

2026 ADVENT RESOURCES FOR TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Dear Trinity Family,

This Advent season, we invite you to join us as we explore the theme Throwback Christmas. We are pointed back to the heart of Advent, God's promises from the very beginning to send a Savior to His people. The old story of Christmas brings us a new hope.

To support you in this season of preparation, Trinity Lutheran Church has created a special Advent book shaped by our Advent sermon series and the themes woven throughout our daily Crosstalk audio devotions. This resource is designed for individuals and families of all ages as we wait together for the coming of our Savior.

Inside, you will find daily Scripture readings, space to write your thoughts and prayers, Bible study techniques to try, and family discussion prompts. We've also included songs, recipes, craft ideas and other activities to help everyone—from the youngest to the oldest—connect to the Word and the theme in a personal way.

Everything in this resources book comes from the Trinity family: the recipes from members, the songs from our music department, and the stories from those who sit beside you in church each week. We appreciate their willness to share their experiences and partner with us in this resource.

There is always more to explore, so we encourage you to visit trinityct.org/advent throughout the season. There you'll find additional resources, up-to-date event information, links to Crosstalk, and more.

With Advent hope,
Trinity Lutheran Church

Advent and Christmas Events at Trinity

Regular Advent Weekend Services

Sundays - 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.
Sunday morning services are also livestreamed.

Special Events

ADVENT SOUP AND SING
Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 6 p.m., Commons
Carols, Christmas trees, crafts and community. Let's have dinner together and sing Christmas carols as we kick off the Advent season.

EARLY CHILDHOOOD CENTER CONCERT
Sunday, Dec. 6 at 4 p.m., School Gym
The 4-year-old preschool students perform in their Christmas concert. This includes traditional, full day and Great Start Readiness Program preschool students.

BLUE CHRISTMAS
Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m., Sanctuary
Blue Christmas is intended for those who have experienced a significant loss in their life, whether it be a loved one, job, home or hope, and are seeking the comfort of Immanuel, God with Us. Anyone is welcome. If you know someone who could benefit from this service, invite them. For more information, contact the Lisa Riviera at 586-463-2921 ext. 111. This service is also livestreamed at Trinityct.org.

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
Wednesday, Dec. 16, 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary
Students in Trinity's K-8 school present the annual Christmas program on Wednesday, Dec. 16 in the Sanctuary. An open dress rehearsal is at 10 a.m. and the main performance is at 6:30 p.m.The evening performance is also livestreamed at Trinity.ct.org.

CHRISTMAS TREE SALES
Begins Nov. 27, Corner of Farmcrest and Harper
Boy Scout Troop 157 sells Christmas trees as one of the groups fundraisers for the year.

Christmas Services Schedule

Dec. 24, 4 p.m.
WORSHIP FOR FAMILIES
Christmas worship for families with children of all ages. Earlier in the day and without candlelight, but with the same Christmas music and message.

Dec. 24, 7 p.m.
CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP
Traditional Christmas worship with orchestra and music by candlelight.

Dec. 24, 10 p.m.
CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP
Christmas worship with a contemporary flare, including the Praise Band.

Dec. 25, 10 a.m.
FESTIVAL WORSHIP WITH HOLY COMMUNION
Celebrate Jesus' birth with choir and communion.

The Christmas Eve 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. service as well at the Christmas Day 10 a.m. service are livestreamed from our website at Trinityct.org. Playbacks of the services are available from the archived services tab.

WEEK 1 - Throwback to Preparation
God Prepared His People Before Bethlehem

Every family has its own Christmas traditions. It may be decorating the Christmas tree, baking cookies, hanging stockings, an Advent calendar or cleaning the house to host celebrations. Whatever the activties, they are part of the excitement, anticipation and preparation for Christmas.

Preparation has always been a part of Christmas - long before Pinterest boards and Instagram, even before the giant camcorders recorded every Christmas moment or the original ceramic Christmas trees sat on every Grandmas' end tables. The original Christmas preparations began in the Old Testament.

As this week's scripture verses detail, God prepared the way for Jesus. He told Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him. He called on the Israelites to trust Him in the wilderness and He provided for them. He made a promise to send a Savior and He fulfilled it with the birth of Jesus.

This Advent season, amid the decorating, baking, shopping, celebrating and traditions, we find space to remember God has already provided the greatest treasure. Christmas isn't about how perfectly we prepare for the holiday season, but about what God has already faithfully prepared for us.

Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for the promises You made to Your people long before the birth of Jesus. You were preparing the way for our Savior. As we prepare for Christmas, help us to remember that in the midst of the activity and busyness, you have already given us the perfect gift - Your Son, Jesus. This Advent, prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of Christ. Deepen our faith as we connect to You through Your Word. Keep our eyes focused on the meaning of the season.

In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.

Sermon Notes

As we tie together themes and Scripture, use the Sermon Notes as a place to jot ideas and concepts to reference in the coming days.

Sermon Title _____

Theme Scripture _____

Music: Write one line from a song or hymn that emphasized today's theme.

_____

_____

Sermon: List 2-3 main points from the sermon today (Take notes on the bottom of this page during the sermon.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sermon Summary: In the space below, write a summary of the sermon message in your own words.

_____

_____

_____

_____

The readings for the first week focus on the way God prepared His people for the Savior to come. Each week, Crosstalk features four daily devotions based on Scripture and a discussion with the Pastors or church staff about the week's topic of focus. We've provided the readings as well as space to take notes as you listen. For the Crosstalk audio devotions, go to Trinityct.org/Crosstalk.

November 30
Genesis: 12:2-3
A Promise for the Future

2 "I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.[a]
3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.

December 1
Isaiah 40:3
Prepare the Way

A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.

December 2
Psalm 130:5
Waiting with Hope

I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

December 3
Exodus 16:12
The God Who Provides

"I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.'"

Bible Study Technique: Verse Mapping

Verse mapping is a way to study a Bible verse by breaking it into smaller parts and exploring its meaning. The practice helps to keep the verse anchored in its context, while considering how it applies to your life.

Verse mapping includes exploring:

- Context: Who wrote it, who was being addressed, and what was happening in the surrounding text?
- Key words: What words stand out? What do they mean?
- Translations: How do different Bible translations phrase the verse?
- Connections: What other passages help explain it?
- Reflection: What does this reveal about God, His promises, and our response?
- Prayer: Use what you learned to shape a short prayer.

Instructions for Verse Mapping

Gather your Bible, a piece of paper, and a pen. We've also provided an outline from Visual Face Ministry on the next page. Colored pencils, markers or highlighters are optional!

1. Choose a Bible verse and write it down. Note the Bible translation. Leave room around it for notes.
2. Read the surrounding passages. Who is speaking or writing? Who is being addressed? What is happening? Write a few notes about the context.
3. Highlight key words, words that stand out, those that repeat, and any that need explanation. Look up unfamiliar words in a Bible dictionary or study Bible and record what you learn.
4. Compare the words by reading the verse in other Bible translations. Note any differences that helps you understand it more clearly.
5. Use your Bible's cross-references to find related passages. Write their references nearby and draw lines to show connections or make notes. Consider how these passages help explain your verse.
6. Reflect on the verse's meaning. What does this passage reveal about God and His work? Does it show our need for forgiveness, give a command, or proclaim God's promises? How does it point to Christ or the message of salvation?
7. Keeping the verse's original meaning in mind, consider how it offers comfort, shapes your understanding, or guides your actions. Our response flows from God's grace; it does not earn His love or salvation.
8. Write a short prayer based on what you learned. Thank God for His promises and ask Him to help you trust His Word and live in faith.

Remember: Your map can be simple or creative. The goal is to understand God's Word, not to make a perfect page.

Verse Mapping

Passage: _____ Date: _____

Write out your passage. Which translation? _____

Write out your passage in a different translation? _____

Highlight or circle any words of interest. Which ones create curiosity? Look them up in a regular dictionary or in the Hebrew/Greek. Write down any expanded understanding.

Cross References

Thoughts, Learnings, Applications
How does God use this passage to shape me?

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Food Pantry Helps Others Prepare for Holidays

Every Christmas season, Trinity's Food Pantry provides holiday food baskets to needy members in the community. For both Thanksgiving and Christmas, Trinity enrolls 100 families in the program. The baskets contain items needed to prepare a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner for their immediate family. The holiday food baskets are in addition to the monthly food support provided to at least four needy families each week, Monday through Thursday.

"We have used the holiday basket program and it has been a lifesaver! When we didn't have any money or it was the off week of pay you guys were there ready to help with out judgment," said Melissa, a recipient of food from the pantry.

It's more than just food. Trinity also provides hygiene items like soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, shampoo and deodorant along with other staples like toilet paper and laundry detergent.

"It makes a huge difference when we get staples like dish soap and detergent because when money is tight and we come through the pantry, I feel relief that I know it's there," said Melissa.

Items are donated to the pantry by Trinity members. Much of the food comes from Trinity's participation in the Simply Give program through Meijer.

During a Simply Give campaign, Meijer matches and, at times, doubles donated pantry funds. The funds are provided to Trinity on gift cards that can only be used on food items at the store.

Melissa's family learned about the help the pantry could provide from a Trinity member. For three years, the family has utilized the food pantry once a month when needed. Through the pantry, Melissa has built relationships with Trinity staff as well. Melissa said she can express her needs to Director of Human Care Lisa Riviera and Office Manager Ashley Butts, knowing they will listen and provide guidance if she needs it.

"We try to connect with our food pantry families and learn more about their circumstances. We can provide tools and resources for other challenges they might face, such as rent support, utility shutoffs and even special items they might need help purchasing," said Riviera.

The food pantry is available Monday through Thursday. It is operated by volunteers who not only pack the food, but also shop for items and keep track of the inventory.

Trinity's Food Service Director Cynthia Chilcutt and Assistant Director Lisa Curley are instrumental in planning and assembling the holiday boxes for the needy.

Items Needed for Holiday Food Pantry Baskets

If you are able to provide support for our Food Pantry's Christmas baskets, please bring any of the items listed below to Trinity Lutheran Church by Dec. 15.

- Ham
- Stove Top Stuffing
- Canned Yams/Sweet Potatoes
- Corn and Green Beans
- Butter
- Frozen Pies
- Boxed Mashed or Scallopped Potatoes
- Gravy
- Canned Yams/Sweet Potatoes
- Cranberry Sauce
- Dinner Rolls

Family Discussion

God made a plan to send Jesus long before He was born. He kept his promises and made everything happen at just the right time. We see this promise throughout the Bible. Here are four examples:

1. **The Family**

God chose Abraham. Isaac, Jacob and King David to be part of His plan to bring Jesus into the world. They were ordinary people who made mistakes, but God never abandoned them.

Genesis 12:1-2 - The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.
2 “I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing

Talk About It: Why do you think God used ordinary people to be part of His special plan?

2. **The Prophets**

Long before Jesus was born, God gave special clues about the coming Savior. He told them Jesus would have a special mother and come to save people. He even told them what to call Jesus.

Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Talk About It: How did God know what would happen so many years before? What does that teach us about God?

3. **The People**

God chose Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and Elizabeth to be part of His plan. Even when they were afraid or confused, they trusted God and obeyed Him.

Luke 1:39 - Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.

Talk About It: How can we show God we trust him too?

4. **God's Perfect Timing**

The Bible tells us that Jesus came at just the right time, according to God's plan. Just before Jesus was born, the government made a rule that everyone had to go to their hometowns to be counted. That's called a census. Mary and Joseph traveled from where they lived in Nazareth to Bethlehem. That was important because God had promised Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.

Luke 2:1-7 - In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Talk About It: Sometimes things don't happen exactly when we want. It's all in God's time. When is a time you had to wait for something good to happen? God used so many people to prepare for Jesus birth. How might He use you to share the news of Jesus?

Prayer

Dear God,
Christmas is coming, and our home is getting busy and excited! In all the rush of decorating, playing music, and wrapping gifts, help our family stop and get our hearts ready for Jesus.

Sometimes, we hate waiting. We want Christmas morning to get here right now! But the story of Jesus' birth reminds us that You are never late. Long ago, Your people waited a very long time for the first Christmas. You sent Jesus at the perfect moment, right on time.

When we feel impatient or worried, help us remember that we can trust Your timing. Fill our home with Your peace and kindness. Help us to be patient with each other, just like You are patient with us.

Thank you for always keeping Your promises. We love You, and we are ready to celebrate Jesus!

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Family Activity: Paper Chain Countdown

Supplies You Need

- Colored construction paper or cardstock
- Child-safe scissors
- Glue stick, tape, or a stapler
- Markers, crayons, or stickers for decorating
- A ruler or pencil (optional)

Step-by-Step Directions



Count the Days: Decide how many days are left until Christmas and cut that exact number of paper strips.

Cut the Strips: Cut long, even rectangles out of construction paper (about 1 inch wide and 6 to 8 inches long works best for little hands).

Decorate Together: Let your young children draw pictures, color patterns, or add stickers to the paper strips. You can even write numbers (1, 2, 3...) or fun daily activities (like "read a book" or "eat ice cream") on the inside of each strip.

Make the First Loop: Take your first strip (the start of the countdown), bend it into a circle, and seal the ends together using a glue stick, a piece of tape, or a stapler.

Interlock the Rest: Take the next paper strip, thread it through the first loop you just made, and seal its ends together to form the second ring.

Build the Chain: Repeat this loop-and-thread process until all your strips are linked together in a long paper chain.

Hang It Up: Hang the chain low enough so your child can easily reach it.

Count Down: Each morning, let your child tear or cut off one ring to see how close you are to the big day. Complete the activity you chose for that day.

PREPARE

COOKIE RECIPE

Cookie recipes are provided each week. The recipes are courtesy of the Trinity Women's League, which hosts a holiday cookie sale each Christmas. Visit this year's Bake Sale on Saturday, Dec. 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Commons. Any unsold items will be available for purchase at church on Sunday, Dec. 11.

Chocolate Mint Rice Krispie Christmas Cookies

½ c butter, softened
1 c sugar
1 egg
1 t vanilla
½ t baking soda
¼ t salt
1½ c flour
1½ c Kellogg's Rice Krispies (red and green color mix)
6 oz (1 c) mini semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/3 c Andes Peppermint Crunch Baking Chips

Beat butter and sugar till light and fluffy.

Add egg and vanilla.

Gradually add dry ingredients. Stir in chocolate chips and peppermint baking chips, then Rice Krispies.

Drop by 2 T cookie scoop onto parchment paper. Form into tight, round dome as needed.

Bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool on wire rack.



PREPARE

WEEK 2 - Throwback to Light
God Promised a Light in the Darkness

Large, multi-colored bulbs hung on Christmas tree branches, illuminating oranments. Silver tinsel was strung from every limb, creating sparkles on the walls and ceiling. Downtowns showcased decorative lanterns with carefully hung garland. For generations, Christmas light displays have always been special, shining a light against the darkness of a winter night and reminding us of the true Light God promised to us.

This week, we look at the promise of a Savior, a hope, a light that illuminates a world darkened by sin.

In John 8:12, Jesus tells us, "I am the light of the world." He is not simply a light that makes us feel better when life gets difficult. He is the Savior who came to rescue us from sin, death and the power of the devil. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has overcome the darkness and given us the promise of eternal life.

This week, as we remember the Christmas lights of years past, think about the light that matters most. Bulbs burn out, decorations get packed away and even the brightest Christmas displays eventually go dark. But the light of Christ never fades.

Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your Son, who came to be a lamp unto our feet and light unto our path. With each candle that is lit, every string of lights hung and every star placed on top of a tree, help us remember that the real light of the world will never dim or go out. As we go about our days in preparation for Christmas, help us to shine that light to others through our words and actions.

In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.

Sermon Notes

As we tie together themes and Scripture, use the Sermon Notes as a place to jot ideas and concepts to reference in the coming days.

Sermon Title _____

Theme Scripture _____

Music: Write one line from a song or hymn that emphasized today's theme.

_____

_____

Sermon: List 2-3 main points from the sermon today (Take notes on the bottom of this page during the sermon.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sermon Summary: In the space below, write a summary of the sermon message in your own words.

_____

_____

_____

_____

The readings for the second week focus on the way God promised a light that would overcome the darkness of the world. Each week, Crosstalk features four daily devotions based on Scripture and a discussion with the Pastors or church staff about the week's topic of focus. We've provided the readings as well as space to take notes as you listen. For the Crosstalk audio devotions, go to Trinityct.org/Crosstalk.

December 7
Isaiah 7:14
The Promised Sign

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

December 8
Luke 1:30-31
The Angel's Announcement

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

December 9
Romans 13:11
Wake Up, the Savior is Near

And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

December 10
John 8:12
The Light of the World

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Bible Study Technique: SOAP Method

The SOAP method is a simple Bible study concept that encourages us to slow down, understand God's word in the Scriptures, and apply it to our every day life. Instead of just reading the words, the SOAP method focuses on what God is teaching and responding in prayer. Learn about the method below and use the worksheet/guide on the next page to note your answers.

S **SCRIPTURE**	Select a passage or verse. Read it slowly. Focus on the words. Write the verse or verses that stand out the most.
O **OBSERVE**	What happened in the passage? What did you learn about God? Is there a command, a promise, a warning or an example? What is the overall concept behind the verse?
A **APPLY**	Think about how the verse applies to your life. Does God give you an instruction or encouragement? What did you personally learn from this message?
P **PRAY**	Prayer is our opportunity to have a conversation with God. Talk to Him about what your learned and what you need help with. Thank Him for what He has shown to you through this study.

SOAP Method for Bible Study

S

SCRIPTURE

O

OBSERVE

A

APPLY

P

PRAY

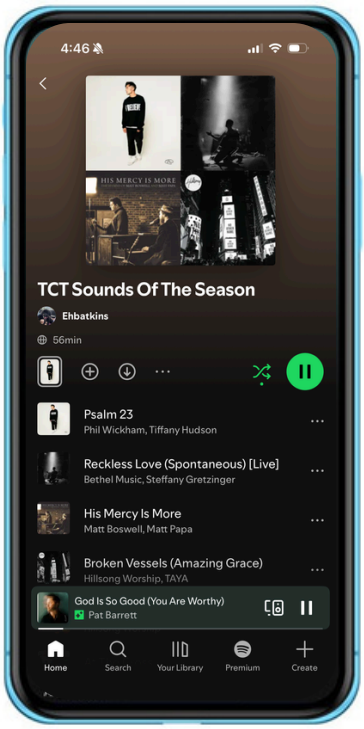
Sounds of the Season

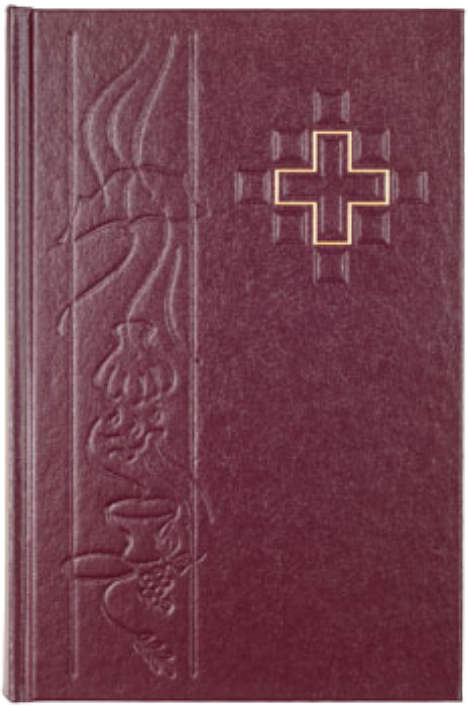
Trinity's Worship and Music Director Erica Batkins compiled a list of songs that we'll hear throughout the Advent and Christmas season.

The list on the left is available on Spotify and YouTube by searching for "TCT Sounds of the Season" or by scanning the respective QR code below. Most of these songs are performed by contemporary Christian recording artists like King and Country, Chris Tomlin and Elevation worship. You may hear these songs at our contemporary services this Advent season.

To the right is a playlistlist of traditional Christmas songs from The Hymnal Project. These are songs such as "Silent Night" and "Angels We Have Heard on High." You may hear these songs played on our organ during our traditional services.

A link to the browser-based playlist for Spotify, YouTube and the Hymnal Project are also available at Trinityct.org/Advent.





Spotify

YouTube

The Hymnal Project

LIGHT

Shining God's light in the world

About a year ago, Ryan Stier considered closing his heating and cooling business. A personal medical battle loomed before him and he didn't feel he could run the company effectively during that time. The idea was dauting as the company was his family's source of income and livelihood. So, he turned to God for help.

"I told God that I needed help. All I needed was my family to be taken care of. I asked Him to please give me the means to do that and I would take care of anyone He put in front of me that needed help," Stier said. "He listened and He tested me first."

The following day, Stier received a call about a family in need and he was able to them out. He said a few more times that week someone would need help and he was able to provide. Then shortly afterward, he closed the biggest job to date, which provided him solid work for almost a year.

"I asked and He answered," said Stier.

Stier lives by the words of his confirmation verse, Romans 8:28. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose."

"Whenever I feel the need to help, it is really God putting it on my heart. I always just know what I'm supposed to do. I don't have to think about it, it just happens. God has always taken care of my family and sometimes you just have to repay it. I could write a book about the amount of times that help has just shown up," Stier said.

It's not always about giving large discounts or doing work for free. Steir said sometimes it's helping the client by bringing a box up from the basement, connecting them with others who can help them, or even just listening.



Ryan Stier with his wife and children.

"I'm just glad that because I was able to give them some help, they may be able to get something else covered, or just to not have to worry about this particular task. The look of thankfulness is all I need," said Stier.

Stier said he also loves to coach baseball and provide kids with the opportunity to play the sport and serve as an example of what its like to be a good human, tackle adversity and handle winning and losing.

Throughout his life, Stier said his parents were role models to him in this behavior. (His dad is Pastor Lew, who has been helping serve the Trinity congregation for over a year.) Stier said the two spend a lot of time volunteering and helping others.

"It brings them joy to lend a hand. It's not only to others, but to me and my family," said Stier. "Through my business, I come across a lot of people who just can't afford repairs and are just in a bad way. I like to think about what I can do to make this an easier experience for them in our short time together."

Be a Light in Your Neighborhood

Invite those around you to worship at Trinity this season. Cut out the cards below and give them to family and friends so they have worship times. Let them know when your family will be there and ask them to join!

TRINITY'S

Christmas Service Schedule

Christmas Eve

4 P.M. - FOR FAMILIES OF ALL AGES

7 P.M. - CANDLELIGHT-TRADITIONAL

10 P.M. - CANDLELIGHT - CONTEMPORARY

Christmas Day

10 A.M.-FESTIVAL WORSHIP

The candlelight and Christmas Day services are livestreamed at Trinityct.org.

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Christmas Day

10 A.M.-FESTIVAL WORSHIP

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Family Discussion

God promised a light to overcome darkness and fulfilled it through Jeus who is a light that darkness cannot put out.

We see Him called a light throughout the Bible

- Isaiah 9:2 - The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.
- John 1:4-5 -In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
- John 12:46 - I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.
- Psalm 119:105 - Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Talk About It: Being Light for Others: How can our words and actions bring God's light into someone else?

Prayer

Dear Jesus,
Thank You for coming as the true Light of the World.
As we look at Christmas lights, help us remember Your love.
Shine bright in our hearts, our home, and our actions today and every day.
When the world feels dark, show us how to share Your kindness, joy, and hope with everyone we meet. Use our family to let Your light shine for all to see.
Amen.

Family Activity: Stained Glass Candle

Materials Needed

- Clear contact paper (two sheets) or several pieces of packing tape
- Tissue paper squares (assorted bright colors)
- Black construction paper (to cut a candle or window frame shape)
- Yellow and orange construction paper (for the candle flame)
- Painter's tape or masking tape (to hold the paper down)
- Child-safe scissors
- Optional: A battery-operated LED tea light



Step-by-Step Instructions

Cut the frame: Cut a candle shape (or a rectangular window frame with a candle silhouette) out of black construction paper, removing the center so you have a hollow outline. Cut out a separate yellow flame and a smaller orange inner flame.

Secure the sticky base: Cut a piece of clear contact paper. Peel off the backing and tape it sticky-side up onto the table using painter's tape so it does not move.

Press down the frame: Lay your black construction paper candle frame right onto the sticky side of the contact paper.

Fill with "stained glass": Let the children press colorful tissue paper squares inside the hollow areas of the frame. Encourage them to overlap the pieces slightly to create vibrant color blends.

Add the flame: Stick the yellow and orange flame shapes onto the top wick area of the candle frame.

Seal the craft: Peel the backing off a second sheet of contact paper or use more tape. Place it sticky-side down right over the top of the craft, smoothing out any air bubbles.

Trim and display: Cut away the extra contact paper around the edges of the black frame. Hang your finished stained glass candle on a sunny window or tape it to a wall near an LED tealight!

COOKIE RECIPE

Cookie recipes are provided each week. The recipes are courtesy of the Trinity Women's League, which hosts a holiday cookie sale each Christmas. Visit this year's Bake Sale on Saturday, Dec. 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Commons. Any unsold items will be available for purchase at church on Sunday, Dec. 11.

Hot Chocolate Cookies

½ c (1 stick) Unsalted butter
2 c (12 oz) Semi-sweet chocolate chips
1½ c Flour
¼ c unsweetened cocoa powder
1½ t Baking powder
¼ t Salt
1¼ c Brown sugar
3 Large eggs
1½ t Vanilla extract

Frosting
2½ c Powdered sugar
5 T Unsalted butter, melted
¼ c + 1 T Unsweetened cocoa powder
¼ c + 1 T Hot water
½ t + 1/8 t Vanilla extract
Assorted sprinkles
~25 large marshmallows, cut in half

Microwave butter and chocolate, at 50% power, for 15-20 seconds max at a time, stirring frequently, until melted. Set aside to cool slightly.

Combine flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt. Set aside. Beat sugar, eggs and vanilla with electric mixer until combined. Mix in cooled chocolate, then flour, until just combined. Cover dough and refrigerate at least 1 hour. Dough should be firm.

Scoop enough dough out to make 12 – 1¼" balls. Return remaining dough to refrigerator. Bake 11 minutes at 350 degrees. Set a marshmallow half (cut side down) onto the center of each cookie. Return to oven. Bake 3 minutes more. Remove from oven and immediately lightly tap marshmallows down to about half height with a spatula. Transfer to rack to cool.

Whisk together all frosting ingredients except sprinkles. Microwave briefly, if needed, so that icing is liquidy enough to drip down onto cookie when ladled over top of marshmallow, but not so liquidy that it flows off the edge of the cookie. Spread with knife if needed. Sprinkle with sprinkles once 3-4 cookies are frosted so that frosting doesn't harden before sprinkles are placed. Let set 30 minutes for frosting to harden.



WEEK 3 - Throwback to Wonder
God's Promises Arrived in Surprising and Miraculous Ways

As a child, the magic and wonder of Christmas is one of the most exciting times of the year. Its the feeling that something special is about to happen. Whether it's waking up to a fresh blanket of snow, attending a candlelight service at church, seeing family members from far away, or looking forward to opening gifts under the Christmas tree, the anticipation is nearly palpable.

The wonder of God's works are beyond our imagination. Sarah and Abraham waited years for the child God promised to them, yet when she was in her advanced years - almost when it seemed impossible - Sarah became pregnant. God fulfilled His promise to them. When He promised a child who would be the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace, His people knew He would fulfill it. They waited with the same anticipation and excitement as a child at Christmastime.

This Advent, we are reminded that the true wonder of Christmas didn't come amid fancy decorations and perfectly trimmed trees. He was born in a stable and placed in a manger. It didn't come with much fanfare at all. An ordinary, plain arrival for an extraordinary gift.

Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for fulfilling Your promises. You work in Your time and in Your ways. Help us to see the ways You came for us and provide for us in ways we might not expect. Remind us that you are in the ordinary moments. As we prepare for Christmas, help us to see the true wonder - Jesus, who came into the world to save us from sin and give us the promise of eternal life. May we never lose sight of this incredible gift of grace.

In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.

Sermon Notes

As we tie together themes and Scripture, use the Sermon Notes as a place to jot ideas and concepts to reference in the coming days.

Sermon Title _____

Theme Scripture _____

Music: Write one line from a song or hymn that emphasized today's theme.

_____

_____

Sermon: List 2-3 main points from the sermon today (Take notes on the bottom of this page during the sermon.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sermon Summary: In the space below, write a summary of the sermon message in your own words.

_____

_____

_____

_____

The readings for the third week focus on the way God's promises arrived in surprising the miraclous ways. Each week, Crosstalk features four daily devotions based on Scripture and a discussion with the Pastors or church staff about the week's topic of focus. We've provided the readings as well as space to take notes as you listen. For the Crosstalk audio devotions, go to Trinityct.org/Crosstalk.

December 14
Genesis 21:2
A Child of Promise

Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him.

December 15
Isaiah 9:6
An Extraordinary Sign

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

December 16
Micah 5:4
The Shepherd King

He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

December 17
John 1:14
God Among Us

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Bible Study Technique: The Lutheran Study Bible

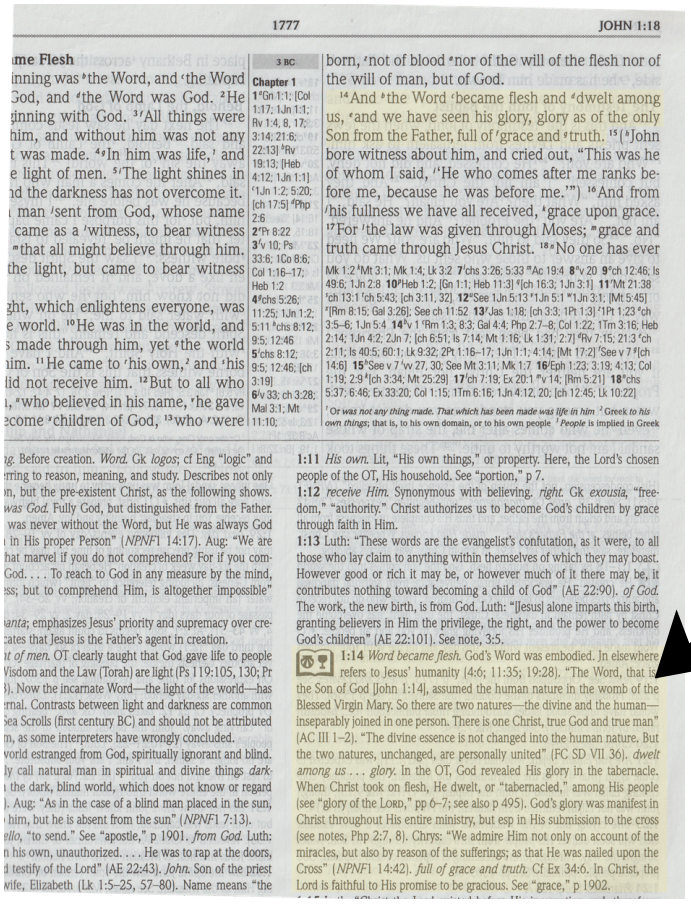
The Lutheran Study Bible is another tool that is used for exploring Bible verses. If you've never used it, the Lutheran Study Bible offers commentaries, dictionaries and historical references that can act as a guide for those diving into Scripture. As examples, we've shared some thoughts from the Lutheran Study Bible on some of the Crosstalk verses from this week.

Our reading is Isaiah 9:6.
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The Lutheran Study Bible provides context for the verses in Isaiah 9:1-6.
From a human, mortal perspective, it appears unfair that all people must die, as death deals equally with evil people as well as those who follow God. We need something to counter the hopelessness that there is nothing after death. For that reason, God comforts us with His promises of love and mercy.

Prayer: Thank you God, that we do not see death as the end of our lives. Your promises, fulfilled in Christ, give us the sure and certain hope of being with You forever.

The Lutheran Study Bible, page 1000



1777 JOHN 1:18

me Flesh
inning was [b]the Word, and [c]the Word God, and [d]the Word was God. [2]He ginning with God. [3]All things were him, and without him was not any t was made. [4][e]In him was life,[f] and e light of men. [5][f]The light shines in nd the darkness has not overcome it. man [g]sent from God, whose name came as a [h]witness, to bear witness [m]that all might believe through him. the light, but came to bear witness

ght, which enlightens everyone, was e world. [10]He was in the world, and s made through him, yet [n]the world im. [11]He came to [o]his own,[2] and [p]his lid not receive him. [12]But to all who [q]who believed in his name, [r]he gave ecome [s]children of God, [13]who [t]were

3 BC
Chapter 1
1 [b]Gn 1:1; [Col 1:17; 1Jn 1:1; Rv 1:4, 8, 17; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13] [c]Rv 19:13; [Heb 4:12; 1Jn 1:1] [d]1Jn 1:2; 5:20; [ch 17:5] [e]Php 2:6
2 [f]Pr 8:22
3 [g]v 10; Ps 33:6; 1Co 8:6; Col 1:16–17; Heb 1:2
4 [e]chs 5:26; 11:25; 1Jn 1:2; 5:11 [h]chs 8:12; 9:5; 12:46
5 [i]chs 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; [ch 3:19]
6 [j]v 33; ch 3:28; Mal 3:1; Mt 11:10;

born, [u]not of blood [v]nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
14 And [b]the Word [c]became flesh and [w]dwelt among us, [x]and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of [y]grace and [z]truth. 15 ([a]John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, [a]'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") 16 And from [b]his fullness we have all received, [c]grace upon grace. 17 For [d]the law was given through Moses; [e]grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 [e]No one has ever

Mk 1:2 [k]Mt 3:1; Mk 1:4; Lk 3:2 7 [l]chs 3:26; 5:33 [m]Ac 19:4 8 [n]v 20 9 [o]ch 12:46; Is 49:6; 1Jn 2:8 10 [p]Heb 1:2; [Gn 1:1; Heb 11:3] [q][ch 16:3; 1Jn 3:1] 11 [r]Mt 21:38 [s]ch 13:1 [t]ch 5:43; [ch 3:11, 32] 12 [u]See 1Jn 5:13 [v]1Jn 3:1; [Mt 5:45] [w][Rm 8:15; Gal 3:26]; See ch 11:52 13 [x]Jas 1:18; [ch 3:3; 1Pt 1:3] [y]1Pt 1:23 [z]ch 3:5–6; 1Jn 5:4 14 [a]v 1 [b]Rm 1:3; 8:3; Gal 4:4; Php 2:7–8; Col 1:22; 1Tm 3:16; Heb 2:14; 1Jn 4:2; 2Jn 7; [ch 6:51; Is 7:14; Mt 1:16; Lk 1:31; 2:7] [c]Rv 7:15; 21:3 [d]ch 2:11; Is 40:5; 60:1; Lk 9:32; 2Pt 1:16–17; 1Jn 1:1; 4:14; [Mt 17:2] [e]See v 7 [f][ch 14:6] 15 [a]See v 7 [g]vv 27, 30; See Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7 16 [h]Eph 1:23; 3:19; 4:13; Col 1:19; 2:9 [i][ch 3:34; Mt 25:29] 17 [d]ch 7:19; Ex 20:1 [e]v 14; [Rm 5:21] 18 [f]chs 5:37; 6:46; Ex 33:20; Col 1:15; 1Tm 6:16; 1Jn 4:12, 20; [ch 12:45; Lk 10:22]

[1] *Or was not any thing made. That which has been made was life in him* [2] Greek *to his own things*; that is, to his own domain, or to his own people [3] *People* is implied in Greek

g. Before creation. *Word.* Gk *logos*; cf Eng "logic" and erring to reason, meaning, and study. Describes not only n, but the pre-existent Christ, as the following shows. *was God.* Fully God, but distinguished from the Father. was never without the Word, but He was always God in His proper Person" (*NPNF*1 14:17). Aug: "We are hat marvel if you do not comprehend? For if you com- God. . . . To reach to God in any measure by the mind, ss; but to comprehend Him, is altogether impossible"

anta; emphasizes Jesus' priority and supremacy over cre- ates that Jesus is the Father's agent in creation.
t of men. OT clearly taught that God gave life to people Wisdom and the Law (Torah) are light (Ps 119:105, 130; Pr). Now the incarnate Word—the light of the world—has rnal. Contrasts between light and darkness are common Sea Scrolls (first century BC) and should not be attributed n, as some interpreters have wrongly concluded.
world estranged from God, spiritually ignorant and blind. ly call natural man in spiritual and divine things *dark-* the dark, blind world, which does not know or regard). Aug: "As in the case of a blind man placed in the sun, him, but he is absent from the sun" (*NPNF*1 7:13).
llo, "to send." See "apostle," p 1901. *from God.* Luth: n his own, unauthorized. . . . He was to rap at the doors, testify of the Lord" (AE 22:43). *John.* Son of the priest wife, Elizabeth (Lk 1:5–25, 57–80). Name means "the

1:11 *His own.* Lit, "His own things," or property. Here, the Lord's chosen people of the OT, His household. See "portion," p 7.
1:12 *receive Him.* Synonymous with believing. *right.* Gk *exousia*, "freedom," "authority." Christ authorizes us to become God's children by grace through faith in Him.
1:13 Luth: "These words are the evangelist's confutation, as it were, to all those who lay claim to anything within themselves of which they may boast. However good or rich it may be, or however much of it there may be, it contributes nothing toward becoming a child of God" (AE 22:90). *of God.* The work, the new birth, is from God. Luth: "[Jesus] alone imparts this birth, granting believers in Him the privilege, the right, and the power to become God's children" (AE 22:101). See note, 3:5.
1:14 *Word became flesh.* God's Word was embodied. Jn elsewhere refers to Jesus' humanity (4:6; 11:35; 19:28). "The Word, that is the Son of God [John 1:14], assumed the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So there are two natures—the divine and the human—inseparably joined in one person. There is one Christ, true God and true man" (AC III 1–2). "The divine essence is not changed into the human nature. But the two natures, unchanged, are personally united" (FC SD VII 36). *dwelt among us . . . glory.* In the OT, God revealed His glory in the tabernacle. When Christ took on flesh, He dwelt, or "tabernacled," among His people (see "glory of the LORD," pp 6–7; see also p 495). God's glory was manifest in Christ throughout His entire ministry, but esp in His submission to the cross (see notes, Php 2:7, 8). Chrys: "We admire Him not only on account of the miracles, but also by reason of the sufferings; as that He was nailed upon the Cross" (*NPNF*1 14:42). *full of grace and truth.* Cf Ex 34:6. In Christ, the Lord is faithful to His promise to be gracious. See "grace," p 1902.

Our reading for Thursday is John 1:14.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Lutheran Study Bible provides context and commentary for John 1:14."

It's not too late to purchase a Lutheran Study Bible as a Christmas gift. Trinity recommends purchasing the book from Concordia Publishing House.

WONDER

Two Trinity missions work together to provide housing for a local, single dad

Just a few weeks ago, a local, single father faced a dire situation. Without stable housing, protective services was prepared to take his children. The father was given just a few hours to figure out what to do. As things looked hopeless, he turned to a Trinity member and two local missions who were able to help him secure what he needed to keep his family intact and obtain stable long-term housing.

While it's known for prenatal care and services for moms, Compassion Pregnancy center also offers an extensive list of curriculum opportunities for new parents, including a men's ministry program. The dad in this situation was involved with the men's ministry and was known by the case workers at Compassion Pregnancy Center as he used the organizations services while he worked to raise his children, all under 5 years-old.

"Dad works steadily and always has. He's never been unemployed in all of our years with him," said Sue Nellis, director of Compassion Pregnancy Center. While he's always had a job, obtaining stable housing has been a challenge.

Trinity member Karen Russell was aware of the family's case. She serves on the Board of Directors at Compassion Pregnancy Center and has experience as an attorney in family law. Russell has provided resources to the dad as he struggled to provide a safe home for his children.

When the dad received the news that he might lose his children, he immediately called Russell.

Just a few weeks prior, Russell had learned of Good Shepherd Coalition during Trinity's September Second Offering and had encouraged the man to apply for support from the organization. Once his housing situation threatened to cause his family to break up, Russell encouraged him to reach out again and explain the situation.

"When the urgent need for Dad to obtain new, stable housing within a matter of hours came to light, Dad sought Karen's counsel and came to Compassion. He and Laura, our case manager, contacted Good Shepherd and explained the urgency. They pulled his application and began working to secure what he needed," said Nellis.

They found him a place to live and, with the help of Trinity and Shepherd's Gate Lutheran Church, they secured a safe place for his family to stay for a few nights until the housing was available.

"Compassion continues to involve Dad in our mentor program, providing mentoring support, continued case management with our on-staff licensed master social worker, baby and toddler items," said Nellis.

Several of the Compassion Pregnancy Center employees, including the man's male mentor, have helped secure beds and other needed household items for the family.

"We'll serve Dad as long as he needs our services. Dad has need of much prayer support for strength and healing from these mountains of difficulties that the Lord has brought him over as well as wisdom in decisions to be made in the future to the benefit of his children," said Nellis.

Compassion Pregnancy Center

GSC Macomb

Family Discussion

Have you ever opened a little gift and found a big surprise inside? Maybe you opened your eyes wide and said, “Wow!” That feeling is called wonder.The Bible tells us about people who had their own “Wow!” moments. God kept His promises in ways they never guessed!

A baby after a long wait
God promised Abraham and Sarah a baby. They waited a long, long time. Abraham was 100 years old and his wife, Sarah, was 99. When Sarah heard she would have a baby in her old age, she laughed! It was hard to imagine. But God kept His promise. They had a baby boy named Isaac!

Talk About It: What’s something you’ve had to wait for? How did you feel when it finally came?

A shepherd chosen to be king
God sent a man named Samuel to find Israel’s next king. Samuel went to visit a family with many sons. When he saw the oldest brother, he thought, “Surely this is the one!” But God told Samuel that people look at the outside, while God looks at the heart.

Samuel met seven brothers, and God hadn’t chosen any of them. “Do you have another son?” Samuel asked. There was one more! His name was David, and he was out taking care of the sheep. When David came in from the field, God told Samuel to choose him. The youngest brother, the one out with the sheep, would be king someday!

Talk About it: What do you think it takes to be a king?

A Savior in a manger
Long before the first Christmas, God promised to send a Savior. When Jesus was born, Mary wrapped Him in cloth and laid Him in a manger. A manger is a place where animals eat their food. That night, some shepherds were out watching their sheep. An angel told them the good news. Their Savior had been born! The shepherds hurried to see Him. And there He was, just as the angel had said. God had kept His promise and sent Jesus to save us.

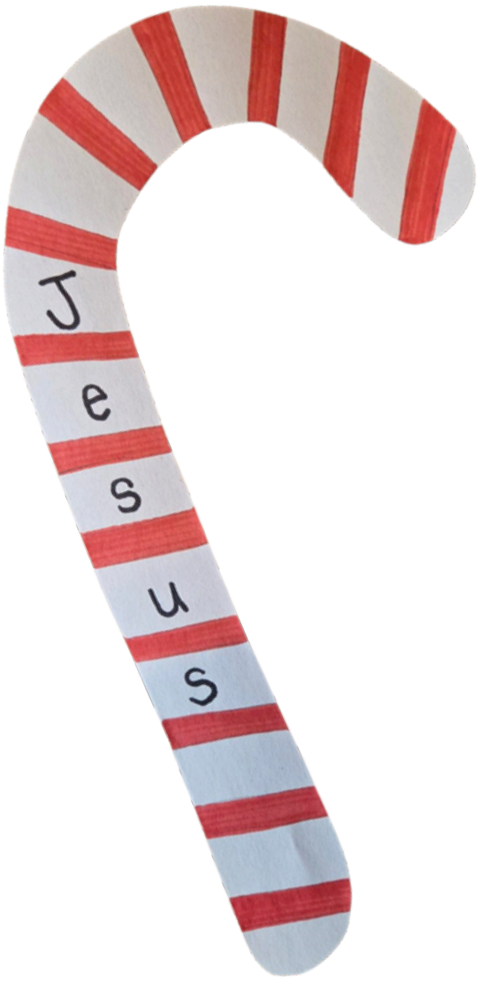
Talk About It: If you could peek into the manger with the shepherds, what would you say?

At Trinityct.org/Advent we have create a playlist of videos that illustrate the stories above. Visit the page to watch them togther!

Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for always keeping your promises. At Christmas, you sent your Son, Jesus, in the most surprising way—as a tiny, miraculous baby born in a quiet stable. Help our family remember that your love and blessings arrive in unexpected ways every single day. Help us see miracles all around us, in both the big moments and the small surprises. Keep our hearts full of hope and close to you. Amen

Family Activity: Candy Cane/Shepherd's Hook



The Meaning of the Candy Cane

- The Shape: Turned upside down, it is a "J" for Jesus. Turned right-side up, it looks like a shepherd's staff, reminding us that Jesus is our Good Shepherd.
- The White: Represents the purity of Jesus, who was born without sin.
- The Red Stripes: Represent the love of Jesus and the sacrifice He made for us.

How to Make a Construction Paper Candy Cane

Materials Needed

- White and red construction paper
- Red and white markers (or crayons)
- Scissors
- Glue stick

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Draw the outline: Have an adult or older child draw a large candy cane shape on the white construction paper.
2. Cut it out: Carefully cut out the candy cane shape using scissors.
3. Color the stripes: Use a red marker to draw diagonal stripes across the candy cane. If you want to use the red paper instead, cut small red strips and glue them onto the white candy cane.
4. Add details: Use a white marker or crayon to add highlights or write the name "JESUS" right on the staff.

Bonus Family Activity: Candy Cane Scavenger Hunt

Create several paper candy canes or purchase a box of real candy canes. Hide the candy canes around the house and challenge family members to find as many as they can. The person who can find the most candy canes wins the game. Be sure to share the meaning of the candy cane from above before or after playing the game.

Cookie Recipe

Cookie recipes are provided each week. The recipes are courtesy of the Trinity Women's League, which hosts a holiday cookie sale each Christmas. Visit this year's Bake Sale on Saturday, Dec. 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Commons. Any unsold items will be available for purchase at church on Sunday, Dec. 11.

Thumbprint Cookies

1 c butter softened
2/3 c sugar
2 cups all purpose flour
1 t almond extract
~ 1/2 c seedless jam (not preserves)

Glaze
1 c powdered sugar
1-2 T milk, room temp
1 t almond extract

Cream together the butter and sugar. Beat in flour and almond extract. Roll the dough into 1" balls and place on parchment covered cookie sheet – 4 rows of 4. Very slightly flatten with thumb or spatula.

Use thumb (or forefinger tip or knuckle) to create a small indent in each cookie. After all the indents are made, fill each with a rounded 1/8 t of jam.

Bake for 14-16 minutes at 350 degrees. The edges will still not be brown when done. Let cool on the trays for 1-2 minutes and then remove to a cooling rack.

To make the glaze, whisk almond extract and powdered sugar together in small bowl. Slowly start whisking in 1 T milk (up to 2 T). Stop adding milk as soon as you can drizzle it off the bottom of the whisk. When the cookies are completely cooled, drizzle the icing over the tops with the whisk. These cookies freeze well.



WEEK 4 - Throwback to Treasure
The Savior Arrives , Bringing God's Greatest Gift to the World

Some gifts are unforgettable, while others are used for a few weeks before they are tucked away and rarely used again and only taken out again when they are donated to a charity or sold at a garage sale.

The greatest Christmas gift is one that was never wrapped in colorful paper and tied with a bow. He was wrapped in swaddling cloths and placed in a manger. He is not a gift to place on a closet shelf to collect dust. Jesus is the gift we want to share. Much like the angels that announced His birth to the shepherds, we too are called to share the news of the Savior and make disciples of all nations.

The grace and peace offered to us through Christ is not something that we could ever earn or purchase for ourselves, but it was freely given to us by God through faith. It is a gift that won't break or wear out and it always fits. God's love for us is the greatest treasure.

Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the many gifts you have given us. Thank You for the people around us and the traditions we celebrate each year. And thank You for the greatest gift of all, Your Son, Jesus Christ. Through Him, You have given us forgiveness, salvation and the promise of eternal life. As Christmas approaches, remind us to focus on that real treasure.

Allow the Holy Spirit to work in us to share the news of the gift of Jesus. Fill us with joy and allow us to spread that joy of that first Christmas morning with those around us.

In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.

Sermon Notes

As we tie together themes and Scripture, use the Sermon Notes as a place to jot ideas and concepts to reference in the coming days.

Sermon Title _____

Theme Scripture _____

Music: Write one line from a song or hymn that emphasized today's theme.

_____

_____

Sermon: List 2-3 main points from the sermon today (Take notes on the bottom of this page during the sermon.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sermon Summary: In the space below, write a summary of the sermon message in your own words.

_____

_____

_____

_____

The readings for the fourth week focus on the way God promised a light that would overcome the darkness of the world. Each week, Crosstalk features four daily devotions based on Scripture and a discussion with the Pastors or church staff about the week's topic of focus. We've provided the readings as well as space to take notes as you listen. For the Crosstalk audio devotions, go to Trinityct.org/Crosstalk.

December 21
Luke 2:6-7
The Humble Manger

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

December 22
Luke 2:13-14
Glory in the Highest

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,
1 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

December 23
Luke 2:19
Treasuring the Story

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

December 24
John 3:16
Heaven's Greatest Gift

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Bible Study Technique: Discovery Technique

Discovery Bible Study can be done on your own, or with others. It is a simple way to explore Scripture by reading a passage aloud and retelling it in your own words. This method explores what the verse or verses teach us about God and His people, using the passage itself to guide the conversation. To close, list one specific way to put what you learned into practice and someone you can share it with. We've provided a layout below.

What does this passage say about God's character or will? Think of it as: what does this passage say about God.

How does this connect to what you've seen or experienced in your own life? In other words, what does this passage say about you or the world around you?

What is one practical way you can live out this truth in your community this week? Or, in light of this, how will you live now?

Family Discussion

Bible Verse: Matthew 6:21
"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Do you have a favorite toy, stuffed animal, or blanket? Maybe you have something special that you love so much you want to take it everywhere!

When something is very special to us, we call it a treasure. A treasure is something we love and think is important. But what happens when our favorite toy breaks? Or when we lose something special? We might feel sad because the things we own don't last forever.
Did you know that God has given us a treasure that will last forever?

That treasure is Jesus!

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, God's Son. Jesus wasn't born in a big castle, and He didn't have a fancy bed. He was born in Bethlehem and had a feeding trough for a bed!

God sent Jesus because He loves us so much. Jesus came to be our Savior. That means He came to rescue us from sin—the wrong things we do, say, and think. We don't have to buy this wonderful gift or do something special to earn it. We receive these gifts through faith in Jesus.

Toys may break, presents may get old, and our favorite things may get lost. But God's love for us will never go away. Jesus is the greatest treasure we could ever have!

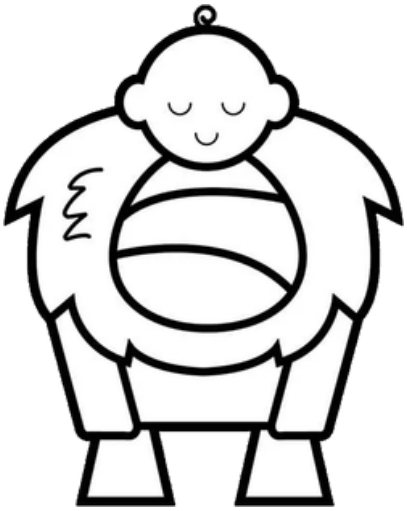
Talk About it: What is your favorite treasure? Is it a toy, a stuffed animal, a book, or something else? Why do you love it? God gives us many wonderful things to enjoy. We can thank Him for our toys, our families, and the things that make us happy.

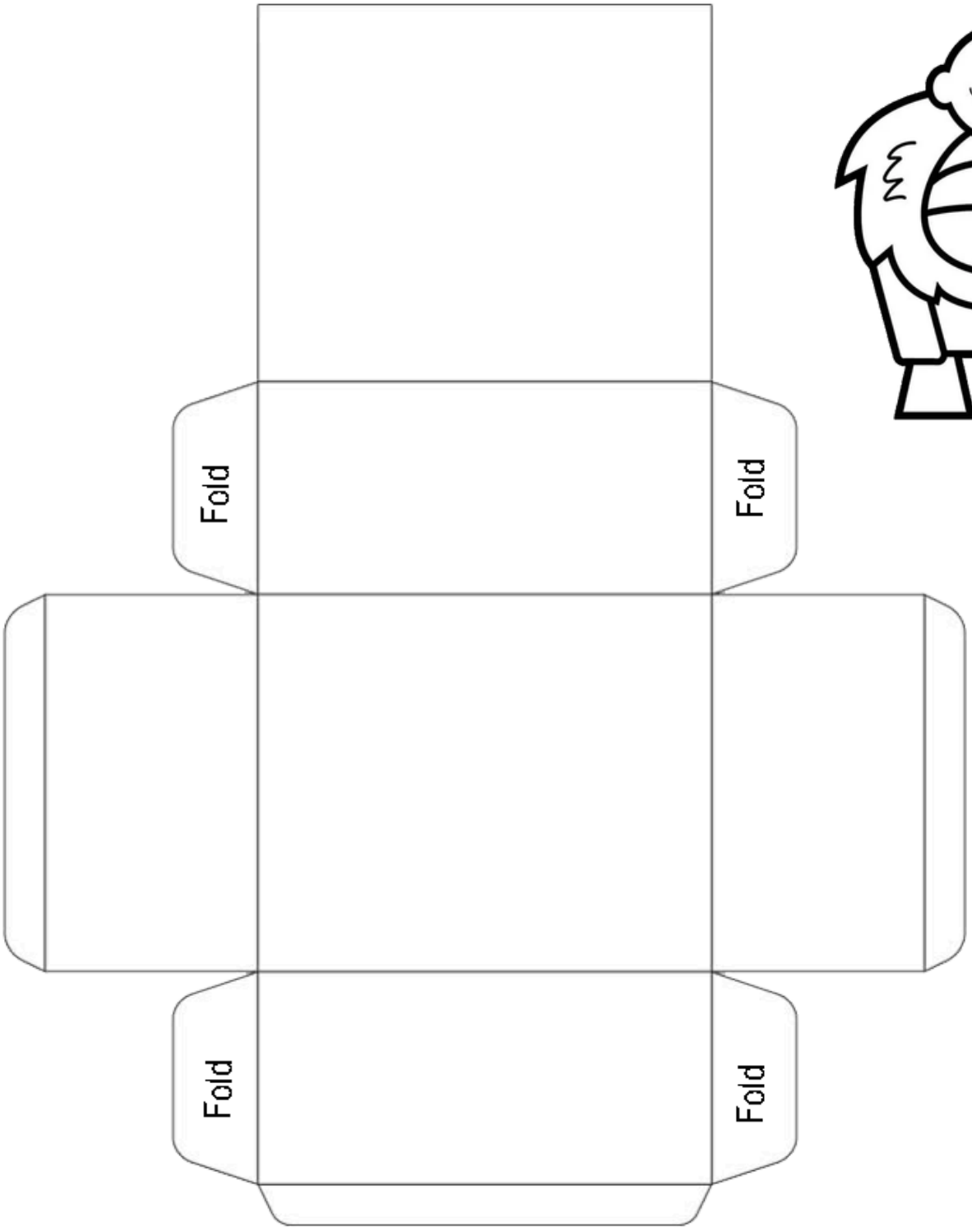
Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,
Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, as the greatest gift the world has ever known.
As we think about how the Savior arrives, we picture him coming not with loud trumpets or fancy riches, but quietly and humbly as a little baby. He brought God’s ultimate treasure straight to us: perfect love, bright hope, and everlasting peace. Bless our family as we welcome him into our hearts today. Help us to share the treasure of his love with everyone we meet.
Amen.

Family Activity: Jesus is Our Treasure

Decorate the treasure box and the baby Jesus templates below. Cut along the edges. Use glue and fold in the flaps to assemble a box. Talk about what might go inside of the box. Then, put Jesus in the treasure box to remind yourself that He is the one true treasure.





TREASURE

Everyday Treasure is Meant to be Shared



Tina Prosch had a lot of plans for 2026. A trip to Mexico, heading up Trinity's hospitality committee and spending more time working on her house. After owning an inn for 20 years, Tina had sold the business and was looking forward to jumping into a new chapter of her life. However, nagging back pain sidelined her before the year ever began. The pain, it turns out, was an aggressive form of cancer—one that would take her life before the end of the summer.

Tina’s MRI in January showed lesions on her spine. The doctors told her it was metastatic cancer, though it would take some time to determine the official origin. In March, as a way to keep family and friends updated on her progress, Tina's family, including her sister Amy Prosch, began posting on a Caring Bridge website.

In one of the first entries, Amy wrote the words to Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Tina’s plans changed from what she envisioned to a life of treatment, rest, rehabilitation, and one thing she didn't see coming - the opportunity to share her faith in Jesus through her interactions and her blog.

Despite pain and challenges, Tina and Amy shared where they saw God's mercies each day—the time she stood up, was able to get a good shower, enjoyed eating a Whopper, even a sunny day.

"These moments may seem simple, but right now they feel like profound reminders that hope is still present, and God is continually, faithfully walking beside her," Amy wrote on the blog in March.

Throughout Tina's months in the hospital and at home on hospice care, the sisters and their brother, John, continued to post updates with a focus on the positive and evidence of God's graces and reminding their friends and family that God held them in his grip.

The focus of the website, initially, was to update family and friends about Tina's condition, but it became a place another to witness. Tina had always shared her faith through her words and actions with guests at her inn, at scrapbooking expos, and with her friends but even when she was hospitalized, Tina shared her faith - her true treasure. While she thought she was giving the world a look into her cancer journey, she was also giving them a first-hand account of living as one of God’s children.

As you come to the end of this Advent workbook, we pray that the Scriptures, reflections, prayers, and activities have helped shape your Advent season with peace, joy, and anticipation. May the time you spent in God's Word and with your family deepen your awareness of Christ's presence—not only at Christmas, but in every season of life. May the love of our Savior continue to guide your steps, strengthen your faith, and fill your home with His light.

We welcome your feedback regarding the workbook, Crosstalk, events and activities as we plan for the future. Email church@trinityct.org. Your opinion is useful in providing tools and resources to help you and your family become fully devoted followers of Jesus.

Thank you for journeying through Advent with your Trinity family. May the God who comes near bless you richly in the days ahead.

