

THE TRINITY TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 2022

From the Pastor

In Luke 1: 26-38, Mary was approached by the angel Gabriel. Most Bible scholars think that Mary was probably about 13 years old. Rites of passage in those days, like getting married or having a baby, occurred much earlier because the life expectancy was much shorter. If one was going to get married and have children, it better happen sooner rather than later, because not only was the life expectancy about 40 years old, the risk of dying during childbirth increased as a girl aged. A thirteen year old female body stood a better chance of surviving pregnancy and labor than a 20 year old body or older. 13 years old! Can you remember when you were 13 years old? What you were thinking, your taste in clothes or television shows? So Mary would have been about 13 years old, doing whatever it was 13 year old girls did in first century Palestine, when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. Luke doesn't give any indication that Mary was startled by Gabriel's appearance. Because, despite what we see in paintings by the Old Masters— Gabriel didn't have a six foot wing span or an all-over glow or suddenly appear in Mary's house. He probably looked like someone in Nazareth, Mary's village, a familiar, friendly face. Maybe he just stopped by and knocked at the entrance to her home, or he called to her as she was walking home and she invited him inside. He had that air about him—an angel-sort of air. Gabriel's news that Mary was going to have a baby would not gladden the hearts of Mary's friends and family, but seriously muddy the waters. Mary was betrothed but the marriage hadn't been consummated and so Gabriel's announcement that she was going to be a mother might also mean that she was going to be an unwed mother. Or that she could face death by stoning for committing adultery. Or that all her dreams of having happy life with Joseph, her carpenter husband would come to a screeching halt. Gabriel's visit to Mary brought confusion. It makes sense that following Gabriel's announcement that the Lord was with her, Mary would be perplexed and would ponder what in the world this angel was saying. And following Gabriel's specific words that Mary was going to conceive and bear a son, Mary had questions. "How can this be?, for my marriage hasn't been consummated." Gabriel showed his kinder side to this little 13 year old girl, saying, first, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power

of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born[d] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. " Gabriel's visit to thirteen year old Mary was perplexing and troubling. Perhaps we should be equally perplexed and troubled that young Mary's response to news that might cost her a husband, leave her open to the possibility of being stoned to death, wreck her carefully planned life was simply, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." No rebellious refusal, no temper tantrum, no whining, not at all like a typical 13 year old, just acceptance and trust in the message carried by Gabriel. It's not Mary's age that matters, but her faith. Her willingness to trust the message of the angel Gabriel and her willingness to serve as the bearer of God's good news, who came to earth as a baby to save his people from their sins—to save us from our sins. Then Gabriel departed. He didn't stick around to see if Mary might have had more questions, or hover nearby in the weeks ahead to erase any possible doubts, or pay a special warning visit to those in Nazareth who doubted or ridiculed Mary as her baby grew in her womb. Nope. Gabriel departed, leaving Mary on her own to face her fiancé, her family, and her future. But maybe not, as part of Gabriel's greeting to Mary was, "The Lord is with you," and part of Gabriel's departing words to Mary were "nothing will be impossible with God." Mary's life was sandwiched between trusting in the Lord's presence and believing in God's power. She knew that living as one of God's servants meant trusting and believing in God's presence and power. And as difficult as that would have been for the nine months that she carried Jesus, it became even more difficult for the nine hours that Jesus hung upon the cross. Yet during both times, and in all the times in between, Mary's trust and belief could be heard in her words, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." I happen to agree with the Biblical scholars who believe that Mary was about 13 years old when the angel Gabriel dropped by for a visit. But I don't think she was an exceptional 13 year old girl. Like most teenagers, I think Mary knew just enough to get started, and what she knew was to trust and believe. Actually, all of us Christians know just enough to get started on our own faith journey,

(continued on page 3)

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The Trinity Times is published monthly. We welcome news items and other contributions from members and friends of Trinity. Bring your articles to the church or e-mail them to the editor, Judy Schomber (schomberstat@aol.com) by the 20th of the month for the following month's newsletter.

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Sally Hughes, Pastor
William E. Berger, Minister of Music
Peyton Chandler, Office Manager
Jeff Durham, Facilities Manager

SESSION MEMBERS

Sally Hughes, Moderator
Vira Baker (2023) Jackie Elbert (2022)
Betsy Bond (2024) Linda Rutherford (2022)
Jane Cooper (2023) Benita Sims (2023)
Roger Cunningham (2024) George Ward (2022)
Aad Zeeuw (2024)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SESSION

**Sara Hughes, Moderator
October, 2022**

The Session is in discussions on 2023 Budget. Church Office will print pledge cards on stock cards for pews. Will meet to review Vanco online giving application.

Received \$500 dollars from Peach Truck for use of parking lot for summer sales.

We received a thank you note from Roof Top for our support.

The aluminum frame for chapel window has been completed and we will prepare for its installation.

Master Planning will be deferred until next month.

80/80 Celebration November 6, 2022 and Holiday Market/Bake Sale December 3, 2022 plans are underway.

Updates on ongoing work around the church: brush cleared and hauled away by Robin Gist tree company.

Approved Sally Hughes and Roger Cunningham to represent Trinity at Presbytery meeting on November 10th, 2022.

Personnel Committee is recommending small pay

DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE AND LECTIONARY READINGS

December 4 **Second Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 1:1-10 and Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19;
Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

December 11 **Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 35:1-10 and Psalm 146:5-10
or Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10;
Matthew 11:2-11

December 18 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 7:10-16 and Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:8-25

December 25 **Nativity of the Lord/Christmas Day**

Dawn: Isaiah 62:6-12 and Psalm 97;
Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20
Day: Isaiah 52:7-10 and Psalm 98;
Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

raises for 2023 for Sally Hughes, Will Berger, Peyton Chandler and Aad Zeeuw. The raise is less than the COLA recommended by the Federal Government. This rate does not satisfy inflation rates presently but will help. The Facility Managers position will continue as a be paid position for all assigned maintenance.

In January 2023 the session will appoint a search committee, which with the assistance of a liaison person from Presbytery to research and nominate an associate pastor to be hired on/before January 2024. The search committee would develop a job description including compensation to be included in 2024 budget considerations.

The Board of Pensions will offer the same benefits to Sally as received in 2022. There will be a rate increase in the 5-7% range.

Later this Spring we will be seeking applications for full time Office Manager as the present one will be graduating from divinity school in May 2023.

Jeff Durham will resign as Facilities Manager because of personal family reason December 31. The Session reviewed and discussed a handout of the job description of facilities manager such as general duties, custodial duties and duties that may involve using outside services.

There was discussion regarding the continued use of elders and members of congregation as worship leaders.

Members of the Session met with Jim Davis and Gail Crider who provided some background

information about their personal lives and spiritual journeys. They were accepted accept into membership by letter of transfer from Belmont Methodist Church.

From the Pastor (from page 1)

knowing that the Lord is with us and that nothing is impossible for God. Trust in the Lord's presence and belief in God's power should be enough to get us started, no matter what our age. With the Lord's presence and God' With the Lord's presence and God's power, we have enough to accept the call to be bearers of the gospel to every person we meet. So in this Advent season, let's be open to hearing God's message to us—through ordinary people or extraordinary events--and no matter how young we are or how old we are, let us trust that the Lord is with us and that nothing is impossible with God and, like Mary, answer, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

NEW MEMBERS JIM DAVIS AND GAIL CRIDER



COVID GUIDANCE/ MASKS NOW OPTIONAL

According to the latest CDC update, Davidson County is considered "medium" in the spread of COVID-19. Accordingly, masks will be *optional* and will still be provided at each entrance. Hand sanitizer will also be available at the entrances. If you have not been vaccinated or had a booster shot, please do!

NEW ONLINE GIVING SYSTEM & QR CODE:

Trinity is excited to announce that you are now able to make financial contributions *virtually*, through our new online giving system, *Vanco*. On the last page of the Sunday worship bulletin, you will see a QR Code, which you can scan to access our virtual giving page. From there, you can support Trinity from the convenience of your smartphone. Also, the online giving system will soon be linked on Trinity's website. Stay tuned!

PRAYER & REFLECTION TIME

On Fridays at 8:30 a.m., Sally will offer prayer ticoncerns that you would like included in the prayer time, please text or email Sally (sally.hughes@trinitypresnashville.org)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT TRINITY

If you are searching for an opportunity to volunteer at Trinity, there are quite a few ways that you can help.

- The sanctuary needs to be "put back" after worship to accommodate the Linden Waldorf Strings classes
- There are photos which have fallen off the wall in East Hall and need to be re-hung (and maybe replaced with newer photos?)

The bulletin board in East Hall needs attention.

Talk with Sally if you are interested in any of these volunteer opportunities!

HOW TO HELP UKRAINE

GIVE: Gifts can be made by phone at (800) 872-3283, or by check, which can be mailed to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

PRAY: As this war continues to cause destruction and loss of life, please pray with us that the

communities affected by this event and those offering assistance will be strengthened, have their needs met and be reminded of the hope found in God.

Through PC(USA) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), we can join together to help our brothers and sisters in Ukraine who are suffering from Russia.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Jane Cooper - 1

Hank Howerton - 23

Daniel Brawner - 10

Barbara McClure - 24

George Ward - 10

Jack Staple - 31

Sally Hughes - 17

Genette Norman - 22

DONATE YOUR OLD LICENSE PLATE!

If you are getting a new Tennessee license plate and would like to dispose of your old license plate, we will have a box in the back of the sanctuary in which to collect them. Eric Hobson creates bird houses using old license plates as the lids and would love to have your old plate!

IF YOU'RE COMING TO THE CHURCH DURING THE WEEK . . .

Due to car lines for drop off for the Linden Waldorf School (includes COVID 19 temperature check) and pick up, you may want to plan your trips to the church to avoid these times: 7:45 – 8:30 a.m., 12:20 – 12: 50 p.m., 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

We're grateful to have our school friends using our property but even more grateful if we don't get tied up in school traffic! Also, please call the church office (615-297-6513 and leave a message so we can call you back) in advance to plan when you're coming by. Staff are often not within earshot of the doorbell or may be working remotely and we don't want to miss you!

WEEKLY CHOIR PRACTICE

Trinity Chancel Choir Practice will take place every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. We'd love for you to join us! Please contact Will Berger at will_berger@bellsouth.net to learn more!

TRINITY 80TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON



