

TRINITY

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



847 Tenth Avenue, Brackenridge, PA 15014 / Web: www.trinitybrack.org / Office: 724-224-7300
Greg Spencer, Pastor; Mobile: 724-858-5587; Email: glsncr@gmail.com

Happy New Year!

Oh, I hope so! At Trinity we have been through a lot in recent years, conflicts over worship styles and times, struggles over leadership, struggling to adapt to changing circumstances with heat, repairs, and coronavirus. If any have learned to adapt and persevere it is us. What do we do with all this experience and knowledge? Do we just breathe a sigh of relief and struggle, when the next struggle comes? Or do we take all we have learned and work together to bring hope and help to the community, so caught and suffering, so long?

What it means to be the church, is to shine the light of the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. It is to save the lost. John Wesley said, "We have nothing to do but save souls." Haven't we all noticed how good it feels to see a "boost" on the news, the occasional "feel good" stories of people helping people, in the midst of difficult times or circumstances? Maybe we can be a people of such good, great things, provide and enjoy such things, more frequently, through fellowship and ministry.

We have been working toward enabling and facilitating growth of the church, for both our sakes, and those of the people who need our ministry, who need Jesus, the love of God and the help of the Holy Spirit. As we move through the coronavirus and into a new freedom, may we already be about our ministry and loving people and community.

In previous summers we saw how putting on a car show made a big impact. Last summer when everything was closed, we offered refreshment events and hundreds of our neighbors attended and enjoyed, the best time in town, every Sunday. Plans are being made to bring refreshment events throughout the summer of 2021, and blessing even more.

The need is clear, the way is clear, and we are here. The time has come for this church to renew our spirit and service in activity and faith, in sharing the good news of God and our church, in welcoming the stranger and turning them into friends, in making disciples and becoming a real, meaningful, church vital and alive, a bright shining light on the top of the hill.

It is up to us all to be the best we can be, and make the church the best it can be, not for ourselves, but for our whole community. I urge us all to take advantage of this opportunity, and this call of God, to being the lord into this part of the world with hope and joy, peace and love. When we do, we will see, and receive the pride and joy of heaven. Maybe this will be the happiest New Year can and will be, the best we have ever known. God, let it be.

Christmas Concert



Early in December, at a meeting of the program leaders of the church, it was decided that we should provide what has become an annual part of our Christmas Celebrations, the Classical Music Christmas Concert. Furthermore, it was stated fervently and clearly that the pastor should not bear the cost of the concert, but rather the people of the church.



We recorded an outstanding musical concert for church and community and posted the concert online at our website and Facebook the morning of Christmas Eve.

Total cost was **\$800.00**. We have received **\$125.00**. **Balance Needed: \$675.00**.

Please enjoy the concert, and give to support and provide for our programs and events. Please mark checks "Christmas Concert". Thank you!

How to Contact Us

The following individuals may be contacted at the following email addresses and phone numbers:

- Pastor: Greg Spencer (glspncr@gmail.com); 724-858-5587
- Secretary/Financial Secretary/Membership Secretary: Sherry Jenks (trinitybrackinfo@gmail.com); 724-224-7300
- Treasurer: Colleen Rudolph (colrudo@comcast.net); 724-224-7329

Ira Wood Grant

We are honored and thrilled to receive support for our ministry from the Ira and Frances Wood Trust. This year they have provided \$10,000.00 to help us in our online and updating of multimedia ministries of the church to the community.

COVID-19 and Us

We have some difficult news. We have never experienced a worldwide deadly pandemic as this. We do not like it. Some would like to pretend it is not here, or we do not have to worry. It is a worry that the facts do not seem to matter. One may wonder if we care about what is happening to our fellow Americans, much less the people around the world.

The facts are and truth is (as of January 17, 2021)

Worldwide:	Cases (reported):	95.4 Million	Deaths:	2.04 Million
United States		24.1 Million + 170,000		399,000 + 1,730

The coronavirus is currently raging at a higher rate than any time previously.

As of Monday, January 18, the Federal Covid Task Force announced a recommendation for Pennsylvania to again ban indoor dining at bars and restaurants at least as long as January 25.

There are new strains of the virus that spread nearly twice as fast as the strain that started this crisis. There are people in and related to our families that are testing positive, and hospitalized with Covid-19.

Allegheny Valley Hospital has nearly one half of all patients treated, with the coronavirus.

In some places persons are dying at the rate of 1 adult every 6 minutes.

As a ministry of Jesus Christ, our highest values include:

Providing love, comfort and care, safety, teaching of good values, and helping all to become good examples of faith and faithful living to all people, especially the community we serve, the Allegheny Valley. These values drive our decisions regarding ministry, activity, fellowship and witness.

WHEN Will We Resume “Live, In-Person Worship at Trinity?”

The good news is we care about our church. We miss each other, and the fellowship we enjoy in worship with each other.

We plan to return to live, in-person weekly worship in the sanctuary when we have a reasonable expectation that we can do so safely, reassure people of their safety, and enable people to worship, fellowship, and enjoy the company of each other without concern.

This is what it means for us to truly love one another as we love ourselves and family.

HOW Will We Return to Worship at Trinity?

We will continue to offer weekly pre-recorded online E-Worship Services
(9:00 AM Sundays on Website and Facebook.)

Live, In-person Worship will resume in the church sanctuary when we re-open.

There will be one, live service (of combined worship styles), 9:30 am Sunday Mornings

We will continue to maintain social distance, wearing masks, and follow CDC and Board of Health Guidelines (until all have received vaccine and/or virus spread is no longer a danger)

We will expect everyone to observe social distance, wear masks, give temp, and register.

Thanks

Thank you: Bill Barnett, Alan Fisher, and Bill Ruediger for putting up and taking down the Christmas decorations of our church including the Outdoor Crèche, and Sanctuary Tree.

Thank you: to the Weleski family for the donation of the magnificent Lenox china nativity. It was used on the altar throughout the Christmas holidays.

Thank you: Amanda Bartel, Fran Alter, Candice Ray, Gayla Patz and Chris Spencer, volunteer readers for the new online Education Story Time

Thank you: Colleen Rudolph, for superior service as Church Treasurer. Your first year was the most interesting and challenging one. Thanks for all the work you did for not only caring for church finances, but also the application and conclusion of our PPP forgiven loan. (Note, the finance committee has approved our applying for the second round of PPP forgivable loans. We are applying for 24 weeks of salary/support.)

Thank you: Every faithful member of our church for your continued offerings, to sustain our church and ministry. Even when we could not gather, you have loved your Lord and your church, you have invested in our present and future. You are sustaining the vision for the church begun when this church was built. You are making ministry possible and available to the hundreds and thousands of persons, who are our neighbors and community. God bless you!

Ministry Today Requires Technology

Effective ministry today, requires technology. Who among us does not have a TV? Who does not have a cell phone? For the older among us, have you noticed that no longer are there telephones (much less telephone booths) on city streets? In the church, how many of us experienced new clarity, attention and appreciation of worship with the provision of our new sanctuary sound system? Those who once had a hard time hearing or enjoying the worship, now can clearly hear every word. Technology is essential to help our church to grow and be effective in helping people come to faith and discipleship. Like it or not, if we cherish our church, we must care for its ministry beyond ourselves, for the present and future. Failing this we will see the church continue to diminish and move ever more toward closing.

Tech Training at Trinity

The time has come for us to equip the ministries of light, sound, and video with people in the church. Ministries not passed on, tend to disappear. Ministries apprenticed tend to be perpetuated. So, Pastor Greg is inviting folks to learn and provide the joy and skills of technical ministry to congregation and community. If you, please contact Pastor Greg.

Sound: The most important aspect of worship, education, and more, is the ability to hear loud and clear. Currently we have three sound systems in the church. We need a team of persons to learn and operate the church sound systems.

Visual Imagery: Two dimensions of this ministry. Computers and presentation programs. **Video Camera, Recording, editing, and mixing.**

Tis the Season of Reducing Racism

Below is an article of Do's and Don'ts for us to consider and help all persons to feel and be respected and equal (regardless of race). This article comes to us from Ms. M.Garlinda Burton, acting Secretary of the Commission on Religion and Race, of The United Methodist Church, and the WPA Conference E-News. Combating Racism is one of the 5 Areas of Focus for our Conference.

Do:

- **Connect the dots.** Preach, teach and say clearly in your church, "What is happening is rooted in systemic, historical, institutional racism. This is not just politics; it is racial violence, and racism is a sin against God."
- **Name the racism you see.** Those who attacked the U.S. Capitol Building and protested election results in other state capitals wore Nazi and Ku Klux Klan insignia; they waved nooses and the Confederate battle flag, all of which are long-revered symbols of white supremacy and racist violence. Learn that history.
- **Participate in a study or discussion.** Learn what you don't know about racism. Listen to people of color when they speak from their personal experience of racism.
- **Develop a thicker skin.** Racism is a fact. Confronting and naming it requires you to learn its history and acknowledge its continuing presence in your church and community. Adjust to saying and hearing the word "racist." Instead of feeling defensive and guilty, choose to become an ally for change.
- **Counter with acts of equity and justice.** Contact your representatives, encouraging them to support and enact laws that counter historic and current expressions of racism. Send a financial gift to a church or local organization actively working against racism in your community.
- **Look for systemic racism.** Peaceful demonstrations led by Black activists have been met with barricades, windows and doors of the Capitol Building were able to do so without much resistance from law enforcement. This is an example of systemic racism in our policing practices and proportionality of response.

Don't:

- **Confuse "not racist" with antiracist.** Anti-racism means one is actively confronting and seeking to dismantle racism in one's faith and daily life. Accepting the status quo and pretending race isn't a "thing" does not help to end racism. All Christians should embrace anti-racism as part of our walk with God.
- **Miss an opportunity to teach.** Racism has such a hold on our society because white people are taught to ignore or dismiss it, and to believe "race" is something "they" have. Pastors and teachers in white congregations equip Christians to become anti-racist by naming historic, systemic and even theological racism and seeking ways people of faith can confront and interrupt it.
- **Say, 'I don't see color.'** Read the Pentecost story in Acts 2. All people of all nations, races and tribes celebrated the coming of God's Holy Spirit. God made us all colors and intended we celebrate this diversity. The goal of anti-racism is for all of us to celebrate and "see color" as a gift from God, without ascribing greater or lesser value to God's people based on their skin color.

Don't:

- **Fail to use your white privilege for good.** Speak out when you see racism happening. Champion changes in your church, workplace and civic groups that allow wider inclusion of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) folks. White people tend to respect and listen to other white people with greater openness and seriousness. Use that to foster anti-racism.
- **'Over-talk' People of Color.** Even in the work against racism, some white people are so used to being "experts" in the group they may unconsciously overtalk or dismiss the ideas and experiences of people of color. Anti-racism work requires white people listen to and take the lead from people of color.

Once and Future Church

Can you remember a time when church mattered? Do you remember covered dish dinners, church picnics, vacation bible school, full nurseries, Sunday School for all ages, youth groups, weddings and funerals in church, talent shows, plays, educational events, holiday dinners, church outings?

Can you remember volunteering, welcoming new friends, receiving new members, spending more than an hour, more than once a week at church, and enjoying it? Can you remember being excited about Jesus Christ, faith, ministry, and the Kingdom of God?

Can you remember when people were kinder and more civil to one another, when folks were not so selfish, so ready to argue, so quick to complain? Can you recall seeing new things, discovering new talents, exploring potential, being given new opportunities, enjoying respect, and all ages caring for each other? Do you remember good and happy times at church?

Can you remember when church was appreciated, respected, and popular in the community? Some may not have noticed the reduction of such things over the last few decades. Some may not remember the joy of faith and fellowship in all aspects of activity and service. Some may not realize how much they have changed over the years. Some will not have noticed or known how or when things changed, so much lost. Some will say "The world is different now." Some will say, "It is someone else's turn." Some will say, "People do not care anymore." Some might think all that matters is taking care of ourselves until we pass or have to close our doors.

If we can remember the good, how good it has been, then we can consider how good it can be!

And do not say there are no people available or young people. Hundreds attend at least three churches within a few miles of our building. Recent statistics indicate approximately 70% of people in any community in America, do not attend church, many of whom have never been inside a church. There are plenty of people who could benefit from church life, just as active and happy as we remember it. And would we not enjoy seeing our church thrive again? Would we not like to see people treat each other better, get along a little more? Would we not like to see less suffering, poverty, divorce, conflict and crime? Is it not Christ who helps to make that happen? It is not we, who know and love Jesus, the ones who represent the best and happiest way that life can be?

If it is impossible the end is what will be, yet even then, in the eyes of God, I'd rather we go out loving, serving, helping, restoring, enjoying and saving, than in grief and surrender. And You? What would you like to see us be and do?

Reaching Out

- The church sends its deepest sympathy to the family of Betty Bricker who passed away on January 20th. A private family funeral was held Saturday, January 23.
- Buff and Dara Nolen want to send out a huge thank you to everyone who sent them cards, called them and offered prayers on their behalf during their recent bout with the COVID-19 virus. They are grateful they are feeling better and getting stronger every day.

Zoom Combined Meetings

In the past several months ZOOM meetings have multiplied for churches, businesses and families all across the country. We have held several ZOOM meetings ourselves. The problem for us has been, not everyone is online and so do not have access. We have a solution!

Twice now we have been able to set up a connection at the church. Those who are not online have come to the church. We have used a big screen TV and external camera and Bluetooth speaker/microphone, to enable the group at the church, to connect in ZOOM meetings with individuals in their homes or other remote locations.

Online Story Time

Have you seen the new Story Time we are providing on Sunday Mornings online?

The Education Team has provided readings and teaching from several chapters of the book, "Growing With Jesus" by Andy Holmes. (You can find them on the church website and Facebook pages). Each week a different volunteer reads the chapter, prays, and illustrates features of our world, all in 10 minutes or less!

These presentations are good for the whole family, and for the whole community! Help us spread the word, and invite everyone to check out this new outreach education ministry.

By the way, if there are persons (teen through adult) who would like to help us as reader, prayer, or other, please call Amanda Bartel.

Ministry Does Not Belong to Us

Ministry is not our own, it is the using of our gifts, interests and talents in the service of Jesus Christ to benefit others, church, community, and the kingdom of God. Too often churches have known wonderful ministries, championed by individuals or small groups, who kept it to themselves, and failed to include or apprentice others. These ministries thrive for a while, but when they ended their service, they also ended the ministry. So many wonderful things have ceased because people sometimes forget, ours is not to keep to or for ourselves alone. As Disciples of Jesus Christ, it is important to us, that everyone learn to share our gifts, teach and train, and help all persons to discover their own ministry, prosper in it, and perpetuate the blessing to the community.

We are but stewards of ministry. We have received it. We share it, we help others to find belonging, meaning and joy in their service, just as much as we find in ours. When we give to and support each other in these ways, the ministries grow, the joy multiplies, and the Kingdom of God prospers along with us.

Our gifts are tools. Following Christ, we are called to pass on the gifts we have, and enable each other to realize and fulfill our own ministries and service, meaning and wellbeing for the benefit of all, and the glory of God.

Safe Sanctuaries ONLINE

Safety is a major issue in ministry today. This applies online as well as in church and neighborhood.

UMC Denomination Discipleship Ministries Resources:
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/>

- **Safe Sanctuaries in a Digital World Podcast** walks you through some things to think about in regards to online safety with youth and children.
- **Safe Sanctuaries: Supporting a Shift to Online Youth Ministry Meetings** highlights eleven online gathering suggestions.
- **Western PA:** PA Rev. Chris Kindle, WPA Director of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation, is offering a video series called "**Safe Sanctuaries in 60 Seconds.**" Each video focuses on a different topic related to Safe Sanctuaries.
- If you have **Safe Sanctuaries questions**, please reach out to Amanda Gilligan (amanda.gilligan@wpaumc.org) or Chris Kindle (chris.kindle@wpaumc.org) at the Conference Center

Opportunities

The Western PA UMC Annual Conference (as well as the general UMC) offers opportunities for leadership and personal growth. Here are a few in which you may be interested.

W.W.W is My Parish! Registration is open for all sessions of the Conference's new five-week Zoom series on virtual ministry that begins Monday, Jan. 25 at 7p.m. The conversations will be on Monday evenings so church volunteers, as well as clergy or staff involved in or considering new online ministry options, can participate. Special guest for the first session will be the Rev. Jeff St. Clair, who launched a new church in Florida in February 2020 and had to rely primarily on virtual ministry to grow the congregation.

For more information and to register cut and paste the web address below into your browser: <https://wpa-reg.brtaapp>.

Heavenly Hands Crafters

Come join us as we begin our 2021 craft season. We meet each Tues. from 9-11AM. All supplies are provided. More than crafting though, we share our joys and concerns through prayer, good conversation, and laughter. For more information, call Betsy Buco at 724-224-1062. We look forward to seeing you on Tues., February 2.

Winter Soup Sale

The Crafters will be making soup on the third Friday of the month. All orders must be in the Sunday before. The soup is \$7 a quart, and there is a two quart limit. Soup may be picked-up that Friday from..... 4-5PM or that Sunday at 10:30-11AM. The following soups will be available:

Mar. 19 Cheese Broccoli Soup
Orders due Mar. 14; pick-up Mar. 19 or 21

Apr. 16 Stuffed Pepper Soup
Orders due Apr. 11; pick-up Apr. 16 or 18

Orders may be placed on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex or by calling the Office at 724-224-7300 or Betsy Buco at 724-224-1062. Profits from this fund-raiser will be used to support the General Fund. Chase away the "winter blues" by enjoying some delicious homemade soup. Thank you.

Special Offerings Resume

We are deeply grateful for all the financial support we receive from many in our congregation. Our focus upon the General Fund has truly kept our church open. Your faithfulness has helped us continue to function for this whole season of Covid-19. While the coronavirus continues to rage, we do not know when limitations and restrictions will end, but we are planning to resume and expand our ministries as best we can, and as quickly as possible.

Toward that end we are resuming the reminders of opportunities to support Church Special Offerings. Throughout the year there are many opportunities for donors to direct gifts (beyond the tithes and offerings to support the church).

We do not ask everyone to give to everything. Rather, we offer a variety of projects and ministries to which we hope you may have a special interest, and to which you give extra support. One such opportunity is our quarterly support for Emergency Relief for individuals and families. The first Sunday of every quarter we receive this special offering to support AVAC. (A percentage of each of these offerings is placed in the Good Samaritan Fund, with our intent to build over time to help us respond in care to our community in the event of a disaster.)

Reminders will be posted on Website and Facebook Pages, and included in the online worship announcements.

How to Submit and Label Your Offering Envelope

Currently, people are being asked to contribute first to the General Fund because that is the fund from which the church pays its operating expenses (i.e. utilities, pastor's salary and benefits, staff salaries, praise team salaries, building repair and maintenance, taxes, apportionment [percentage sent to UMC], and office supplies.)

Even so, people are free to make designated gifts and those monies will be placed in the designated funds, or distributed as they request, with proper credit applied to their records. We ask people to prioritize the General Fund, and to consider Designated Gifts as over and above their regular offerings. All gifts people give to specific purposes will go to those purposes.

If you are making a contribution "in memory of" someone or if you are making a contribution to a particular fund - such as Good Samaritan or Green Day or the like - please write that on your envelope.

Offering Envelopes

Weekly Offering Envelopes are now available to any who request them for financial offerings to Trinity Church. In an effort to reduce costs, we are preparing our own envelopes on a quarterly basis. Please call the church office to arrange for pick up or request we mail sets to you.

Church Leadership

Administrative Council

CHURCH OFFICERS: Ad Co. Chair: Bob Murrell

Vice Chair: Dale Cepull

Secretary: Gayla Patz

Lay Leader: Fran Alter

Education Chair: Amanda Bartel

Finance Chair: Chris Steele

Missions Chair: Sue Barnett

WPA Conf. Rep: Gayla Patz

Pastor Parish Relations Chair: Tim Cornuet

Trustees Chair: Bill Barnett

Treasurer: Colleen Rudolph

Pastor: Greg Spencer

MEMBERS at LARGE

Lori Eschenbaugh

Tom Fannie

Linda Hughan

Betty Ruediger

Ray Schmaus

Howard Stewart

Finance Committee Chairperson: Chris Steele

Betty Ruediger

Bob Murrell

Cathy Schmaus

Colleen Rudolph (staff-no vote)

Craig Jerome

Fran Alter

Bill Barnett

Evelyn Callender

Gayla Patz

Greg Spencer

Harry Crytzer

Linda Rummel

Sherry Jenks (staff-no vote)

Suellen Faustin

Tim Cornuet

Endowment Committee Convener: Pastor, Greg Spencer

Bill Barnett

Betty Ruediger

Colleen Cousert

Chris Steele

Doak Hemphill

Fran Alter

Suellen Faustin

Missions Committee Chairperson: Sue Barnett

Arlene Hill

Bonnie Fisher

David Stuckey

Sam Means

Ray Schmaus

Sam Means

Sue Denham

Church Leadership (continue)

Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Chairperson: Tim Cornuet

Alan Acre	Diana Lucas
Alan Fisher	Fran Alter
Beth Sarver	Gayla Patz
David Stuckey	Greg Spencer

Board of Trustees

Chairperson: Bill Barnett

Alan Acre	Gary Schrag
Bill Ruediger	Harry Crytzer
Don Rummel	Jim Dlubak
Fran Alter	Shirley Nock

WORSHIP

Chairperson: Karen Fazio

Betsy Buco	Greg Spencer
Carol Wildi	Jan Valasek
Dara Nolen	Mariella Acre
Evelyn Callender	Vicki Dlubak
Fran Alter	

February Birthdays

February 2	Homa, Lou Ann	February 17	Tomson, Theodore
February 8	Bibza, Viola	February 19	Crytzer, Harry
	Reckhart, Ronald		Sarver, Emma
February 10	Mack, Kylee		Schmaus, Catherine
	Rae, RJ	February 20	Ward, Ashley
February 12	Scisciani, Brooke	February 22	Robinson, Bonita
	Voskamp, Charles	February 25	Jarosinski, Judith
February 14	Fetchko, Kimberly	February 26	Przybylek, Kristopher
February 15	Scholl, Lois	February 28	Mahan, Bruce
February 16	Przybylek, Jody		Ringer, Kimberly
February 17	Beattie, Clifford		Spencer, Greg
	Sontum, Lynn		



What Is God Calling You to Do?

Submitted by The Finance Committee

2020 taught us that we can never take for granted the normalcy of our lives. Throughout the unprecedented challenges of 2020, our faith gave us the strength to endure. Not everyone in our community has faith to give them strength. Now more than ever our community needs to hear the Good News.

To accomplish its mission, the church needs us all to be good stewards. As Christians, we are called to use the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks or calls us to do. We are expected to be stewards of our time, our talents, and our resources.

During this time when the pace of our lives has slowed, we must ask ourselves, have we been good stewards of our time? What can we do with our extra time that will honor and serve God?

What about our talents? Are we using our talents for good—to help others and our community?

Calling someone who is isolated and alone, sewing masks, teaching someone to use a computer to connect online, providing a needed ride, preparing a meal for an overworked nurse are examples of giving in the spirit of Christ. The list of possibilities is endless.

How are we using our earning, and investments? Are we in a position to share our good fortune with others or in the pursuit of what we believe?

On the next page you will find a chart. Each step on the chart represents a range of weekly giving. The number of households that gave within each range in 2020 is listed. Find where you are on the chart. How much should you be giving? What you give is between you and God.

Take time to pray asking the Lord how you should respond to all he has given you. Consider stepping up a level or two of giving if you can. If not, consider moving within your step. Take the next step in faith, make an offering that would be pleasing to the Lord.

