

COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH NEWSLETTER

December 2019 Edition



A Message from OUR PASTOR

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;--Isaiah 11:1-4a

This quote from the prophet Isaiah reminds us that many of our expectations about whom the Messiah, and ultimately the Christ, was to embody, come from the Hebrew Scriptures. Recognizing this, this Advent, as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, we will be using many of the references to the Messiah using what is known as the Jesse Tree. This "tree," which will be present in both our worship time during the four Sundays of Advent, and in our Advent Wednesday Night Celebrations, will assist us in connecting the promises of the Hebrew Scriptures with their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ.

This tradition comes from the first line of this oracle of Isaiah, "a shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse," which conveys to us two ideas about the Messiah. First, Isaiah points to a lifeless stump identified with Jesse, the father of King David, whose royal sons have failed miserably as the leaders of Israel. As those who have not been faithful, they are no longer able to tap into the life that comes from God, and so they are no longer able to provide the guidance and justice that bring life. The second is that new life will come out of that failure, a new branch will grow, a new leader that God will provide. The spirit of God will be with him, the same spirit God gave when Samuel anointed David to be Israel's king.

During worship we will be hanging medallions on the Jesse Tree in the sanctuary, each one representing a story from the Hebrew Scriptures. During our Wednesday Celebrations, we will be exploring a few chosen ones, and explore their impact on our hopes and expectations for the coming of the person of Jesus Christ into our lives.

Many thanks to Lori Halase for her work in helping plan these activities, and to the Crafts Group, whose members created the symbols we will use throughout this season.

May the Blessings of this season fill you with joy, hope, peace, and love.
Brant

This month, because of the many traditional hymns that we enjoy around the Advent and Christmas season, there will not be a hymn of the month. This feature of our worship service will return in January. Please feel free to explore our hymnals and make a suggestion to either Brant or Dan.

Join us for our Christmas Eve Service, which will start at 7pm. Carols, scripture, prayers, and lots of candles prepare us for our welcoming into the world the Light of the World.

YOUR SESSION/COUNCIL AT WORK

Tidbits of information from Session/Council meeting of November 19, 2019 that you may find helpful:

Opening: M. Lacker chose and presented Matthew 5:1-10 in Lecto Divina format for our reflection and prayer time.

Clerk's Report: Church membership remains at 131. Communion was served on November 3, 2019 and during the installation service for Rev. Brant Piper. Correspondence from Presbytery was shared with the session. Presbytery's per capita tax is set at \$29.00 /church member this year. To help offset the cost and to aid in covering the UCC per capita tax, a motion was sustained to collect \$30.00/member from our congregation. Session books were reviewed by Presbytery and were approved without exception on October 26, 2019. Letter from Roger Scovill was read to inform us that the 2018 financial records have been reviewed and all accounting records are accurate.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Brant gave his report on his service to the congregation, the community, and the denomination. He was able to take study leave on 11-11-19 as requested.

Denomination Report: Next Presbytery meeting is at Fenton, First on December 3, 2019. M. Longstreth will attend as commissioner.

Session Training: Referring to the book "The Neighborhood Church", Pastor Brant led us in a discussion regarding the conversion from scarcity to abundance. We talked about the practice of developing an "attitude of gratitude" and the effects that this discipline can have on a person and a church. We were given an assignment for next month's session meeting.

Committee Reports:

Building & Grounds: C. Davis reported that the committee is still looking at the options for the empty manse. A realtor has been contacted. The Warren Avenue Church bus was sold on November 6, 2019. The proceeds from the sale went to the collaborative at the Warren Avenue building. Some lighting issues have been remedied.

Finance & Stewardship: Pastor Brant reported results of the stewardship campaign. Forty two pledging units have submitted their pledges for a total of \$81,418.00. Eight units increased their pledges while 16 units stayed the same and 3 decreased their pledges. Fifteen pledging units pledged for the first time. These were mostly from our new members who joined us last December.

Christian Outreach: K. Blehm reported that the mission of the month is Hidden Harvest. Six CROP walkers collected \$995.00. Peace offering collections for October totaled \$327.00. Thanksgiving baskets will be packed for distribution on November 25th.

Nominating: K. Blehm met with Pastor Brant. She has notified her committee members who were not present to make some phone calls but no results were available for this meeting.

Spiritual Life: M. Longstreth related that L. Halase is assisting Pastor Brant with the Advent weekly series that will be held at 6 PM. Plans for the meals are on December 4, Spiritual Life committee will serve appetizers; on December 11, the choir will serve soup; December 18, the session will serve dessert. Communion stewards were discussed.

Women's Association: The Holiday bazaar sales totaled approximately \$3000.00. **WONDERFUL WORK, WOMEN. MEN, THANKS FOR HELPING ALSO. WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!**

New business: Per a request for the use of memorial funds, a motion was sustained to create an "ad hoc" committee to explore technology equipment for the sanctuary. New signage near the road was also discussed. This topic will be referred to the finance committee for research and prioritization.

Submitted for your information,

Mary Ann Parker, Clerk of Session



PER CAPITA - 2020

As members of both the Presbyterian Church, USA and the United Church of Christ, we benefit from the work and the resources of not one, but two national denominations. These resources allow us to draw on the insight and creativity of a wide variety of congregations and church leaders. Each denomination charges us a fee based on our membership as an equitable and mutual way of sharing the costs of moving the church forward in the 21st century.

On Sunday, January 12th, we invite the congregation to participate in the effort to collect \$30 from each member to help this church not only fulfill our obligation to the larger church, but also to allow each to demonstrate his or her support for the many ways our denominations share the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are choosing this Sunday for the collection because it is Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, on which we will not only hear the story of Jesus' baptism, but also reaffirm our baptismal vows. In this way, you will be offered the opportunity to recommit yourself to the work of Jesus Christ through both your reaffirmation of your baptismal vows and your financial commitment. This is not a requirement for membership, though the church has a voluntary financial obligation to fulfill because of your membership, but an invitation to demonstrate your support for the larger church. Please join us in this effort.

As a church of 130 members, we have as our goal 100% participation in this effort and special envelopes will be available for these contributions. If you would like to make your contribution to this effort before the end of the 2019 tax year, please do so and designate the funds you want directed towards the 2020 Per Capita.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™
DECEMBER 3, 2019

Set for December 3 this year, Giving Tuesday is an annual, global day of giving that follows two of the biggest shopping days of the year: Black Friday and Cyber Monday, and has become a way to redirect energy away from acquiring stuff to improving communities and lives through generosity. More importantly, it serves as an invitation to shift our focus to the central reason for Christmas: the birth of Christ and God's love for the world. This is a national event and many local, national, and international non-profits are sponsoring campaigns, including the Presbyterian Church (USA) (giving-tuesday.pcusa.org), and the United Church of Christ (www.ucc.org/giving_tuesday), both of which have a wide variety of projects which would appreciate your support.

thankyou

Carol VanArsdale wishes to express her thankfulness for all the card, phone calls, and prayers during her recovery from her fall and surgery.

Christmas Cookie Walk

For those not familiar with this tradition, on Sunday, December 22nd, following Worship there will be homemade cookies for sale in Fellowship Hall.

The cookies are donated by members of our congregation (please feel free to bake and deliver cookies to the church during the week of Dec16th-Dec 21st or when you come to church on the 22nd.) You can bring as many different kinds as you like. This way you can take home a variety of different kinds of cookies.

If you wish to purchase cookies, you will be given a Styrofoam container and you can select as many as you like. Cost is \$5.00 per "Baker's Dozen" - 13 cookies.



RECURRING EVENTS at CTC

Craftnooners meets Tuesdays at 1:00 pm in Fellowship Hall

Book Club-Meets in the Lounge most Wednesdays @ 1:00 pm - (Bring lunch or snack if desired) We will resume on January 15th & 22nd for a discussion on capital punishment and to watch the movie "Dead Man Walking".

Bible Study-Meets in the Lounge most Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm. Will resume after holidays. Date TBD.

Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall - Sunday mornings following worship @ 11:30 a.m. in CTC Fellowship Hall

Session Council Meeting Is the third Tuesday of each month held in the Lounge unless otherwise scheduled.

Deacons meetings are scheduled as needed.

Spiritual Life Committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month @ 6:30 p.m. in the Lounge unless otherwise scheduled.

Choir Practice - Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. in Choir Room.

Bead Club - A bead club meets on the fourth Tuesday of most months in our Fellowship Hall.

City of God - Meets in the Sanctuary on scheduled Sunday afternoons.

UPCOMING EVENTS - CTC

Advent Series - "The Jesse Tree" Dec 4, Dec 11 & Dec 18 @ 6:00 pm see detailed description on page 5 of this Newsletter.

Private Christmas Party - in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 7, 2019.

Christmas Eve Worship Service, will be on Monday, December 24th @ 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming **COMMUNITY EVENTS** Hollyday Art Fair

Date: 12/4/2019; **Time:** 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

Andersen Enrichment Center & Memorial Rose Garden

120 Ezra Rust Drive

Saginaw, MI 48601

Phone: 989.759.1362

Event Description:

Fresh holly sale, cookies in the Hollyday Bake Shoppe, distinctive gifts in the gift gallery, Michigan artists at booths offering a variety of original artwork and hand-crafted holiday items. Lunch served from 11 am – 1:30 pm includes homemade soup, sandwich and dessert. Cost for the lunch is \$6.

Directions:

Andersen Enrichment Center & Memorial Rose Garden 120 Ezra Rust Drive Saginaw, MI 48601 (Across from Ojibway Island and next to the Water Treatment Building)

Boar's Head Christmas Festival

Date: 12/5 @ 7:30 p.m.; 12/7 @ 7:30 p.m. & 12/8 @ 4:00 p.m.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 808 Weiss St., Saginaw, MI

No Cost - Free Will Offering

23rd Annual "Living Nativity" - A Journey Into Bethlehem

Date: 12/6/2019 **Time:** 7-9 pm 12/7/19 and 12/8/19 **Time:** 6-8 pm;

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 8220 E. Holland Rd., (M-46) Saginaw, MI 48601 (5 Miles east of I-75, on corner of M-46 and Mueller Road).

Event Description: Travel to the ancient town of Bethlehem to pay your taxes and be counted in the Roman census. Hear the shepherds talk about the angels' proclamation. Listen to the prophet talk of signs and wonders. Enjoy the city alive with activity and no room at the inn. Avoid the anger of the Roman soldiers and tax collectors. See the babe asleep in a manger. Experience all of this and more at the "Living Nativity". This is a **FREE** activity but is outdoors involving an approximate 30 minute walk so dress appropriately for the weather.

Broadway Holiday on Washington Avenue

Date: 12/10/2019; **Time:** 8:00 PM

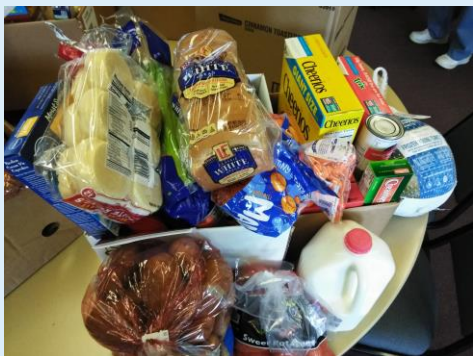
Temple Theatre, 201 N Washington Ave., Saginaw, MI 48607

Phone: 989.754.SHOW

Event Description: Join the SBSO for a Broadway Holiday celebration with Bay City native Katie Travis. Well known for performing the role of Christine Daaé in the national tour of the Broadway mega-hit, Phantom of the Opera, Travis brings her immense talents to the Temple Theatre stage for a special holiday performance. This concert will include a number of holiday favorites to usher in the sounds of the festive season!



Mission & Women's News: Last month we fed 21 adults and 27 children by providing Thanksgiving baskets for them chock full of all kinds of goodies. Thanks to all who donated and who helped shop and pack.



The Christmas Fund (UCC) and the Joy Offering (PCUSA) are the offerings for the month of December.

The Joy Offering is split 50-50 between Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and providing assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.

The Christmas Offering is used to supplement health premiums and to provide emergency grants for retired clergy and their families.

We will again have the angel tree with names, ages and sizes for family members from Weiss School. Take a tag, buy an appropriate gift for that person. Wrap the gift and return it under the tree with the tag attached.

We will be packing Christmas food baskets for eight needy families from Weiss school. Items that are needed will be highlighted in the Sunday morning announcements.

If you are looking for a mission to gift this Christmas, check the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for available groups looking for help.

CROP WALK - We thank those who walked in and those who donated to the CROP Walk. The weather was cool but no rain. We collected \$995.00 which is more than \$350.00 over last year's total.

2019 ADVENT SERIES

We begin our Advent Program on Wednesday, December 4, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Countryside Trinity Church and continuing for a total of three weeks. This year's program is *"The Jesse Tree"*. As we prepare ourselves for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we will be guided through our expectations for the Christ using the Jesse Tree. This celebration is based on the words of the prophet Isaiah in chapter 11, "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse." Jesse, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, was the grandfather of King David, and speaks of the expectations the people of Israel had for the Messiah. Food, Christmas Carols, worship, and exploration of our expectations for the Christmas season will be shared and celebrated.

The following is a list of the meals we will be sharing starting with the first week, on December 4th:

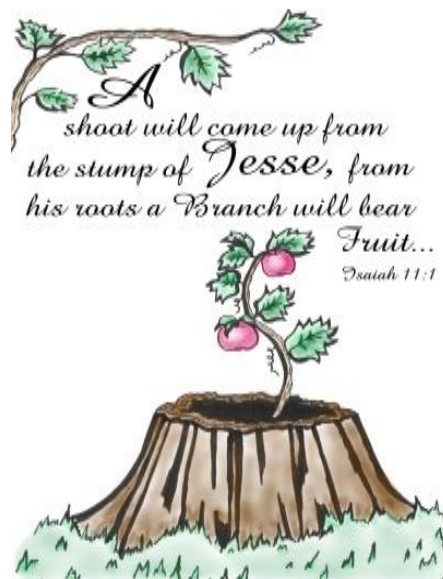
Week One-Dec 4 - Appetizers/Spiritual Life

Week Two-Dec 11 - Soup/Choir

Week Three-Dec 18 - Desserts - Session

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend what promises to be an exciting Advent program. The designated groups will provide the food for the series.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend what promises to be an exciting Advent Series.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Mari McKenzie

	October				
	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers	Ending Balance
General	11,522.92	9,101.94	9,641.84		10,983.02
Memorial	6,775.00				6,775.00
Special projects	1,568.79				1,568.79
Mission					
Food	848.44	5.00			853.44
Heifer proj (Church School)	(0.00)				(0.00)
UCC/PCU	129.00	388.50			517.50
Good Samaritan	2,648.28	84.00	150.00		2,582.28
Muriel Lakey Scholarship	5,023.16				5,023.16
Womens Association	(0.00)		101.65		(101.65)
Local	177.99	80.50	5.00		253.49
Bricks	1,380.70				1,380.70
	30,074.28	9,659.94	9,898.49	-	29,835.73
Endowment	148,223.74				148,223.74
	178,298.02	9,659.94	9,898.49	-	178,059.47



Trick or Treat for UNICEF Halloween Party

Thank you to everyone who participated and donated to the UNICEF Halloween Party! We raised \$180.18.

It was fun to see the children and adults dressed up for the occasion!

The children had fun playing games and decorating pumpkins while raising money for a great cause. "Thank You" to the Scovill family for donating pumpkins from their garden for the children to decorate! The children enjoyed being creative and decorating their own pumpkin.

Thank you to everyone who helped and donated to make this event a success!!!

TIDBIT WORTH REPEATING: Hugging is healthy. It helps the body's immune system. It cures depression. It reduces stress. It's rejuvenating. It has no unpleasant side effects It is God's miracle drug! It is all natural, it contains no chemicals artificial ingredients, no pesticides and no preservatives. Hugging is practically perfect. There are no parts to break down no monthly payments, non-taxable, non-polluting, and of course, it's fully returnable! Here is your hug for the day!





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Rhashell Hunter
- 8 Garth Westendorf
- 12 Melissa Paterson (Shalhoup)
- 16 Alexa Mahan
- 17 Nancy Easlick
- 18 Paula Plater
- 22 Ed Halase
- 24 Nancy Scott
- 25 Breckue Woodke
- 26 Craig Gates



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 15 Joseph & Doris Ruth
- 24 Bruce & Patricia Denno
- 27 Dick & Nancy Easlick

HEALTH & SAFETY - IN SAGINAW

Mondays: Blood pressure clinic meets from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Zauel Memorial Library, 3100 N. Center Road.

Monday-Friday: Aquatic exercises at the Sherwood Pool are held weekly. Classes are at 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. and 11:35 a.m. The ability to swim is not required. Lap swimming is at 11:35 a.m. There is a charge for exercises and lap swimming. For more information visit the Community Education page at www.stcs.org or call (989) 797-1847.

Tuesdays: Weight Watchers meets at 9:30 a.m. at Swanhaven Manor, 300 Kennely Road in Thomas Township.

Ongoing: Senior Fitness/Health Club, 4032 Bay Road, offers yoga, dance and tai-chi classes. The facility now accepts Silver Sneakers. Ages 18 and over are welcome. For more information call (989) 790-5788.

Senior Center Activities: There are many centers in the Saginaw area offering continuing weekly activities from dancing and exercise to cards. A list will be posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. You can also go online to view a list of each month's activities. Go to www.saginawcounty.com and hover on the tab "Community & Services" and then click on the drop down item "Commission on Aging". Look for upcoming events and there will be a link for Senior Center Events & Activities. **Check it out** - there are some fun activities that continue throughout the year.

CARDS AND GAMES

First and Third Wednesdays - Euchre night is at 6:30 p.m. at the Creek Side Bar & Grille at Crooked Creek, 9387 Gratiot Road, Saginaw. Call (989) 781-0050 for more information.

Thursdays: Bingo will be played at 10 a.m. at the Moose Family Center, 2218 Midland Rd., Saginaw Township 989 793-9735.

Fridays: **Eleanor Frank Senior Center**, 2355 Schust Road (at the entrance to Haithco Park) has an open euchre tournament starting at 9:30 a.m. for senior citizens ages 60 and older. Call Bob at (989) 525-4400 for details.

The **Eagles Club**, 7078 Gratiot Road, will hold Jack of Spades at 9:00 p.m. The public is welcome.



CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS: Please help! We NEED food donations for the Christmas Food Baskets. This year we will be giving food baskets to 8 families so they can enjoy a delicious Christmas meal. And, if you have ever helped pack the food baskets, you know there will be enough food for long after the Christmas meal. The last date to bring food will be Sunday, December 15th. We will pack the baskets on Friday, December 20th. Judi Westendorf can tell you what items are still needed or check on the chart in Fellowship Hall. In lieu of food, you may donate \$\$\$ and our shoppers will pick up the needed items. If you can come and help pack, your help would be greatly appreciated. Thanks.



<p><u>Hoyt Nursing Home</u></p> <p>Elaine Kraenzlein</p>	<p><u>Swanhaven Manor</u></p> <p>Fern Evon Little</p>
<p><u>New Hope Valley Independent</u></p> <p>Dorothy Gray, Virginia "Ginny" Jarvi and</p>	<p><u>Wellspring Assisted Living</u></p> <p>Shirley Roof, Carol Williamson, Bob & Marie Lemmer, Mary Ellen Sierocki, Lila Neumeyer</p>
<p><u>St. Francis Home</u></p> <p>Judith Lorenz</p>	<p><u>Wellspring Independent Living</u></p> <p>Helen Reynolds</p>
<p><u>In Hospital or Private Homes</u></p> <p>Dawn Curtis, Bessie Daugharty, Eleanor Farnum, Betty Hauk, Floyd & Lois Krzak, Ruth Marsh, Elaine Miner, Fran Preuter, Kathy Williamson, Betty Burr and Joan Comstock</p>	<p><u>Health Source</u></p> <p>Norma Meacham</p> <p><u>Saginaw Senior Care & Rehab</u></p> <p>Mary Young</p>

Countryside member, Ruth Marsh's husband, honored posthumously: MURAL OF SAGINAW'S FIRST BLACK MAYOR COMING TO HENRY G. MARSH BRIDGE UNDERPASS



By [Isis Simpson-Mersha | isimpson@mlive.com](mailto:isisimpson@mlive.com)

SAGINAW, MI — A mural depicting former Saginaw Mayor Henry G. Marsh is in the works for the Interstate 675 bridge bearing his name that spans the Saginaw River.

The plans for the mural and a new event space for the Henry G. Marsh/ I-675 bridge were presented to Saginaw City Council on Nov. 4.

Annette Rummel, CEO of Great Lakes Bay Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the mural will pay homage to Saginaw's first black mayor and welcome tourists visiting Saginaw. The mural will be painted on the retaining wall under the bridge, she said.

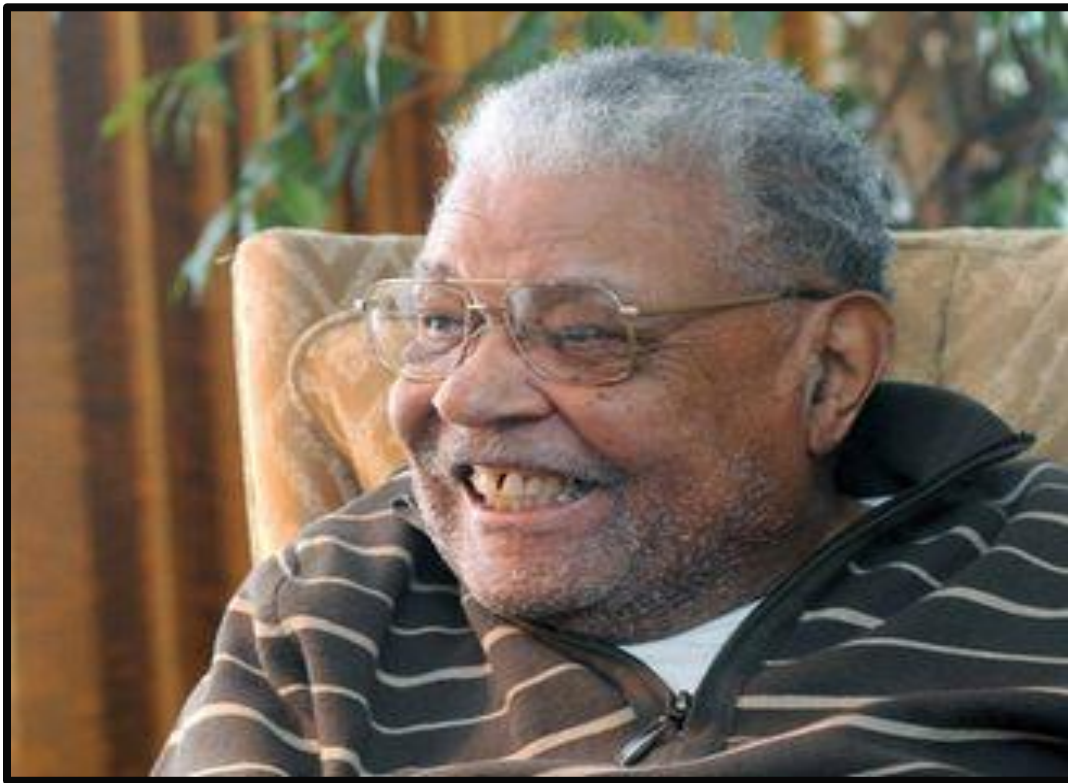
"We believe that that was a wonderful honor to name the bridge after him, but we want the physical bridge to respect his personality and his contributions to the community," Rummel said.

Marsh was elected mayor in 1967, becoming the first black mayor of Saginaw and one of the first in the U.S. He served during the same time racial tensions were high all across the country.

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Some members in the community saw Marsh as a trailblazer because of how he handled a riot in Saginaw. He formed a 220-member Committee on Civil Rights made up of homemakers, factory workers, ministers, business owners and members of civil rights organizations.



Former Saginaw Mayor Henry G. Marsh talked about his life in January 2009.

"We want to be historically accurate," said Rummel. "So we're working with the Castle Museum. We want to be respectful, mostly we want to be respectful to his family, to his wife and make sure that it's up to her expectations."



Rummel said the space under the bridge and will be transformed into a "very sought after" venue to hold outdoor activities.

The vision for the nearly 2-acre urban park includes small sporting events, animal interactions, organized by the Saginaw Children's Zoo, Saginaw Spirit events, fishing, a trail hub and even a wedding reception venue. LED lighting will create an ambiance for the different events, said Rummel.

She said the area will be universally accessible to the community. The idea for the urban park came from a project in New York called City Nation Place. One of the components of the project is to use the underpass areas as an urban pocket park with the goals of engaging citizens, driving investment, attracting talent and developing sustainable tourism, according to its website.

The project will be funded by the Saginaw County Convention and Visitors Bureau, private sector partners and public sector partners, Rummel said.

Rummel said organizers are working with the Michigan Department of Transportation and Marsh's wife, Ruth Marsh, to figure out how to move forward with the plans. Rummel said plans for the area will start to take place next year.

2019	DECEMBER		SUNDAY	Countryside Trinity Church 4690 Weiss St. Saginaw, MI 48603 Email: Countryside@ctcsaginaw.com Phone: 989-793-0125		
CALENDAR YEAR	CALENDAR MONTH		FIRST DAY OF WEEK			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
10:25 am- Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am - Worship Service with Communion and 2 Coin Meal Offering; 11:30 am - Coffee Hour		1:00 PM Craft group meets in Fellowship Hall	6 pm Advent Program - Appetizers			11:00 am -6:00 pm Private Christmas Party
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
10:25 am- Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am - Worship Service; 11:30 am - Coffee Hour		1:00 PM Craft group meets in Fellowship Hall	6 pm Advent Program - Soup & Bread			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
10:25 am- Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am - Worship Service; 11:30 am Coffee Hour		1:00 PM Craft group meets in Fellowship Hall 6:30 p.m. Session Council Meeting	6 pm Advent Program - Desserts			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
10:25 am- Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am- Worship Service 11:30 am - Coffee Hour; 11:45 am COOKIE WALK	Deadline for January Newsletter	7 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Office Closed 	MERRY CHRISTMAS. Office closed. 			
29	30	31	01	02	03	04
10:25 am- Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am- Worship Service; 11:30 am - Coffee Hour				Office Hours: Mon- Fri 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Worship Services on Sundays at 10:30 a.m.	 <small>Psalms 37:5, NRSV</small>



Countryside Trinity Church
4690 Weiss Street
Saginaw, MI 48603



The Magic of Christmas - "The Magic of Christmas" is an original Christian poem about the true spirit of Christmas, which can't be bought or wrapped up in a box; it comes from the inside as we share good will with those around us:

"Joy to the World," the carolers sang out as last minute shoppers scurried about, desperately seeking that one special gift that would give Christmas morning a magical lift.

As an old man stood standing, listening to the song, midst all the madness of the bustling throng, in a shaky, hoarse voice he began to join in singing the words of the famous old hymn.

One by one people stopped with their madness to join with the old man for a moment of gladness.

By the time the carolers finished with singing the song, the whole throng was united as they all sang along.

As if by magic from out of the sky Church bells rang out from a chapel nearby. And when it was over the people greeted each other with messages of good will they shared with one another.

You see, that magical lift the shoppers sought for so long, was not in the buying or scurrying along. That magical gift so desperately sought was the *Spirit of Christmas*—which could never be bought. --

Tom Krause