

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
December 31, 2017
First Sunday after Christmas - New Year's Eve
8:15a 10:30a

Welcome to Trinity United Church of Christ. We seek to offer a warm greeting to our visitors, whether you are visiting the area or seeking a church family. To assist you as you worship, we have large print bulletins and hearing assistance devices available. Please see an usher for assistance. We would be happy for you to sign the guest book in the gathering area while you are with us this morning. Whoever you are, wherever you are in life's journey, we are glad that you have come, and pray that you will be blessed by your worship experience. Come and see what God is doing!

denotes the congregation standing as you are able; congregational responses in **bold print*

Once, during the hours of a quiet, starlit night above the hills of Bethlehem, a strange voice announced news that this world will never forget. To a few shepherds then -- and to all the world eventually -- that voice said, "Behold! I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be to all people..." We cannot be sure what language that messenger spoke: perhaps Hebrew, maybe Aramaic, or possibly some other language never named and not understood except by a few. But the message heard that night has been translated into almost every language spoken on the planet. When the message reached primitive England, there it encountered an old Anglo-Saxon word, "godspell" which meant "good news", and thus the message became the "gospel" and so it has remained ever since. "I bring you good news." From whatever source, these are welcome words to most people most of the time. But this particular piece of news is especially good because it is good for all people in all time. For almost two thousand years it has occupied an uppermost place in human thought. And now today, it is because of this good news that we are gathered here -- think about it again, ponder it anew, give thanks for it and rejoice in it -- and prepare to share with all others wherever you can.

PRELUDE -- "Chapel Chimes" - *Greenwald*

TIME OF SHARING

PREPARING OUR HEARTS AND MINDS FOR WORSHIP

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

We who used to be at a distance have been brought together by Jesus,
who has broken down the barriers that once kept us apart.

Christ has erased the hostility among us
and has brought us the good news of peace

*** PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

**What a wonderful gift it is, O God,
to have the opportunity to worship together, to celebrate the gift of Jesus,
to share as your people in a community of faith.
May we continue to grow together, to support one another,
and to carry our faith to the ends of the earth.**

*** LITANY FOR AN OLD YEAR**

Holy and Gracious One, we come to the end of another year.
A year that has seems to have passed by very quickly.

We reflect on the ups and downs.

For some of us it has been a year filled with good physical health,
meaningful relationships, and memorable adventures.

For this we lift up our hearts in thanksgiving.

For some of us it has been filled with some frustrations,
some painful moments when we felt overwhelmed,
and some disappointments that discouraged us.

Yet we have known your presence through all these things.

We give thanks that over the past year we have known your nearness,
your guiding Spirit, your encouraging love.

**We give thanks for this community of faith that has stood by us,
supported us, and helped us grow in faith.**

We give thanks that even in those moments when we have strayed,
when we have doubted, when we have forgotten you,

you remained near to us, welcoming us and holding us close.

We pray that those whose lives we touched have benefitted,
that our witness has been faithful, and that our words have given healing.

Continue to be near to those we hold in our hearts.

Remember the good that we have done,
and continue to encourage us on our way.

For we ask it in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

***GATHERING HYMN # 138 – “Jesus Our Brother”**

TIME OF CONFESSION

If God were dependent on our communication to know where we are or who we are,
would God know us?

We expect of God evidence and signs of caring.

Does not God, who gave us life,
have the right to expect to hear from us daily in prayer?

How have we cut ourselves off from God?

Heavenly Parent, we have wandered away to pursue our own agenda.
We have laid aside your expectation that we will forbear one another and forgive.
We harbor grudges against people.
There are some we neglect and some we disdain.
We have viewed them neither as your beloved nor as our sisters and brothers.
The peace of Christ does not rule in our hearts.
Your trust is not what flows from our lips or finds expression in our actions.
O God, turn us around, that what we do may be a genuine expression of your love,
for we ask it in the Name of Jesus.

Now let us silently reflect on the personal struggles and fears that keep us from being fully free.

WE PRAY FOR GOD'S MERCY
Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison

ASSURANCE OF PARDON
God has already forgiven us.
God offers healing for our brokenness.
The scars of resentment against others are taken away
so we can forgive them.
The love of God enables us to love.
Praise God from the earth.
Draw near to the eternal and exalt the Name of the One
who rules all time and space.
Thanks be to God for this magnificent gift of love.

*HYMN RESPONSE # 487 – “Surely No One Can Be Safer”

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

And now, experiencing once again the forgiving power of our
loving God, let us say what we believe, using the Apostles' Creed.

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only begotten son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he
descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and
sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the
quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of
saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S TIME

SPECIAL MUSIC
Don Walsh, Soloist

THE WORD OF GOD
Isiah 61:10 to 62:3 Psalm 148 Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

HYMN # 153 – “Who Would Think”

QUIET PREPARATION

SERMON

***LITANY FOR A NEW YEAR**

And now, O Holy God, as we leave this time of worship
for the last time this year,

we pray for you to go with us.

As you have blessed us in the past, so continue to bless us in the new year.

Fill us with your Spirit and with confidence and hope.

**Wherever the journey may lead, may we sense your presence
supporting and challenging us.**

Bless those who fellowship with us,
**those who visit for only an hour and those
who come among us as fellow seekers.**

Remind us of your presence.

**Bless the leaders of this congregation,
and all those who volunteer their time and talent.**

May we reach out to the community of Gettysburg and beyond.
Witnessing to you and faithfully proclaiming the good news.

Wherever we go and wherever we are,
in school, at work, in our leisure, in our quiet times,

May we be found faithful to your will.

For we ask it in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying:

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.
and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen**

THE GIVING OF OURSELVES AND OUR OFFERINGS

Everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required;
and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.

*To our visitors - - the finances of the church are the responsibility of our church members.
As our guests, we ask visitors to simply pass the offering plate to the person sitting next to you in the pew.*

Please sign the Registration Booklet at the end of each pew, then pass it to the next person. Thank you!

OFFERTORY – “Lift Thine Eyes” - *Williams*

* OFFERTORY RESPONSE # 785 “We Give You”

**We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.**

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Sometimes, Lord, as we struggle to pay our bills,
and as we seek to make a good impression on others,
our values become skewed.**

**As we look to the year ahead,
we commit ourselves to seeking first the kingdom of God.**

*CLOSING HYMN #132 – “Joy to the World”

*COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead,
press on toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

POSTLUDE – “Unto Us A Boy is Born” – *Paxton*