

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



John 1:1-18
December 19, 2021



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page, our Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.



- **Prelude**

Roxanne Groff

- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

- **Welcome**

Pastor Mel Musser

- **Fourth Week of Advent: Love Candle**

Reader One: Just as the first believers longed for love to end the trials of sadness, so we too long for love to stir our hearts. But soon, a savior shall be given...

Reader Two: (*light candle 1*) A savior to bring hope...

Reader One: (*light candle 2*) A savior to deliver peace...

Reader Two: (*light candle 3*) A savior to bring joy overflowing...

Reader One: (*light candle 4*) One who is light shining in the darkness, and the darkness did not—and cannot—overcome it. With this flame of love, may we all gaze upon him in wonder. No one has seen God, but may we catch a glimpse of God's love in the babe in the manger.

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Healing God,

C: We come into this house broken and lost. We bring our worries and our fears. We bring the weight of having acted out in ways that hurt others, you, and ourselves. We wonder if there will ever be a time when light will find us. Forgive what we have done and heal us, for the sake of the one who gave everything for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

L: God offers light and healing. God invites us into a new way of being. Despite our sin, God forgives. Receive and welcome God's forgiveness, for you are made clean and whole again. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

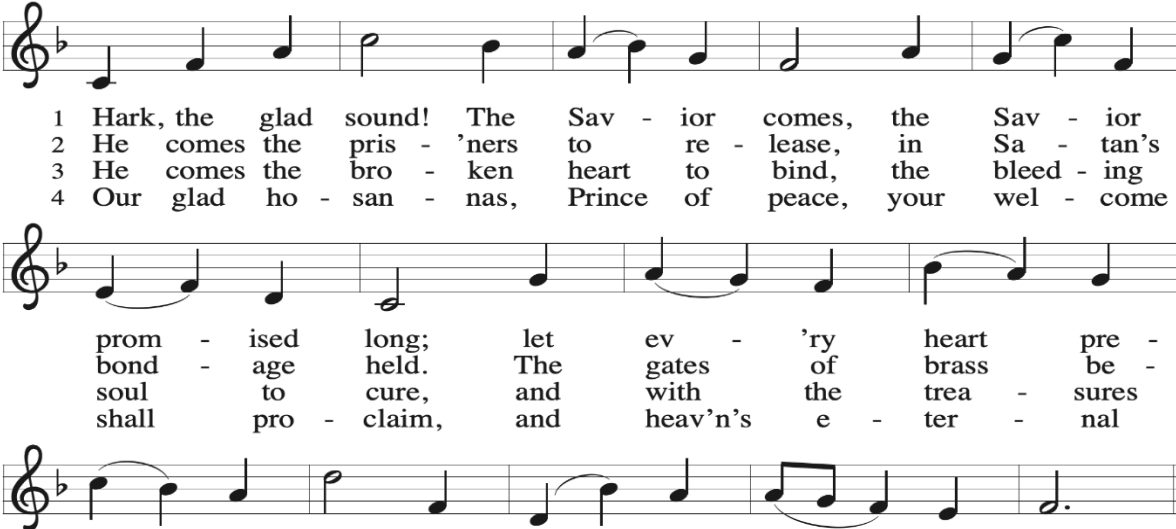
* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

* **HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Hark, the Glad Sound!”

LBW 35



1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
 2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come

prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
 bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
 soul to cure, and heav'n's e - ter -
 shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter -
 nal

pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.
 fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
 of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
 arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

* **APOSTOLIC GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

* **KYRIE**

A: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: For this Holy House, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: Help, save, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... God of light, You walked the earth when you created it. You walked it again when Word became flesh. Remind us that you walk with us still.

C: Amen.

• CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Theme: Jesus Shows Us Grace and Truth

Scripture: John 1:1-18

Object: Picture of the United States and a Smart Phone with GPS

Hello girls and boys! I'm so happy to see you here this morning. I hope you all had a great week. Now that school's out for Christmas break, I hope you are all still being good and staying on Santa's Nice list...

I'm planning my trip to Alabama. Mrs. Musser and I are going to visit my sister and we're going to drive there. If you look up on the front wall there's a picture of the United States. Do any of you know where Alabama is on a map? Yes, it's the state down by the Gulf of Mexico. Does this map help me to actually drive there? No, of course not, we need something more detailed.

I have here with me my smart phone. Now among many things this phone can do it can tell me exactly how to get to my sister's house and how long it's going to take to get there. Now when you use one of these GPS phones you still have to watch where you're going. I've heard about people who followed their GPS and turned onto railroad tracks and one person even drove right off a pier into the ocean. With my phone I trust the directions, but I still verify that it is accurate. I don't want to end up in the ocean...

In our Bible story for today a man who knew Jesus wrote a Book in the Bible. His name was John. John tells us that Jesus came from Heaven where he was with God and in fact Jesus was God, but he came down here to earth and was born as a little baby in the town of Bethlehem. John also tells us that Jesus came to show us the way to grace and truth. If we follow Jesus we can see God.

A map can help us find a place and a GPS or smart phone can give us turn by turn directions, but there's something even better than a map or a GPS. That's a personal guide. A guide is someone who knows the way because they've been there before. They've already tested the directions and can lead us without any doubt to the place we want to go. Jesus is our guide through life.

So, first God sent Moses with the Ten Commandments. They act like a map for us to live according to God's will. But we needed something more than a map... So, God sent people called Prophets to speak the words to show us how to live. They are kind of like the GPS or Smart Phone that tells us which way to go. Finally, God saw we needed something more than just a map or a GPS, so God sent us his son Jesus. Jesus and His Holy Spirit are like our own personal guide leading us to know God and to the place we all want to be, with God in heaven.

Let's pray... Dear God, Thank you for giving us the Bible and the 10 Commandments as our map in life. Thank you for sending prophets to speak your words to us. Most important, thank you for sending Jesus as our guide. Amen.

* Please stand if able

- **SCRIPTURE READING: John 1:1-18**

P: Our scripture reading for this day is from the Gospel according to Saint John, the First Chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ (*Spoken*)

- **SERMON**

Pastor Mel Musser

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Word of God in the flesh, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

How many of you would call yourselves "campers"? I know some of you disappear on various weekends throughout the summer to spend time camping.

You might not call it camping. I usually hear things like we're going to the lake,

* Please stand if able

or we're going to the cabin up north. For me, personally, I don't care too much for camping. For me, camping is poor room service at the Holiday Inn... If you consider yourself a "camper," let me ask you this, how many of you actually pitch a tent when you camp? Aha, now the numbers dwindle! What if I ask it this way...How many of you have ever pitched a tent before? Maybe in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, or maybe with your parents when you were young. Okay, so most of us understand the basics of "pitching a tent," but what if you had to live in a tent on a more permanent basis... When I was on deployment in Egypt back in 1989, we were all told that no matter what our career field was, until we have enough tents for everyone to live in, we were all tent makers. So, we pitched tent after tent until we had several hundred. (SLIDE) One of the biggest tents I've ever seen is the dining hall tent. It's this giant "H" shaped tent that can feed over 1200 people at a time. Now the civil engineers had already laid the electric lines and installed the generators that provided the power. Unfortunately, there was only one way to connect the tent to the power and of course we built the tent 180 degrees backwards. Our Commander got us all together shoulder to shoulder, all 250 of us and we lifted the giant, fully constructed tent and turned it around so that the electrical connections could be made. The really funny part of this story is that even after that experience we did the exact same mistake on the second dining hall we built and had to turn it around as well. By the time we got to the third one, we

knew which direction it had to go... You can bet that when we deployed for real during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, we put the Dining Hall tents together the correct way...

In our Gospel text from John, we heard the words “And the word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (SLIDE) That’s what it says in our translation of vs. 14 in our gospel. “The word became flesh and dwelt among us...” The word translated “dwelt” comes from the Greek verb “skenoo.” “Skenoo comes from the root word the word “skene,” which means tent. “Skenoo” literally means making a dwelling, pitching a tent, or making a tabernacle. The sense of this word is not just that word of God comes to earth, but that the Word of God pitches his tent with us. Jesus sets up camp with the people of earth, in spite of the fact that he’s got a much better arrangement already available.

Most religions have stories of some form of divine being visiting humanity. In Christianity, the divine does more than just stop in for a visit. God sets up camp with us, pitches His tent among the people, and becomes a real flesh and blood human being. This is not just an appearance, but God in human form, who came from heaven to live life as a human being.

Think with me for a moment the significance of this image of God pitching a tent rather than say, inhabiting a building. Tents are temporary; they wear out;

they only give partial shelter from the elements. The same things can be said about humanity. Human life is temporary. Human bodies wear out. The human condition gives only partial shelter from suffering. But Jesus came to be a real human being, experiencing mortality, pain, frailty, suffering, and humiliation. All experiences that God chose to embrace when He became human.

Another definition of this verb, *skenoo*, is to tabernacle. Though not a word we'd use in regular conversation, the tabernacle was basically a traveling temple for the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness of Sinai for forty years. It was seen as the house of God, but it was movable, so it could go from place to place with them as they wandered before settling in the Promised Land. The glory of God was understood to be housed in that special tent, called a tabernacle. So, when we hear that God tabernacled among us, we also should think about the way God's power is now experienced, not through some vague "presence" in a tent, but through a real human being, made of flesh and blood, who lived and loved among us.

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard once sought to describe the incarnation of God in Christ. I'll paraphrase his story... A certain king was very rich. His power was known throughout the world, but he was most unhappy, because he desired a wife. Without a queen, the vast palace was empty. One day, while riding through the streets of a small village, he saw a beautiful peasant girl.

She was so lovely the heart of the king was won over and no other would due. He wanted her more than anything he had ever desired. Every day he would ride by her house on the mere chance of seeing her for a moment in passing. He wondered how he might win her love. First, he thought, I will draw up a royal decree and require her to be brought before me to become the queen of my land. But, as he considered this option, he realized she was a subject and would be forced to obey. He could never be certain that he had won her love. Then, he said to himself, “I shall call on her in person. I will dress in my finest royal garb, wear my diamond rings, my silver sword, and my shiny black boots. I will overwhelm her and sweep her off her feet to become my bride.” But, as he pondered the idea, he knew he would always wonder whether she had married him for the riches and power he could give her.

Then, he decided to dress as a peasant, drive to the town, and have his carriage let him off. In disguise, he would approach her house. But, somehow he knew this would be discovered and she would think he was a fake and a liar. Finally, he knew what he must do. He would shed his royal robes. He would go to the village and become one of the peasants. He would work and suffer with them. He would actually become a peasant. That is exactly what he did and he won over the love of his life. God likewise considered how He might win over the love of his life, humankind. God in Christ became one of us. He took upon Himself the

form of human flesh to dwell among us. Jesus, God Incarnate, the Word, became flesh and lived among us; Jesus pitched his tent and lived as one of us. The very God who created the universe humbled himself by willingly being born a tiny baby in a manger and living as one of us, with all of our limitations. He did it out of sheer love for us all.

I think Kierkegaard was on to something with this story, but I'm not sure that God pitching a tent and living as one of us tells the whole story. Just because God decided to give up the riches of heaven to become a babe in a manger doesn't really explain how that benefits humankind. There must be more to the story. And there is! In the very first chapter of John's Gospel, we're given this great prolog and near the end of our text for today we hear that through this Word become flesh we receive grace upon grace. John reminds us that through Moses we received the Law. But through the Word become flesh, we receive this thing called Grace. I teach my confirmation students that Grace stands for God's Riches At Christ's Expense. We receive forgiveness of sins, salvation, and everlasting life all because God chose to pitch His tent and become a human being. Why would God do that for the likes of me and you? It goes back to the beginning. In the beginning was the Word. This Word or Logos in the Greek means much more than just the spoken or written words. It also refers to the word still in the mind—things like reason, logic, and ideas. The Greek concept of "Logos" also refers to the power and

energy that undergirds and holds the universe and everything in it together.

Imagine giving up all that power to become a helpless baby. To experience hunger and thirst. To feel pain and suffering. To die in the most humiliating manner ever invented by the mind of mankind, crucifixion. That's the full picture of the price God paid for you and for me and for our salvation. Yes, God pitched His tent in the body of Jesus Christ, but that's not the end of the story. Jesus taught us to love, not just our friends and family, but even our neighbors. Jesus gave a whole new meaning to forgiveness. It's not just a one- or two-time thing, but forgive infinitely, just as our Father in Heaven forgives infinitely. Jesus came so that we could see the face of our Father Creator and to know that we are loved by that Father. This Word of God also promised us that trusting in Him would bind us to him not just in a death like his, but also in a resurrection like His. Now that's really good news for all of us who know our own mortality. The sting of death has been removed. Thanks be to God!

May the reality of God's Word become real for you this Christmas Season. May God's peace come to you because you can trust God's Word in the flesh, Jesus Christ. May we all now go and tell this great news to our world so the peace we have found in Jesus can spread to all people. Amen.

Silence may be kept for meditation...

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

*** NICENE CREED**

The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: The season of waiting is nearly over. Focus our eyes on you, that we might not miss the One who comes to show us the way of light. Count us not among those who neither recognize nor accept our Lord because we are too distracted by non-essential things, or because we are convinced of our own way. Creator God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You spoke a word, and all was created. Your word sustained your chosen people over centuries of hardship and joy. And your Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Reawaken us to the true power and blessing of this Word to transform the world. Creator God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: It can be difficult, Lord, to pause from all our preparations and rest in your presence. Renew our spirits and prepare our hearts to receive the gift of your son. Creator God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: The darkness has not overcome your light, O Lord. Shine into the lives of those who struggle to see it, clouded by worries, challenges, or crises. Heal them with a word and put your grateful praise on their lips. We bring before you especially... Creator God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: With John and all who proclaimed your promised Messiah, we join the chorus of praise. Tune our voices to glorify you always with the choir immortal. Creator God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: We give you thanks that you have heard us. Receive our prayers and all those for whom we pray into your compassionate embrace, for the sake of Jesus.

C: Amen.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is an offering basket located near the back door of the church and for those worshipping online if you go to www.pitsburgtlc.org you can make your offering online.

P: So, let's pray for the offerings we receive this day.... John testified to the light, reminding us that you, O God, walked among us. We strive to bring light into the world through our offerings. Receive our gifts so that all may know that you walk among us still. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*** DIALOGUE**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*** THE PREFACE**

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*** THE SANCTUS**

C: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

*** EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P: Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace.

Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C: Amen

*** THE LORD’S PRAYER**

P: We are united together by this heavenly food, which is the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. So, let us pray as Jesus taught...

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: God’s love fills us every time we gather to share in the meal of grace. God’s light shines through us when we participate in this celebration of God’s love. Come to the table that has been prepared for you.

• COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

During the distribution the minister says these words to each communicant:

P: At this time you may open the communion bread and partake of the body of Christ, given for you.

Now please open the wine and you may now partake of the Blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen.

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

P: May this Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, strengthen, keep, and unite us.

C: Amen.

*** POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

P: Let us pray... Jesus, Bread of life, we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray.

C: Amen

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: May the living God fill us with all hope, peace, joy and love in believing, so that we may live by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYMN**

“Joy to the World”

LBW 39

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

* **POSTLUDE**

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Peggy Didier
Acolyte	
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	Given to the Glory of God by Dean & Donna Thompson

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Don't over eat

MIND: Read the story of the birth of Jesus

SPIRIT: Experience the joy of Christmas through the eyes of a child



Scripture readings for next Sunday, December 26th
John 1:19-34

Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.



- * Please stand if able
- Please be seated

December 19, 2021

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This Week @ Trinity – December 19 thru December 26, 2021

Sun, December 19 10:30 am Worship Service

Tues, December 21 Newsletter Deadline

Wed, December 22 6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Fri, December 24 3:30 pm FISH Choice Food Pantry

4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship

10:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship

Sat, December 25



Sun, December 26 10:30 am Worship Service

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26th – We will have an “Open Mic” morning! Any individual or group wishing to share vocal or instrumental Christmas songs will be welcome to the mic! Please tell Pastor Mel if you would like to provide something that morning. We will also sing some of your favorite Christmas hymns.

AND on December 26th, you are invited to wear your “**Ugly Christmas Sweater**”.

AROUND THE PARISH

Holy Communion Delivery Available to ALL:

If you or anyone you know would like to have Holy Communion delivered to a home or place of business, please call Pastor Mel at 937-626-7100. He will bring a prefilled communion chalice including both sanctified wine and a morsel of bread all prepackaged from the Concordia True Vine company. This is a safe way to stay connected to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Trinity Contact Info

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