

Trini Tidings



Advent 2022

**Trinity United Church
Portage la Prairie, MB**

Phone: 204-857-4471

e-mail: trinityu@mts.net

Website:

www.trinityunitedportage.ca

Office Hours

Monday – Friday

9:00 a.m. – noon

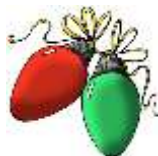
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Do you have small hotel-size hand lotions that you would be willing to share with us? Please bring them into the office during the week.

Christmas Office Hours

- The office will have regular hours, Friday, December 23, and like other Saturdays, will not be open on Christmas Eve.
- The office will be closed on Monday, December 26 and Tuesday, December 27
- The office will also be closed on Monday, January 2.



For 2022 tax receipts, donations must be received by noon on Friday, December 30.

There are almost 18,000 bird species around the world, and their diversity is astounding! They can be as small as the Rufous hummingbird (3 inches long), or as tall as an ostrich (up to 9 feet).



COMING UP IN WORSHIP at TRINITY

You are welcome to join us in person at Trinity or access our online feed through our zoom platform. The zoom link is emailed out each week, is available on our website, and in our Facebook group. If you need help accessing our online worship, please be in touch with the church office. You are always welcome to come through the front doors and join us in person! Doors open before 10 am and we start at 10:30 a.m.

This Advent, join us for "Reflecting the Sacred!"



November 27

Advent 1

Guest Worship Leader
Karen Tjaden
"Sacred Time
and a Cardinal of Hope"
Communion Service

December 4

Advent 2

Guest Worship Leader
Sandra Rex
"Sacred People
and a Bluebird of Peace"

December 11

Advent 3

Guest Worship Leader
Karen Tjaden
"Sacred Spaces
and a Sparrow of Joy"

December 18

Advent 4

Guest Worship Leader
Sandra Rex
"Sacred Knowing
and a hen of love"

December 25

No worship offered

Christmas Eve



**Saturday, December 24
6:00 p.m.**

(note the special time)

This is a joint service with
McKenzie United Church at
Trinity United Church
The service will also be
available via zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6460700716?pwd=SW9RZDBYVTRpek0ZWZhWkZ3bXN4Zz09>

If you would like to be involved with this service please reach out to Amy Chappellaz
204-871-0228

There are speaking parts for those who are interested, and you are welcome to join the combined choir if you wish! Be in touch for info about rehearsals!

White Gift Sunday

This year at Trinity, we will celebrate White Gift on **December 4**. All donations of toys, winter wear, gifts, non-perishable food and gift cards will be shared with the Salvation Army for Christmas hampers (or to the Portage Family Abuse Prevention Center or the Canadian Mental Health Association, as appropriate). Please do not wrap your gifts. There will be a box in which to deposit any gift cards.

If you are unable to attend on the 4th, you can make a donation to the office any time **before noon December 5**.



Christmas Music Brings Memories

How many of your favourite memories have a soundtrack attached to them? Do particular songs take you right back to a particular place and time or remind you of a particular person? Do songs sometimes make you cry because they remind you of someone you miss?



Christmas music can be like that. It can remind us of our grandmother playing the piano or of children dressed up in bathrobes parading to the front of the church as shepherds or of the peacefulness of candlelight or the fun of a sleigh ride or of carollers coming to the door. Music can remind us of the moments and people we cherish.

Sometimes we are looking for a way to celebrate our memories of loved ones whose presence we miss in this festive season and throughout the year. At Trinity, one of the ways you can honour a loved one is by making a donation in their memory.

A gift to Trinity can be designated in a variety of ways: Trinity's Memorial Fund contributes to the worship and Christian education life of the church in memory of the one who is honoured. Memorial gifts are also gladly received to any other ministry of the church, designated, or undesignated.

Thinking about our memories and those we love can also invite ourselves to as the

question "how do I hope to be remembered?" You can often make a sizable financial contribution to an organization whose work you believe in by placing an invitation in your

funeral plans to make donations to that organization. Tell your family, discuss with your

preferred funeral home, or make a note with your important papers that "memorial donations can be made to...." Then put the paper away, and make more music and memories with those you love.

Trinity's Memorial Fund

The Trinity Memorial Fund seeks to honour the life and faith of loved ones in ways that keep faith alive. We thank God for the lives of these faithful people, in whose memory we have received donations since October 2022.

Philip Miller
 Jake & Janny Kok
 Roy Tibbett
 Lorena Pogue
 Ken Yuill

A donation to the Unspecified Bequest Fund will be received in the new year from the Estate of Dick Street.

Bird nests are made with lots of different materials: twigs, grass, human hair, cobwebs, mud, lichen, and more. No two nests are the same, but most nest-building birds like to put soft things inside their nests to bring comfort to their young. And some birds even weave herbs and spices into their nests, to help fight off bacteria in a way scientists are still trying to understand.

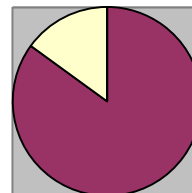


Thank you to those who continue to give to Trinity - by way of PAR, your weekly envelopes and on Sundays, by way of cheques, cash, e-transfers and debit. All of your donations are greatly appreciated!!

By way of an update, our donations to the end of October are lagging behind our giving goal* by \$4,067. And as we reported earlier, at the end of October, we are showing an overall deficit of \$38,414. * the budgeted giving goal was part of a deficit budget.

The Stewardship Team

**Trinity's
 Financial Picture
 Projected Expenses for
 January-December 2022
 \$272,573**



**Income Received
 to Date**

January – November 25
\$180,860

With 5 weeks remaining in the year, we have reached 66% of our goal. Please help! We need your donations to reach our goal and continue the ministry we offer together



As you receive your Christmas cards and letters this year, please take a few moments to save the stamps. The UCW saves stamps to support the leprosy fund. The value of these stamps is increased if the postal cancellation is marked over the stamp.

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Service of Remembrance and Hope



The holidays can be hard for those going through a tough time. Those who have experienced hardship - like the loss of a loved one or a painful divorce - are twice as likely to associate the holidays with negative feelings like sadness, loneliness and worry. At this time of year, it has been our practice to join with the Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic and United Churches of Portage to offer an ecumenical **Christmas** service for those who are experiencing loss. Because it is an emotional time, sometimes loss is felt more keenly, and we can feel isolated if we don't share the feelings of celebration that appear around us. This year, for a variety of reasons, we are unable to offer an ecumenical offering. However, at Trinity we will still offer a brief prepared and pre-recorded service that those who are grieving can access at the time that works best for them, whether it is in the middle of a sleepless night, or just before a Christmas event. You are welcome to watch it together with those in your circle who might be feeling the same way. It will be available through the Trinity website and YouTube page in early December. If you would like the link sent directly to you, please be in touch with the church office. For some resources to help you or to support someone close to you who might be struggling, check out Option B, whose purpose is to help you take care of yourself and support your loved ones through life's most challenging moments. <https://optionb.org/>

Partnering with MacGregor United

As most readers will be aware, until June 2020, Trinity had two full time ministers. Since that date, Trinity has had one minister, and a vacancy that we have been trying to fill with a 3/4 time lay position, but we have not had any success in filling that position. With Julie now off on medical leave for cancer treatment, the Leadership Team has made some shifts in our approach and have been working with MacGregor United to form a partnership whereby we might work together to find a minister who would work half time for Trinity and half time for MacGregor. A new job description and service agreement have been drafted that will require the approval of the congregation before a search committee can begin to fill the position. It is our hope that Trinity members will support this new arrangement so that we might work together to find someone who will be the right fit for us both. Please stay tuned for information on an upcoming congregational meeting to approve this direction. If you are interested in helping with the Search process, please be in touch with the office, or directly with Donna Matthews.

Games Night

Our next Games Night is our Christmas Party, set for **December 12 at 7 p.m.** Tour of Lights will start at 7 p.m., carol singing, pizza & hot chocolate at 7:45 p.m. Cost is \$3/person. Call if you need transportation 204-857-3671.



We are always looking for volunteers and would be so happy to have you join us.

Deadline for 2022 Contributions!

If you wish to top up your 2022 donations, they must be received in the office no later than **noon, December 30**, to be eligible for the taxation year 2022. Charitable donations in Manitoba (after the first \$200) receive a 46% tax credit. This means that if you pay income tax, your donation costs you roughly half of what you give.



We Welcome Our Sunday Guest Worship Leaders at Trinity in the New Year

Sunday Services and Sunday School at 10:30 a.m.

January 1

Norman Collier

January 8

Wilma Shirriff

January 15

Norman Collier

January 22

Wilma Shirriff

January 29

Lynne Sanderson or Ila Swain

February 5

Norman Collier

February 12

Lynne Sanderson or Ila Swain

February 19

Sandra Rex

February 26

Lynne Sanderson or Ila Swain

Birds' nests come in all kinds of shapes and sizes: some can be as big and heavy as a car (like an eagle's nest after generations of use and expansion), while others are as tiny as a thimble (like the nest of a Bee Hummingbird, the smallest living bird)!



Update: Your Generosity at Work in Ukraine



Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, Mission & Service partners have been responding to the needs of those impacted by the war. Here's an update about some of the ways your generosity is helping to provide life-saving support through our global partnerships:

- With the freezing cold of winter looming, ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) is working hard to ensure that those affected by the conflict have safe, warm, and dignified accommodation. As schools are being used to shelter refugees and internally displaced people, ACT is making certain children can continue to access education.
- In the earliest days of the crisis, one of our partners—Hungarian Interchurch Aid—opened welcome points at borders for those driving and walking across the border and transitioned to support those arriving by train. They have now opened a centralized refugee hub.
- In Poland, our partner the Lutheran World Federation is hosting cash support centres, providing refugee families with money to meet their basic needs.

- Throughout affected regions, Mission & Service partners are helping people access essentials like food, water, and hygiene.
- Church leaders are also on the ground providing spiritual comfort. Father Eugen Omu is a Romanian Orthodox priest who is staffing a refugee welcome centre in Sculeni, Romania. "It is important to have priests here," he says. "When someone sees a priest, it reminds them of God and gives them courage to face what is to come."

Our church partners are at the forefront of the emergency response in Ukraine with help from faithful supporters like you. Your generosity serves as a reminder of the loving spirit of God, providing care and encouragement when and where it is most needed. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Hot Cocoa Prayer for Advent

1. Measure two tablespoons of cocoa powder. Taste it (it's bitter). Pray for some of the things that are bitter in your life and a little hard to take on their own.
2. Measure and add 1–2 tablespoons of sugar or sweetener. Taste it (it's sweet). Offer a prayer of thanks for all the things that are sweet in your life and are perhaps best in small doses.
3. Add a pinch of salt. Taste it (it's salty). Offer a prayer for moments of grace and clarity, experiences that bring out the flavour of life.



4. Warm some milk (or milk beverage substitute) while reflecting on when you have experienced the Holy in the past day or week. What has warmed your heart?
 5. Mix warmed milk beverage with hot chocolate mixture. Taste it (it's yummy). Give thanks to God and enjoy.
- #AdventUnwrapped**



As Christmas and the holidays approach, Christians experience the season of Advent as a time of expectant waiting and preparation. This year, The United Church of Canada will present a special series of ecumenical Advent meditations and conversations that will reflect on the question: "What Are We Waiting For?" On each Thursday evening in Advent, listeners are invited to join in a live discussion at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom, with one of the leaders on that week's Advent theme. Attendees to the gathering will be able to ask questions during the online conversation. Also, each Monday during Advent, the church leaders will release an ecumenical Advent meditation in which they will focus on one of the four Advent themes and address challenges and opportunities facing the Canadian churches. For more information, or to register, click the following link: <https://united-church.ca/events/ecumenical-advent-series-what-are-we-waiting>

Hawks have the best eyesight in the entire animal kingdom – and they can also see in color (so can chickens!).



A Chorus Before Dawn - Reflecting the Sacred in Advent

Each year in the Northern Hemisphere, as the days get shorter and the nights get longer and colder, the season of Advent arrives.

In the 4 weeks leading up to Christmas, we pray and light candles and tell the truth about a world full of shadows. We confront realities of conflict and injustice - and we take responsibility. But we also look for reflections of the sacred that is being born around us even now. We look for signs of God's appearing in the world where we live. And then we raise our voices and sing into the shadows of good news for all people. Song birds all over the world know a thing or two about singing into the dark. In the wee hours of the morning, before the sun appears over the horizon, they begin a great symphony that scientists call the "dawn chorus". Advent is the church's dawn chorus. It starts in the silence, in the shadows, and looks to the light. Each week, we gather together to listen and sing (sometimes quietly at first) straight into the deepening darkness. We look for reflections of the sacred, and we proclaim that in the end, the night will give way to the day; winter will give way to spring; despair to hope, war to peace, grief to joy, violence to love, as God comes again and again, like the morning star in the east, or a mother hen gathering in her brood.

Please join us this year in our chorus before dawn. Help us discover and become reflections of the Sacred in our world. Perhaps we'll learn a few lessons from birds along the way!

"Snowflakes" for M&S

When you give to Mission & Service, people living in poverty receive food, shelter and clothing. Refugees are safer and more secure until times are better. Children receive tuition, uniforms or simply a good breakfast so that they can stay in school. Immediate support during crisis and natural disaster is provided and long term support is there after it has passed. Through Mission & Service, you help transform lives and inspire meaning and purpose. Each year during Advent, Trinity puts an extra focus on M & S gifts. This year, a hand made snowflake decoration will be added to our tree for every M & S gift made through Trinity during this season - showing us how we are building a better world together. To learn more about M & S, you can check out <https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/get-involved/generosity-through-mission-and-service/what-mission-and-service> M & S also has a gift catalogue for those who would like to make their donation into a Christmas gift. You can check out the paper catalogue at the church office, or go online to <https://giftswithvision.ca/>



Julie & the Stuff of Science Fiction

In the book of Hebrews, faith is described as the "assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) There are lots of things hoped for and not yet seen coming up for our minister, Julie as she enters phase 2 of cancer treatment for multiple myeloma. In this case, the

things that are hoped for are not results (although we hope for those too) but simply a rather unbelievable treatment, which all depends on the results of a multiplicity of tests. However, there is a timeline, and here's the plan, as far as we know it. Julie has currently been approved to move into the next phase of treatment which is sometimes called "bone marrow transplant", sometimes "stem cell transplant" and sometimes "stem cell consolidation/recovery".

Here's how it works. In the middle of December, she will undergo a procedure to create extra stem cells, harvest and store them. Provided that all goes well, at the beginning of January, she will be admitted to hospital for an extended stay where she will undergo a heavy dose of chemotherapy to kill the rogue proteins in her blood. Chemotherapy will also kill all of the regular stem cells, so the harvested and stored stem cells will then be re-introduced, and she will begin to develop a new immune system from scratch. What will science think of next? This means that glimpses of Julie on screen will not be as common during December (although she does plan to record a sermon for Remembrance and Hope.), and that she will be on complete medical leave for the first few months of 2023. In the meantime, the Leadership Team has been working hard to ensure that plans are in place for Sundays and pastoral emergencies. The church is not the building, or even the minister - the church is the people, and the church shall continue on. Our prayers and good wishes are with Julie as she travels the next part of this unknown and "as yet unseen" path.

“A Chorus Before Dawn – Reflecting the Sacred”: A Journaling Exercise

Perhaps you may find a time each week to reflect on your Advent experience, writing your thoughts and responses using the prompts below...

Week 1

beginning with November 27

HOPE and “SACRED TIME”

We begin our Advent journey by emphasizing the gift of being awake to the “now”... the gift of sacred time with God, with each other, and with those in need of hope.

“I have never been separate from God, nor can I be, except in my mind.” (*The Universal Christ*, p. 44) page
How I can stay present with others this week and shine as a beacon of hope?

Week 2

beginning December 4

PEACE and “Sacred People”

When we look through the lens of the sacred, we prepare our senses to recognize the holy in all people.

“You must come to know [the Word becoming flesh] in the very cells of your body—and see it in the cells of all bodies, which each carry the same divine DNA of their Creator.” (*Everything is Sacred*, p. xiii)
Where I see the sacred in other people this week, even people who I find difficult to love...

Week 3

beginning December 11

JOY and “Sacred Spaces”

The pregnancy of Mary is connected to the promise of justice and joy in the Advent story. “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for the Holy One has looked with favor on the lowliness of this servant...” (*Luke 1: 46b-55*)



How do the spaces I inhabit - at home, work, and in community - reflect God's justice and joy? What am I being called to create in order to further goodness in the world?

Week 4

starting December 18

LOVE and “Sacred Knowing”

Let us seek out quiet to hear the voice that brings courage by gently saying, “do not be afraid.”

“We do not need to be afraid of the depths and breadths of our own lives...We are given permission to become intimate with our own experiences, learn from them, and allow ourselves to descend to the depths of things, even our mistakes...” (*The Universal Christ*, p. 111)
When I drop into the depths of my heart and listen for God, what do I know in my bones as God's calling over my life?

Christmas Eve/Day

“LIGHT” and “Sacred Being”

Our very being reflects the sacred. The incarnation of God in human flesh is proof.
“Have you ever noticed that the expression ‘the light of the world’ is used to describe the Christ (John 8:12) but that Jesus also applies the same phrase to us? (Matthew 5:14, ‘You are the light of the world.’)” (*The Universal Christ*, p. 31)
I am beloved as a child of God, no matter what. How do my life and actions reflect my identity as God's child?

Christmas Season:

“Surprisingly Sacred”

Can we dare to believe that we can know a surprising calm even in the midst of anxiety because of the in-breaking of this Prince of Peace upon our lives each and every day?
“Jesus came to undo our notions of scarcity and tip us over into a worldview of absolute abundance—or what

he would call the 'Reign of God.’” (*The Universal Christ*, p. 184-185)

How I've been surprised by the sacred on this day and throughout the Advent and Christmas Season?

New Year's Day **“Sacred Doing”**

We dedicate ourselves in this New Year to sacred acts of justice and mercy, bringing grace to a hurting world, reflecting the sacred in all we do.

“It is not God who is violent. It is not that God demands suffering of humans. We do. God does not need or want suffering—neither in Jesus nor in us.” (*The Universal Christ*, p. 146)
Where God is nudging me to acts of justice and mercy in this new year?

Note: If the quotations cited in this journaling exercise are of further interest, you can find their source books in the Trinity library. Source material also taken with permission and thanks from Worship Design Studio Advent theme “Reflecting the Sacred”

Reaching Home

If you are looking to do some good this holiday season, one option is to donate convenient and easy to use food for those in Portage la Prairie who are homeless or on the verge of becoming homeless. Think about things you can eat on the go – if you don't have a kitchen in which to heat or prepare things. Any donations for Reaching Home can be dropped off at the PCRC office at 56 Royal Road North.

A bluebird can spot caterpillars and insects from over 50 yards (46 meters) away, and can fly at speeds of up to 45 miles an hour (72 kilometers an hour).



Language is for the Birds

The wonders of birds are part of our everyday language, in human cultures around the world. Do you recognize any of the sayings below? What others would you add to the list?

- Free as a bird
- Proud as a peacock
- Happy as a lark
- Graceful as a swan
- Take someone under your wing
- A birds-eye view
- Birds of a feather flock together
- The early bird gets the worm
- As scarce as hen's teeth
- Like water off a duck's back
- Like a duck to water
- Night owl
- Eagle eye



Taking Care of



Each Other

As covid continues to circulate, and we enter into the season of the common cold and flu, let's remember to look after one another and keep each other well. If you have cold or flu symptoms, please stay at home, rest and get better soon! (Don't forget that if you can't come in person on Sundays, you can always join us online from home!)

Connecting and Caring



There are a number of people in our congregation who are home bound, particularly in icy and snowy weather. Each year, we try and be in touch with those folk in some small way, with a token to help them continue to feel connected, even when they can't be physically with us. If you are stuck at home this winter, and would like to be on our contact list, please let the office know (204-857-4471) by **December 9**. We are also looking for rose bowls for our Caring Friends project. If you have any that aren't being used and would be willing to share them, we'd gladly receive them.

Turns out calling someone a "chicken" as a shorthand for "coward" is completely backwards. Chickens are legendary for their bravery – so much so that in the ancient world, roosters were symbols of military valor. Mother hens will fight tenaciously (against foxes, hawks, you name it!) to defend their chicks. All this puts a whole new spin on Jesus comparing himself to a "mother hen," gathering Jerusalem under his wings: not only tender nurturing, but also fierce courage!



Church Connections



Who could have guessed how important online communication would turn out to be in a pandemic? While you can always find us by using the telephone, we have many electronic and online options as well.

Regular emails are sent with updates – if you have not been receiving these and you would like to, please email us at trinityu@mts.net with your preferred email address. If you have not been receiving email and you are already on our distribution list, please be in touch so we can discover the glitch!

Find us through our webpage www.trinityunitedportage.ca, at our Facebook page, or in our active Facebook Group – Trinity United Church, Portage la Prairie. Our YouTube channel is Trinity Portage, at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCifQQLFZrDcGyY-J3xjDoKA/videos> You can also follow us on Instagram at [trinityportage](https://www.instagram.com/trinityportage), and our Twitter handle is [@ChurchPortage](https://twitter.com/ChurchPortage).

Chickens experience a rainbow of feelings. For example, they mourn when another chicken in the flock dies, and they show signs of depression if they are removed from the flock and have to live alone.

Did you know that roosters don't need the light of a new day to know when it's dawn? They have an internal clock that alerts them to start crowing two hours before the onset

of light. It's called "anticipatory predawn crowing." Another kind of "dawn chorus"!

Learning from Our History

Dear siblings in Christ, The United Church has recently been named in a class-action lawsuit regarding forced adoptions and abuses in the maternity homes that we ran from the 1920s to the 1980s. This letter is to ensure you are aware of the lawsuit and the context. We recognize the pain and suffering that was experienced by mothers in our maternity homes through the practice of pressured or forced adoption. We know that mothers, children, fathers, and extended family members were, and are, part of our communities of faith. We have heard the pain that these practices and these



homes have caused and are deeply sorry.

We also acknowledge that many United Church people were involved in these maternity homes as staff and as supporters of this work, as volunteers, as fundraisers, as governing board members, and as ministers. We understand that the social mores of the time contributed to a sense that pressured or forced adoption, and the operation of maternity homes, was in the best interest of children. While the intent was generally good, the consequences were often harmful and with lasting negative impacts to many of the mothers who were sent there. Since 2010, the United Church has been addressing its

involvement in maternity homes. In 2018, the Theology & Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee brought out a report on the [theologies of adoption](#), which was received by the General Council Executive. We also testified before a [Senate Committee](#) on forced adoptions in 2018, acknowledging the church's role and the harm it caused. And in 2020, the General Council Executive issued an apology. In May 2021, the Moderator led a [worship service of apology and lament](#). Additional information about our work is available on the relevant [United Church webpage](#).

The United Church [national archives](#) and [Ontario regional councils' archives](#), based in Toronto, hold most of the records related to our maternity homes. These records are not sealed, as is the case with some provincial and territorial adoption records, but access is limited.

Permission to access these records is guided by United Church Archives [policy on access to archival records on adoption](#).

We are called to listen to those who have experienced harm in our maternity homes. We ask all those connected with the United Church to hold them all in prayer.

*The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne 44th Moderator
The United Church of Canada*

*Come and do your Christmas baking the easy way! The UCW Dainties Sale has returned and will be held **December 11** following the morning service.*



Winter Birding by Ear!

Sometimes a birdwatcher's best strategy is not to look but to listen!



One tried-and-true trick is to use simple memory devices to remember a bird song. Here's a list of a few handy mnemonics for some common winter birds:

- BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE "Here, Sweetie" or "Chicka-dee-dee-dee"
- TUFTED TITMOUSE "Peter-Peter-Peter"
- BLUE JAY "Jay! Jay! Jay! Jay!"
- AMERICAN CROW "Caw! Caw! Caw!"
- NORTHERN CARDINAL "Cheer-cheer-cheer-purty-purty-purty"
- BARRED OWL "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you aaalllllllll?"
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH "Yank-yank-yank"
- AMERICAN GOLDFINCH "Po-ta-to chip. Po-ta-to chip."

Trinity's Special Services in December



Service of Remembrance & Hope

The service will be available through the Trinity website and YouTube page beginning in early December

Joint Christmas Eve Service with McKenzie United
Saturday, December 24
6:00 p.m. at Trinity