

Trinity UMC

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

ARE WE STILL PREACHING THAT?

Sitting in the Junior High Choir in the Fellowship Hall of the Grace Methodist Church in Spencer, Iowa, I was listening to the Senior Pastor preach from the Stage at the Christmas Eve Service. We were in the Fellowship Hall because the New Sanctuary was under construction and wouldn't be completed for a while.

The Pastor was describing how busy and harried everyone, including himself, seemed to feel with all of the Christmas festivities, gift-buying, meal-planning, school and church activities. Everyone seemed so busy that it was easy to dread the season and totally miss the wonderful blessing it could/should be. The year was 1967 and I was 13 years old.

Thirty years later, now married with four children, grade school to high school, I found myself preparing to preach that same sermon. I thought to myself, 'have we/I learned nothing?' I fear I might have to preach it again sometime. Maybe this year, maybe Christmas 2025 will be different.

My encouragement for all of us, self-included, is to make sure we don't miss Jesus in our celebrations of His coming into the world. Take time this year to offer thanks to our Heavenly Father for sending our Savior to Earth,

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that all humankind could know we can be rescued from darkness and can walk in His Light in this Life. What a wonderful, loving God we serve. See, there I go--I almost got to preaching that sermon! Enjoy celebrating Jesus this Advent/Christmas season!

Pastor Bobb

A BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE?

You've heard of having a Merry Christmas and a White Christmas and most Christmas decorations feature Green and Red as their dominant colors---so why a Blue Christmas Service?

For those who have lost loved ones, Christmas can be a difficult time as JOY and CELEBRATING are strong and appropriate themes of the season. This time can also heighten our sense of loss when the loved one, with whom we have celebrated Christmas for many years, is no longer with us. The feelings of grief can be especially overwhelming if a death occurred near Christmas.

A Blue Christmas is designed to be a service which acknowledges that people may be feeling "Blue" or Sad at this time. A Blue Christmas service calls us to gather with others who understand and to join in worship in ways that recognize this special need and also focus on our God who knows us and deeply cares for us. Our God is present with us as we worship. The Holy Spirit is called The Comforter, Counselor or Advocate (John 14:16) and is sent by the Father to be with us and in us always. In worship, in day-to-day living and especially in our moments of greatest grief, He is our very present help.

The Blue Christmas Service is sponsored by the Ballard Minister's Association and will be held Thursday, December 11th at 7pm at the Trinity UMC in Huxley. Area Pastors will be helping with the service, and Pastor Bobb will be providing the Message.

NOTES FROM YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL

Thank you to all who stepped up with extra donations of food and funds for the food pantries in Huxley. The need continues and we are proud of TUMC's efforts. The NOW committee continues to manage several ongoing mission projects, and we appreciate your help with those too.

Christmas events start with first day of Advent on Nov 30. We will decorate the church and have a soup lunch after. Please volunteer and see the calendar for more opportunities and events.

Pastor continues to connect with our community. He is preparing for the Community Thanksgiving service on Nov. 23 and Trinity will host a community Blue Christmas service Dec. 11 at 7:00 pm. He will be inviting folks to light the Advent candles in our church services. Building maintenance projects keep the Trustees busy. Council is maintaining and prioritizing a list of needed projects. A few examples are Fellowship Hall exterior door and window replacements and updating Narthex bathrooms for ADA compliance. The congregation will have an opportunity to support projects once they are prioritized.

Financial Report:

Year-to-date, we have taken in \$1900 more than we have spent. Account balances as of 11/12/2025 are: Checking--\$4996.68; Trustees--\$1236.17; Memorial-- \$16,553.59, and Heifer project--\$171.26. Balances change as expenses are paid.

Two more months of apportionments are paid so we have met 2/3 or 8 months of our obligations. The goal is to make payments to complete the 5th year in a row of meeting our apportionments.

Council will not meet in December so no update in January. Please contact a council member if you have questions or concerns.

THE WISHING TREE

This year the Wishing Tree gift lists will be available at church on Sunday December 7th. The gifts need to be returned by the 13th. If you would like more time to shop, gift lists will be available for pick up at the church from Eileen on Thursday, the 4th. If you don't have time or don't like to shop, but would like to support this project, you can make a monetary donation, and Santa's elves will shop for you!

Please have any donations to the church by December 3rd. If you have questions or need help getting a list, you can contact Robin Isaacson or Kathy Parmenter.

Thank you for giving some children in our community a happy Christmas!

HELPING OUR COMMUNITY

Trinity UMC has put together Thanksgiving Baskets that we have delivered to the needy residents of our community. This year Trinity and Fjeldberg Lutheran worked together to make the Thanksgiving boxes. The boxes were distributed on Nov. 24 & 26. With the donations from both churches and the community we were able to put together and deliver 75 boxes. These boxes went to 61 families and will feed 234 people.

Nazareth Lutheran in Cambridge put together 51 Chicken Alfredo meals that were distributed to Cambridge area families. The meals included a can of cooked chicken, pasta, a jar of alfredo sauce and a can of green beans.

I'm sure there were other acts of kindness performed during the Thanksgiving Holidays.

Please remember that due to the increased need of the residents of our communities, please consider giving extra help by bringing food or designated monetary donations to the church. All donations will be delivered to our area food pantries during this holiday season.



Huxley Holly-Days

December 4 - 7th, 2025

Thursday 4-7PM

Large Ornament Light Display
Sip & Stroll the Shops
@ The Plaza

Saturday 10-2PM

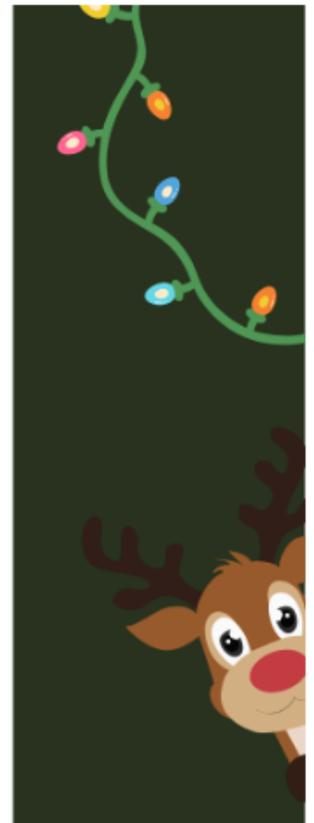
A Very Merry Library Christmas 10-11AM
Santa & Kids activities 11-2PM
@ The Landing

Friday 4-8PM

Golf Cart Holiday Light Parade
down Main Street
Caroling on Heart of Iowa Bike Trail
@ Old Main

Sunday 10-2PM

Reindeer 10-12PM
Small Business Vendor Fair
@ 1850 Homestead



UPDATE FROM THE NOW COMMITTEE

A huge thank you to everyone for your help with the Craft/Vendor Fair. Over \$1,700.00 was raised. Also thanks to all who helped with the Community Thanksgiving Service. We believe everyone felt very welcome and enjoyed the evening of food and fellowship. It was announced that close to 100 families received Thanksgiving meals this year. Bless you for any donations you made to this project and thank you to Kathy for representing Trinity.

- Our Noisy Offering and Brown Bag collections will continue on December 21st. We will have a new Heifer Project as we used some of the Craft Fair profits to take advantage of a 3X match to our donation of Clean Water.
- Our Mission Focus for December will be the Mitten Tree and our Christmas Cheer Boxes. Mittens will be available for pick-up at the church on December 4th (AM) and December 7th. Mitten Tree gifts need to be returned by December 13th. Watch for a list of items needed for our Cheer Boxes.
- Social Dinners will be put on hold until January due to the upcoming holidays. Let us know if there is a place you would suggest.
- December 28th is the next Did You Know Sunday. Let us know if there is something that should be announced.
- On-going projects: Pop tab collection for Ronald McDonald House, plastic bag collection for sleeping mats, stuffed animals, school supplies, and paper tubes (toilet paper/paper towels) for the Trinity Kids Mission Project. We will continue to collect personal hygiene items for the Clothes Pantry.
- Thank you to everyone who has helped bag the cans and bottles. The can collection trailer is closed until spring.
- December 21st we will have a TUM Fun event of breakfast pizza, favorite/ugly sweater day, and Christmas Cheer Box assembly.

Many thanks to everyone for your support of the NOW Committee projects and events this past year. We could not do them without you, and we welcome your comments and suggestions as we look into the New Year!

END OF YEAR GIVING AND LOOKING TO 2026

I want to thank the Huxley congregation for your financial support of God's work through our church family in 2025. As the year ends and we make plans for 2026, I encourage you to be in prayer about what God wants you to give as this year closes and a new year begins. It is good for us to remember that what we have worked hard for is still all God's and we are stewards of His resources. And God is so generous! He says you can keep 90% of it, just return 10%. That's a pretty good deal! It's God's way of keeping us from becoming overly focused on money and yet being a blessing to others with it. For many of us giving 10% is a challenge. But it is a good goal, and it will be a blessing to you and others. The important question is, "What does God want you to do with His resources? Prayer about that. Listen and act on what God wants you to do. As always, your giving to the church is confidential.

I think God has good things in store for our church in 2026. Pastor Bobb

FROM YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL

Fellow members of Trinity United Methodist Church: I write this as the Council's goal is to be open and transparent with your church funds; We are ahead of last year at this time for church income, but we have had increasing expenses as discussed with you last month. Trinity has paid our suggested conference apportionments for the last four years and we plan to pay our 2025 apportionment as well. Thank you!

We all control our church finances, and the Council's focus is on good decisions with the funds we are given for the glory of our church and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

But let me be clear! After all of our other reoccurring expenses are paid, which include utilities, insurance, supplies, janitorial, secretarial, and pastoral salaries, we then allocate funds to Conference apportionments. The budget and finances are discussed monthly at our Church Council meeting and actual income and expense amounts are included in our meeting minutes and reported each month.

Funds from the sale of the church parsonage supplemented past church repairs after the derecho. We have reinvested the balance of those funds to rebuild that previously invested balance.

Giving and Tithing as Spiritual Practices

God owns everything that exists. Followers of Jesus believe that God provides all that we will ever have or need. God puts money and possessions in our hands for us to steward – manage – on God's behalf. That is why we call our practice of giving to the church a "Stewardship Campaign".

Attached is a visual explanation from the Conference on how funds are allocated within the church.

Respectfully,
Craig D. Henry,
Chairman, Trinity United Methodist Church Council

The Trinity Church Council has adopted a priority repair list as we continue plans to maintain our church. As we close out the year this creates an opportunity for you to help with these projects. Please, consider adopting one, or part of one, of these projects on the church maintenance list as you look at year-end giving.

- 1.) Narthex Men's and Women's ADA bathroom upgrades.
New counter sinks and storage, relocating mirrors and accessories to meet ADA requirements. Re-paint both bathrooms. Estimated cost \$1,250.00/Each
- 2.) Security windows in our classroom doors -
Two classroom doors. Estimated cost \$75.00 /door
- 3.) Fellowship Hall Exit Door is failing. Estimated Cost \$1,320.00. Door is delaminating (falling apart), Replace with commercial steel door and bump (panic bar) exit hardware.
- 4.) Fellowship Hall windows need replacement. Estimated at \$900.00/Each
There are ten total windows, replace the cracked window in West wall first.
- 5.) Narthex Exit Door is failing. Estimated Cost \$1,320.00
Door is delaminating (falling apart), Replace with commercial steel door and bump (panic bar) exit hardware.
- 6.) Church exterior landscaping is needed, and we will revisit next spring for new quotes.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE AN RMD?

If you have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and are age seventy (or getting close), you should know about a way you can give to your local church that will strengthen the church's ministry and produce tax savings for you! Here are some important facts you should know.

1. Individual Retirement Accounts - people have been putting money away without having to pay federal taxes on it. (That part is important.)

2. The understanding was that those folks could access that money without a penalty as early as when they turned fifty-nine and a half, but when they reached seventy and a half, they were required to start taking at least a minimum amount out each year—"required minimum distributions" or RMDs. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the age for these RMDs was gradually raised: now it is seventy-three. Since participants didn't pay tax on the money when they put it in their IRAs, they are required to pay tax on it when money comes out. RMDs can push some people into a higher tax bracket. That can be avoided.

3. To Avoid Paying Taxes. In 2006, pension protection legislation allowed for tax-free use of RMDs for charitable contributions, saving the tax that people would have had to pay when they took this money out of their IRA accounts. These are called "qualified charitable distributions" or QCDs.

There's an important distinction: these are NOT tax deductions. They do not provide a charitable deduction they exclude the donated distribution from taxable income!

Here's an example: If you were planning to give \$1000 per month to your church, you don't qualify for more than the standard deduction amount, and you are at the 12% tax bracket—giving that amount from your IRA (as a QCD) will save you \$1,440 in taxes! If you are in the 22% tax bracket, the savings will be \$2,640!

4. From Ira to "My UMC"—Never In My Pocket! With a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), a check goes directly from your IRA to your church or the charity you select. Many people who are facing RMDs that will have tax implications could pay all their annual tithe or offering at one time, or fund a repair project, through their QCD and never have to show it as income.

5. You Don't Have to Wait For 73 to Do the QCD! QCDs can happen for anyone who has reached the age of seventy and a half. Retirees who are over that age and want to continue to be generous to their local church should consider a qualified charitable distribution.

6. Most Taxpayers No Longer Get a Tax Break for Charitable Giving. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that went into effect in 2019 included an increase in the standard deduction—it nearly doubled. It left many people better off, but with 90% of taxpayers taking the standard deduction, it eliminated a tax-incentive regarding charitable donations for most of us. Inviting retirees in the seventy plus group (who use the standard deduction) to consider using the qualifying charitable distribution may reduce or eliminate the tax that they might have to pay on RMDs. Yet many will not know of this option unless your church makes the invitation!

We encourage everyone to discuss this with a financial planner, tax consultant, or attorney—and be sure to let your family know! It could be a savings for you and a blessing to your local church!

THINGS OF NOTE FOR DECEMBER



- The can trailer is closed for the winter.
- There will be no Sunday School on December 28 or January 4th.
- Eileen will be on vacation the week of Christmas.

KEEPING ADVENT AT HOME

Decorate a shoebox with the Advent colors—purple or blue. Place the Christmas cards that you have received from others inside the box.

Each night at dinner, draw out a card and talk about how the person who sent it has brought you joy and then pray for that person.



SYMBOLISM OF THE CANDY CANE

Candy canes are a Christian symbol that represent the following: The hard candy reminds us that Jesus is our rock. The cane shape reminds us of a shepherd's staff and the shepherds that came to worship Jesus. It also reminds us of how Jesus came into the world to be a shepherd of his people. Candy canes were created as Christian symbols representing the blood and purity of Jesus.

The cane was shaped like a "J" for "Jesus" and the red-and-white stripes represented Christ's blood and purity. The three red stripes were also said to symbolize the Holy Trinity, and the hardness of the candy represented the Church's foundation on solid rock.



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Our Christmas Candlelight service will be Wednesday, December 24, 7:00pm. You will hear the familiar Christmas scriptures, sing the beloved carols, and be lifted by special music and message. On Christmas Eve all the rushing and busyness of the season is over and a holy hush all about us as we come to church. In the beauty and quietness of the night, we will celebrate the birth of our Lord once again.

You are invited to join with millions of Christians around the world as we meet for this traditional candlelight service. Come and bring your family and friends to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.



4 Letter Words
BELL
SNOW

5 Letter Words
ANGEL
COCOA
ELVES
HOLLY

6 Letter Words
LIGHTS
SLEIGH
TINSEL
WINTER
WREATH

7 Letter Words
CHIMNEY
GARLAND
PAGEANT
RUDOLPH
SNOWMAN

8 Letter Words
CAROLING
DECEMBER
EXCHANGE
ORNAMENT
PRESENTS
REINDEER
WRAPPING

9 Letter Words
CHESTNUTS
CHRISTMAS
EVERGREEN
FRUITCAKE
MISTLETOE
NORTH POLE

10 Letter Words
POINSETTIA
SANTA CLAUS

11 Letter Word
GINGERBREAD

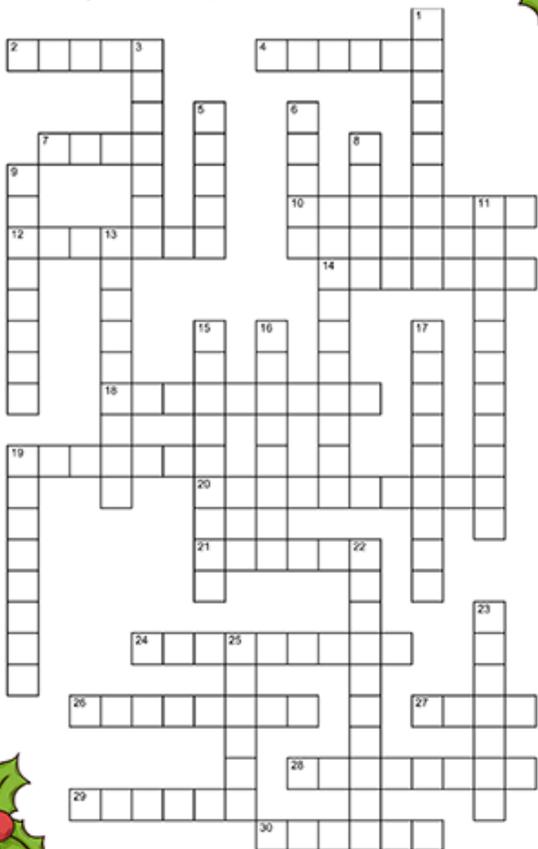
Christmas Joy

PUZZLES

Christmas Word Scramble



DIRECTIONS: Fill in the crossword grid with the provided words.



HCSSAMTRI _____
SMTEILEOT _____
APOSETTNI _____
MOWNASN _____
HERAWT _____
RNGBIEADRGE _____
HAOIDLY _____
RFYTOT _____
GHLISE _____
IPALFEECR _____
SEERTSPN _____
CTAODINSERO _____

LEICCI _____
ENERERDI _____
WEKSFALON _____
NASAT _____
NIELST _____
TIEWNR _____
NNMTAERO _____
AHKHKUNA _____
AORCL _____
EOGGNG _____
ISOGKCTN _____
CLADNE _____

Word list: Candle, Carol, Christmas, Decorations, Eggnog, Fireplace, Frosty, Gingerbread, Hannukah, Holiday, Icicle, Mistletoe, Ornament, Poinsettia, Presents, Reindeer, Santa, Sleigh, Snowflake, Snowman, Stocking, Tinsel, Winter, and Wreath

RELIGIOUS CHRISTMAS

WORD FIND

E H L E A R S I Q Y V C G Q C W B B K G W R G
D U G X R H I I J S H J N C L E I R B A G E P
V W Y I P V B W L W M E Y R T W T Q W D A K A
L X Y L O H M V I W L S M K Y O I H W A U I E
J Y C W A N D F N T C U N Q J H X P D Y D N T
B J P O I H A P P Y J S U V G J S Q D J T G K
E R G U C N B X P H B M Q Y W X H T R I B Y I
T S N O I T I D A R T P Z W E Y K S T D D T V
H S H Y L P R U O I V A S Y X E Z X R O V I D
L A G C C H I M N E Y G E N E R O S I T Y V R
E M S G N I M A E L G H P E S O J X F B V I E
H E B F R F A M I L Y J H C J E J C Y D C T U
E C L U E M A F N Z X G Q K L I V V M Q S A W
M E D G L G A R L A N D G F G B N W H X X N E
C A R O L S S D F Z L Q K N D F Y J K F P J X
K H E W S J O Z G E P M Y Z J L Z W B Y T S S

GENEROSITY
TRADITIONS
BETHLEHEM
GLEAMING
NATIVITY
SAVIOR
GABRIEL
GARLAND
FAMILY
CAROLS
ISRAEL
JOSEPH
HAPPY
JESUS
HOLY
KING
CHIMNEY
BIRTH