>	<b>Romania</b>	
	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Poland</b>	
	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Australia</b>	
	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Bethlehem</b>	
	<b>Let's Celebrate!</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	

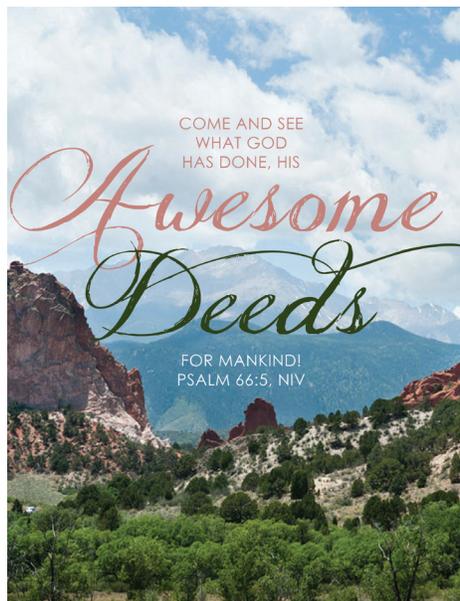


**Drive-up Holy Communion is available by request. Contact Pastor Black at 713.229.2917 to arrange a date and time.**

## Life Thoughts for the Church Year - December 5 – Advent II

God's deeds give every member of our race a right to life (Psalm 66:5, 9). He creates us in our mother's womb. He redeems us even as embryos. He calls us all into His everlasting family. Our life is a masterpiece. He Himself commences and completes (Philippians 1:6). No sizes, skills, or circumstances on our part can impair or improve the value He has invested in us and our neighbors.

*(From the Fall 2021 issue of LifeDate, a quarterly journal of news and commentary from Lutherans For Life - [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org))*



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*Joyfully Sharing Christ's Saving Love With All People Now!*

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Article submission deadline is **December 10** for articles to be published January 1, 2022.

Submit articles to [pschroeder@trinitydt.org](mailto:pschroeder@trinitydt.org).

Contact Pam Schroeder at 713.229.2944 with any questions about this publication.