

CTC Connections Newsletter December 2022



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From the Pastor:

Every year it seems that Christmas surprises me. I, along with many of you, think: "I can't believe it is Christmas time!" And yet it is! Every year I think I will "do" Christmas better. My decorations will be perfect, my evenings will be spent relaxing, looking at the Christmas Tree lights, and listening to Christmas music. I will not wait until the last minute to find the perfect presents for family and friends. And I will bake cookies. This year is the year it is going to happen!

But alas, it probably won't. I am already behind in my scheduled "do Advent right" plan. My tree is up, but not fully decorated. My evenings are busy. I do have some presents gathered. I haven't wrapped them though. And I really don't like baking cookies. I like eating them, but not baking them! I've got time, right?

Advent is such a wonderful season. It always helps me to remember that these days leading up to Christmas are about looking forward to the birth of our Savior. And even though we celebrate His birth every year, there is a wonder, a hope, a peace, that we experience anew.

My favorite thing about my Advent journey is getting out my Nativity Set. It is quite expansive, and each year I add a figure to it. As I get the figures out, I wonder about them. What was the girl holding the goose thinking on that day so long ago. Did she know her life would be forever changed? How about the guy playing bagpipes? Did his song change with the birth of the Messiah? And what about Mary and Joseph? What were they doing as they prepared to head to Bethlehem? Were their days filled with the ordinary, as well as the wonder that the baby soon to be born is the Savior?

I suspect that they were, like us, in awe at this sign of God's love. And that no matter what else was going on in their lives, the knowledge that Emmanuel has come to live among them, changed them in profound ways. Emmanuel still lives among us. May your Advent and Christmas be filled with hope, love, joy and peace that comes from this knowledge.

Pastor Jane

UPCOMING LECTIONARY READINGS:

DECEMBER 2022



Luke 1:26-38	In the sixth month an angel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth
Isaiah 11:1-10	A shoot shall come from the stock of Jesse, a branch shall grow out of his roots
Matthew 1:18-25	Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother
Isaiah 35:1-10	Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.
Luke 1:39-45, 56-58	The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus, it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.
Luke 1:46-55	'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Luke 2:1-20	The Birth of Jesus. In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

YOUR SESSION AT WORK

NOVEMBER 20, 2022

MARY ANN PARKER, CLERK OF SESSION

Following prayer by Pastor and Moderator, Jane Lynn Young committee reports given.

Minutes of last month's stated session meeting approved.

Treasurer's report received.

Clerk's Report: Church membership is 114. Communion served on November 6, 2022. Parker reported that the Session minute book and church register were approved without exceptions by Presbytery 10/24/2022.

Motion sustained to ask members to pay \$30.00/member to cover per capita for both Presbytery and UCC for 2023. **Motion sustained** to contribute \$250.00 to the Wider Church Mission of PCUSA and \$250.00 to UCC Mission.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Jane is working on material for the Advent study.

Denominational Report: Roger Scovill will serve as elder commissioner at Presbytery meeting on 12/6/2022.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Christian Outreach: Blehm reported that the November missions are Hidden Harvest, Thanksgiving Food Gift cards to eight families from Weiss Elementary School, and The Shoe Box Saginaw Project.

Motion sustained to remove 14 members who have not attended CTC or contributed in any way to the life of the church in several years from the membership list. These people had received letters regarding their membership status and did not reply asking to stay on the rolls by October 31, 2022, as requested in the letter they received,

Finance & Stewardship: Mari McKenzie, church treasurer, presented the budget for 2023 which Session approved. **Motion sustained** to change software to digitalize congregation contributions and financial records to PowerChurch no later than December 1, 2022. We will not be using QuickBooks any longer which has gone up in cost. This switch will save the church about \$1,100/year.

Personnel: Parker reported that twelve people participated in the BLS/AED lifesaving courses presented by non-member Brian Leach (Avis's son). We will be showing our appreciation to Brian and his son, Travis (a senior at Swan Valley) who assisted with the classes. Action taken regarding Christmas gifts for the staff and the pastor.

Spiritual Life: Communion dates for 2023 were approved. Woodke related that an “Unspoken Prayer Table with Candles” will be instituted. This will be similar to the lighting of the candles that we celebrated on All Saints’ Day.

Nominating Committee: Redfield reported that the committee members are working on the slate of officers for 2023.

****** Please note that a Called Congregational meeting will be held directly following worship service on Sunday, December 11, 2022, for the purpose of electing officers for 2023.**

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned with prayer by M. Parker at 1:15 PM.

TREASURER REPORT- MARI MCKENZIE

	October				Ending Balance
	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers	
General	16,104.62	10,618.76	11,541.35	1,547.00	16,729.03
Memorial	17,147.13	405.00			17,552.13
Special gift	2,000.00		2,000.00		-
Special projects	1,360.81				1,360.81
Mission					
Per capita	(186.25)				(186.25)
Two-coins-a-meal	34.09	50.00			84.09
Food baskets	927.52				927.52
Heifer proj (Church School)	-				-
UCC/PCU/Blankets	60.00	200.00			260.00
Good Samaritan	2,527.28		126.64		2,400.64
Muriel Lakey Scholarship	8,754.46	310.22			9,064.68
Local mission	490.00	95.00	475.90		109.10
Bricks	1,335.85				1,335.85
	50,555.51	11,678.98	14,143.89	1,547.00	49,637.60
Minister Compensation	72,789.84	-		(535.00)	72,254.84
Endowment	228,131.84	45.88		(1,012.00)	227,165.72
	351,477.19	11,724.86	14,143.89	-	349,058.16



Betty Burr Samaritas Senior Living	Joan Comstock @ Home	Dawn Curtis @ Home
Betty Hauk Wellspring Assisted Living	Floyd & Lois Krzak @ Home	Marie Lemmer Wellspring Assisted Living
Fern Evon Little Swan Haven Manor	Virginia Lyon @ New Hope Valley	Norma Meacham @ daughters in North Carolina
Elaine Miner @ Home	Fran Prueter @ Home	Helen Reynolds Wellspring Memory Care

I saw this posted online and thought it should be shared:

CHURCH IS HARD

Church is hard for the person walking through the doors, afraid of judgement.
 Church is hard for the pastor's family, under the microscope of an entire body.
 Church is hard for the prodigal soul returning home, broken, and battered by the world.
 Church is hard for the girl who looks like she has it all together but doesn't.
 Church is hard for the couple who fought the entire ride to service.
 Church is hard for the single mom, surrounded by couples holding hands, and seemingly perfect families.
 Church is hard for the widow and widower with no invitation to lunch after service.
 Church is hard for the deacon with an estranged child.
 Church is hard for the person singing worship songs, overwhelmed by the weight of the lyrics.
 Church is hard for the man insecure in his role as a leader.
 Church is hard for the wife who longs to be led by a righteous man.
 Church is hard for the nursery volunteer who desperately longs for a baby to love.
 Church is hard for the single woman and single man, praying God brings them a mate.

Church is hard for the teenage girl, wearing a scarlet letter, ashamed of her mistakes.
Church is hard for the sinners.
Church is hard for me.
It's hard because on the outside it all looks shiny and perfect. Sunday best in behavior and dress.
However, underneath those layers, you find a body of imperfect people, carnal souls, selfish motives.
But here is the beauty of church—
Church isn't a building, mentality, or expectation.
Church is a body.
Church is a group of sinners, saved by grace, living in fellowship as saints.
Church is a body of believers bound as brothers and sisters by an eternal love.
Church is a holy ground where sinners stand as equals before the Throne of Grace.
Church is a refuge for broken hearts and a training ground for mighty warriors.
Church is a converging of confrontation and invitation. Where sin is confronted, and hearts are invited to seek restoration.
Church is a lesson in faith and trust.
Church is a bearer of burdens and a giver of hope.
Church is a family. A family coming together, setting aside differences, forgetting past mistakes, rejoicing in the smallest of victories.
Church, the body, and the circle of sinners-turned-saints, is where He resides, and if we ask, He is faithful to come.
So even on the hard days at church—
The days when I am at odds with a friend, When I've fought with my husband because we're late once again. When I've walked in bearing burdens heavier than my heart can handle yet masking the pain with a smile on my face. When I've worn a scarlet letter, under the microscope. When I've longed for a baby to hold or fought tears as the lyrics were sung. When I've walked back in, afraid and broken, after walking away. I'll remember, He has never failed to meet me there.

Jacob Waldron

NEWS FROM CTC

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: There will be a short Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 11th immediately following worship for the purpose of electing officers for 2023. Please plan to attend.

CHOIR NEWS: The choir will be singing on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. During Advent, the choir will sing every Sunday. Practice will be held in the choir room on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month beginning at 5:15 p.m. All those interested in joining the choir see Dan Groom. All voices welcome.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES. Ms. Sandy will be taking the children back to Sunday School class on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month unless otherwise announced. Please think about bringing your children, grandchildren, or other young family members with you to church.

ADVENT-2022: We had our first soup and scripture following worship on Sunday, November 27th and it was fabulous. Great food and scripture was shared. We will continue with this program until Sunday, December 18th. Hope you can join us. The following chart shows which committee will be providing the food:



November 27th	Deacons
December 4th	Spiritual Life
December 11th	Session
December 18th	Choir



CTC CHRISTMAS SERVICE will be held on Christmas Eve, December 24th, 2022. We will not have a Christmas Day service; however, we have been invited to attend First Presbyterian Church's Christmas Day Worship Service which begins at 11:00 a.m.

TWO COINS A MEAL

will be collected on the first Sunday of each month. There will be a pail at the back of the Sanctuary marked as such. Please bring your coins in a plastic baggie or envelope if you can do so and place in the pail either on your way in or out of Church. Thank you.



COMMUNION SERVERS NEEDED!

One of our most important ministries here at Countryside Trinity Church is serving communion to our shut-ins. We are presently in dire need of volunteers to be a part of this ministry. The Deacons are searching for people who are willing to visit and serve communion several times a year to those unable to attend worship.

We go out in teams of two and to get started you would be teamed up with one of our current team members or you could form

your own team. We are called to serve God and ALL members of our church family, and this would be a great opportunity to be a part of this rewarding ministry.

Please prayerfully consider joining our Homebound Communion Team. Our servers are: Mary Ann Parker, Lori Halase, Jackie and Dallas Williams, Lou Diechman, Ron Platt, Kathy Loviska, Pat Denno and Dan Groom. If you have any questions about this ministry, please talk to any of our current servers, and when you are ready to join with us, please contact Dan Groom. Thank you, **The Deacons.**

THESE DAYS: *These Days* magazines are on the table in Fellowship Hall if you would like to pick one up. A donation jar is on the table.

GREETING CARDS: A variety of greeting cards are on the window ledge in Fellowship Hall. Please leave your payment in the basket provided.

DISASTER RELIEF: PCUSA and UCC have programs aimed at national and inter-national disaster assistance to provide emergency humanitarian aid such as food items, shelter, medicines, diapers, hygiene items, etc. to people in need. This enables congregations and mission partners to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crises and catastrophic events.



If you are able and desire to help, place your Donation in an envelope marked "Disaster Relief" in the collection basket at church or mail to Countryside Trinity Church, 4690 Weiss Street, Saginaw, Michigan 48603.

All monies collected at CTC will be divided equally between Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Disaster Assistance fund and the United Church of Christ's Disaster Relief fund.

Thank
You

MISSION OF THE MONTH. Missions of the month for December are the Christmas Food Cards and PCUSA's Christmas Joy Offering and UCC's Christmas Fund.

CHRISTMAS FOOD CARDS: CTC will be giving gift cards to needy families from Weiss School. This way, the families can purchase the type of food of their choice. We gave eight (8) gift cards to families for Thanksgiving and are planning to do the same for Christmas. If you wish to participate, please put your donation in an envelope marked "Holiday Food" and place it in the offering basket or mail to the church office. Thank you for your generosity.

If you wish to donate to the Christmas Joy or Christmas Fund Offerings, there are flyers and envelopes on the table in Fellowship Hall. Or, you could you're your donation to the church marked Christmas Joy/Christmas Fund. Thank you.

CROP HUNGER WALK: Marcia Lacker reports we collected \$695.00 this year for the Crop Walk. Thank you all for your donations.



FACEBOOK PRAYER GROUP:

Don't forget we have a Facebook Prayer Group on our FB Page. It is a private group where only those who are invited can see the messages posted for those in need of prayer. If you are on Facebook and would like to be invited, please call Kathy in the office so she can invite you to join. If you would like to add someone to the prayer list, please contact Kathy in the office to do so.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY is holding a



series of classes in *Home Maintenance & Financial Management* for 2022-2023. Classes range from basic home repair including minor electrical, lamp repair, plumbing repair, & many more as well as home maintenance. Pre-registration required. If you are interested, flyers are in Fellowship Hall.

HOLIDAY LIGHT RECYCLING DRIVE – MID MICHIGAN WASTE3 AUTHORITY. November 15, 2022 -January 15, 2023

Don't throw away old holiday lights. Recycle them at one of the following locations during normal business hours! Proceeds benefit the Can Council.

Bridgeport Twp Govt Center, 6740 Dixie Highway, Bridgeport

Can Council, 1311 N. Michigan Ave., Saginaw

Carrollton Twp DPW, 1645 Mapleridge Rd., Saginaw

Frankenmuth City Hall, 240 W. Genesee St., Frankenmuth

Gardner White Furniture, 2660 Tittabawassee Rd., Saginaw

Hydes Park, (During Freeland Light Show, starting 12/1, 9200 Midland Rd., Freeland

James Township Hall, 6060 Swan Creek Rd., Saginaw

Merrill Village Office, 148 W. Saginaw St., Merrill

Mid Michigan Waste Authority, 2063, S. Miller Rd., Saginaw

Richland Township Office, 1180 N. Hemlock Rd., Hemlock

Saginaw City Public Works, 1435 S. Washington St., Saginaw

Saginaw Twp DPS Bldg., 4870 Shattuck Rd., Saginaw

Spaulding Twp Office, 5025 East Rd., Saginaw

St. Charles District Library, 132 S. Saginaw St., St. Charles

Village of St. Charles Office, 110 W. Spruce St., St. Charles

Thomas Twp Public Safety Bldg., 8215 Shields Dr., Saginaw

Wheeler Township Office, 8510 E. Monroe Rd., Wheeler

Zilwaukee City Office, 319 Tittabawassee Rd, Saginaw

INCLEMENT WEATHER: It is that time of year again where we may experience slippery road and sidewalk conditions. Before venturing out to church if the weather or conditions on the streets and sidewalks is questionable, please watch Channel WNEM on your TV for closings that normally scroll along the bottom the screen in the winter, or on your computer go to www.WNEM.com for the latest closings. We will report any cancellations on these sites. Thank you. Be safe and stay warm.

Online instructions: On your computer or telephone go to www.WNEM.com and then click on the following symbol which is located near the top of the page:



This is the Menu button. After you click on it, a menu will drop down.

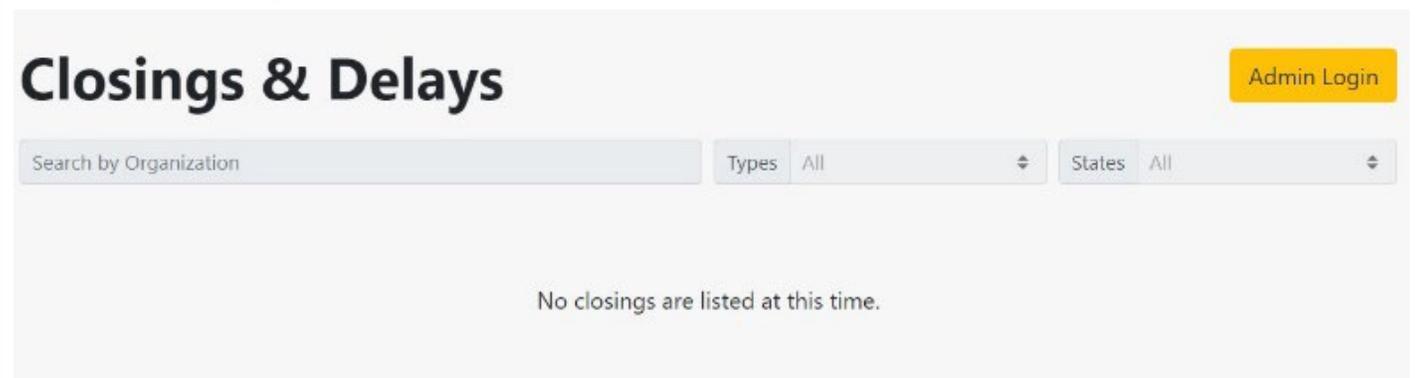
Then click on the arrow to the right of where it says, "First Alert Weather", see below be sure to click on the arrow to the right side:

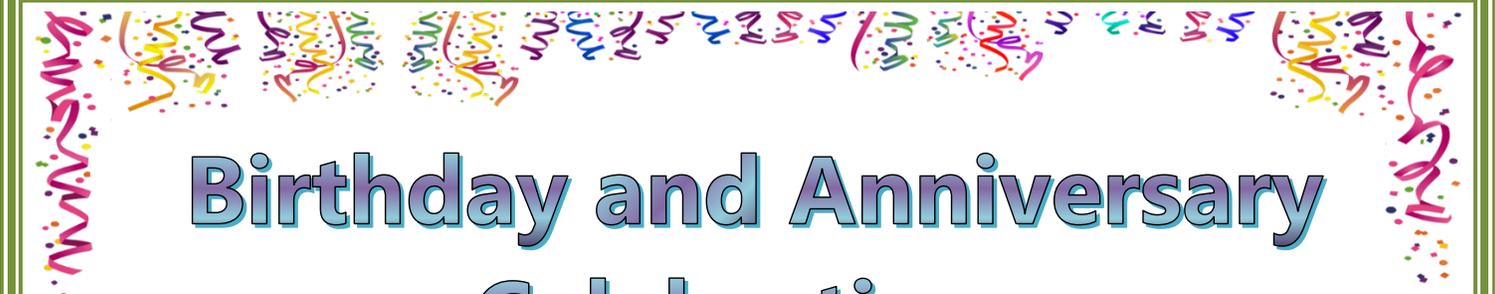


After clicking on that arrow, another menu will drop down – then click on **WORDS** "Closings and Delays" – looks like this:



When you click on "Closings and Delays" the following will appear. Look for Countryside Trinity Church and if we are closed, we will be listed there with information about the closing. It will look like this:





Birthday and Anniversary Celebrations

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Rhashell Hunter
- 12 Melissa Paterson (Shalhoup)
- 16 Alexa Mahan
- 17 Nancy Easlick
- 22 Ed Halase
- 25 Brecque Woodke
- 26 Craig Gates
- 30 Kermit Diggs

- 14 Betty Hauk
- 17 Madisen J. Groom
- 22 Mary Ann Parker
- 24 Chelsea Parker
- 25 Brian Leach
- 27 Laura Nolan
- 28 Irene Ohmer
- 28 Kevin Barnum
- 30 John Bethune
- 31 Peter Dominguez

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 15 Joseph & Doris Ruth
- 24 Bruce & Patricia Denno

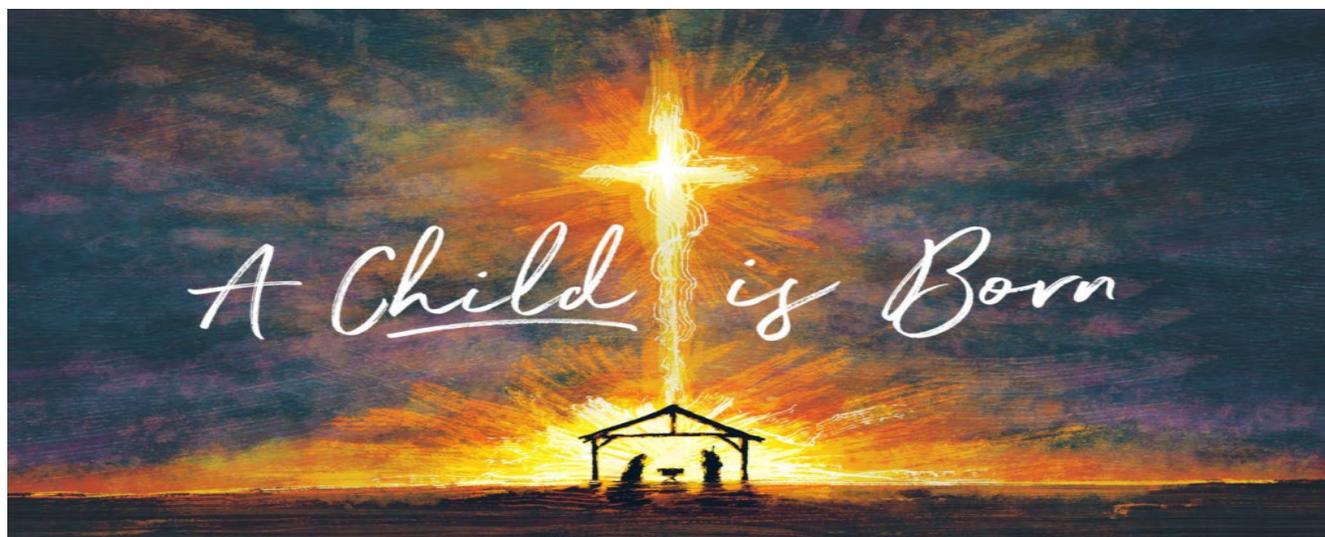
JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Norma Meacham
- 8 Zachary Vega
- 12 Julie Smith Lowe
- 13 Sarah Gonzales
- 13 Kevin Diggs

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 6 Pervez & Ezra Yusaf
- 7 Ron & Brenda Platt
- 11 Robert & Jean Bortner
- 28 Michael & Amanda Groom

**COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH
4690 WEISS STREET
SAGINAW, MICHIGAN 48603**



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Holy God, all-glorious giver of grace, you are light, shining in darkness; you are life, the life of all people. Fill us with the light and life of Christ, through whom all things were made, so that we may be faithful disciples, bearing witness to your grace and truth; through Christ, your Word made flesh.