

Welcome!

"Together we LIVE to see our lives, our community, and our world transformed by the power of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST."



DECEMBER 2024

"Do All the GOOD you can in ALL the PLACES you can" - John Wesley

"Serve each other according to the gift each person has received, as good managers of God's diverse gifts" - 1 Peter 4:10



"A Place to Belong"

Trinity United Methodist Church



A Great Story for Christmas

- Author Unknown -

It's just a small white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past 10 years or so.

It all began because my husband, Mike, hated Christmas -- oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it -- the overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma -- the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties, and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way. Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended. Shortly before Christmas, there was an anon-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church.

These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes. As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. And, as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids -- all kids -- and he knew them, having coached little league football, baseball, and lacrosse.

That's when the idea for his present came. That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition -- one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on. The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents.

As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure. The story doesn't end there. You see, we lost Mike last year due to cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope.

*Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us. **May we all remember Christ, who is the reason for the season, and the true Christmas spirit this year and always.** God Bless! -- pass this story along to those friends and loved ones who you know are the givers who understand the true meaning of Christmas.*



“A Gift for Me and For You”

On several Christmas mornings when I was still a child, I would wake to find under our Christmas tree, carefully wrapped toys and gifts just for me, and of course my brothers and sisters and mom and dad. I can't remember all the toys and gifts I had received, but I remember the awe I felt in knowing my dad and mom had given from their hearts, that unconditional love just for me. Not all gifts, however, are so personally intended. After I became an adult I can remember receiving horrendous gifts I got at Christmas parties. Then there are those punch-out calendars that sit on my desk or hang on the wall reminding me all year long to buy Christian materials from their companies. And there are those boxes of candies that seem to be passed down from one Christmas to the other.

What takes the joy out of giving are the required gifts--the expected office exchange, the boxes of candy you keep by the door to hand the neighbors when they come to call as you know they will, once a year.

Really difficult are the gifts that come with long invisible strings dangling from them, gifts so very expensive that you could never afford to give in return.

I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt as they watched richly robed wise men kneeling before their child offering alabaster jars of precious myrrh, inlaid boxes heavy with the scent of frankincense, and iron-bound chests laden with gold--gifts fit for a king. How could they possibly repay?

I guess the most troublesome gift at Christmas is the Child Himself. What do we say? We smile nicely and pat the humbly- wrapped present. "How nice of you, God, to have been so thoughtful," we mumble politely. But the Gift lies on the dresser unopened year after year; perhaps because we don't expect to find much inside except a useless religious trinket. Perhaps because we don't feel any need for God just now. Perhaps because we know that if we unwrap the Gift we'll be obligated to the Giver beyond what we can ever repay. And so it sits ... and so it sits until in loneliness, in pain, in utter desperation we tug at the ribbons and tear off the wrappings, hoping against hope we'll find inside what we've longed for. And so it is. Unconditional Love!



I am sure our heavenly Father has spends many a disappointing Christmas. Amidst the glittering ornaments and flashing Christmas lights, the hurry and hustle of shopping and wrapping and family get-togethers, parties and presents, trees and turkeys--who really cares about His gift? What gets more attention from us: our Father's gift of life in Jesus Christ or the quickly-wrapped department store gifts from our cousins and friends?

God sent a gift one Christmas morn, a wondrous gift, a precious gift. God sent a gift one Christmas morn and wrapped it up in swaddling clothes, for me and for you, He did. Yes for me and for you He did.

Thank you, Father, for Jesus your gift to me and the world. Thank you for the abundant life that we, His disciples, can enjoy now. Thank you for sending us a most expensive gift--your own life. Thank you!

May you and yours have a very blessed and Mary Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year.

Love and peace,

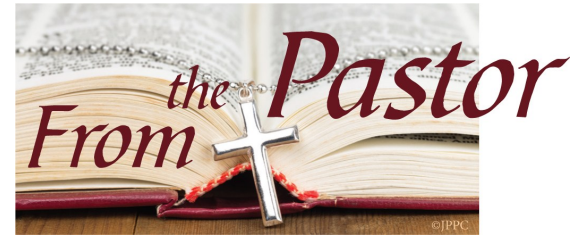
Pastor David and Henrietta Cervantez

A BABY THAT BRINGS HOPE

Advent season



Photo at Unicorn Center of Bible study group



“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Matthew 2:6 NIV

Blessings church family, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I hope you and your family are doing well. As we approach the advent season some of us may find ourselves busy with holiday preparations. You may experience that the holiday season brings challenges of sadness, loneliness, or stress. Yet the season of advent is one that offers a new hope for life. Well, Jesus and His earthly family know exactly how you feel.

First of all, some of us may wonder why would God want to come into this world in such a strange way?! He arrived as a defenseless child, *as a baby!* He could have chosen to come in as a fully grown man ready to fight against the tyranny of Jesus' time, both from religious leaders as well as those in positions of the Roman regime.

Yet God chose to come into this world in the most humble of ways, let's think for a moment how this was. He was completely defenseless and had to rely on the rough hands of a carpenter to bring Him into this world. Furthermore, instead of having royalty and dignitaries awaiting his birth, he was greeted by some dirty shepherds and animals. Then, months later, men from other countries came offering gifts, but they were certainly not there at the time of his birth.

To top it off, his parents were a young couple miles away from their home and family. To make things worse they were forced to spend the night in a stable. Worst yet, this was the place where she gave birth to the king of the world. They like most births, even though they are painful, bring with them such joy of a new life coming into this world.

Imagine for a moment that baby Jesus is stretching out his tiny cute and lovable hands for us to hold. Some of you may or may not know I've recently become a grandfather and my grandson is a year old now. Every time I get the honor of picking up my grandson, he stretches out his arms waiting for me to carry him. Such a feeling is the best feeling in the world for me as a grandfather.

Yet as a messenger of the word of God, I am reminded of this every time I get to preach and teach the word of God. Recently, I was able to share a Bible study with the clients of the Unicorn Center, here in San Antonio. And just like my grandson, they were so eager to receive God's word. I had the privilege of sharing the Word of God to over 130 disciples.

Trinity family, I hope that this Advent season brings you the same joy of receiving baby Jesus and sharing His joy with others around you, whoever they may be.

May God bless you and Merry Christmas!

Pastor Fred Perez

Santa or Grinch?

Here we are again. It's about to be Christmastime soon. Most of us really look forward to this time of the year! I know there are those who do not. This time can be really busy and stressful, but we usually look forward to it anyway. However, there are those who become very sad and depressed during this time of year. Why? If you have lots of family and friends who will be there to help you celebrate the holidays, you are probably really happy and excited (even if you are stressed out!). But there are others who will be alone or mostly alone during the holidays. Those people probably do NOT look forward to the holidays. Some are more depressed during this time than any other time of the year! There are even many suicides during these holidays!

So, what can you do to change these situations? Can you volunteer at a local Food Bank or give money for a gift for a child? Can you help serve a meal to those in your community who might, otherwise, not have a decent meal during the holidays? Maybe you could even invite a friend or a family to your home for Christmas (or any day during the holidays. It doesn't have to be on Christmas day).

You might even be a "Santa" and bring gifts to a friend or family - with or without their knowing who provided the gift(s). You could send a gift online via Amazon or many other companies to someone who might not get any other gifts. See, you don't even have to leave your home to give! Maybe you could order a meal through Door Dash or some other delivery service to a family. Again, you don't even have to leave your house to do that.

I have received many requests for money for USO, DAV, Wounded Warriors, St. Jude's Hospital, Meals on Wheels, and Salvation Army! All of these use your money for benevolent services, so these are ways to give, too.

At the very least, don't be a Grinch! Trust me! MANY people are suffering in silence! Just letting people know you care about them goes a long way! Ignoring them can really hurt! To feel that no one cares about them cuts to the core! People need love! People need to know that someone, anyone, cares about them. Tearing them down or telling them about their mistakes really doesn't help. Treating them like they are worthless or don't matter, again, really doesn't help. Don't be "a mean one, Mr. Grinch." What is your goal? "Do you really want to hurt [them]?"



I pray that you will seriously consider how lucky you are to have friends and family around. I pray that you will think about people who really might not have anyone. If you have the ability and the capacity to help, please be the Christian you were raised to be, and reach out to them!

Harriet Phillips, Lay Leader



Santa's Prayer on Christmas Eve

By Warren D. Jennings

The sleigh was all packed, the reindeer were fed,
But Santa still knelt by the side of the bed.

"Dear Father," he prayed "Be with me tonight.
There's much work to do and my schedule is tight.

I must jump in my sleigh and streak through the sky,
Knowing full well that a reindeer can't fly.

I will visit each household before the first light,
I'll cover the world and all in one night.

With sleigh bells a-ringing, I'll land on each roof,
Amid the soft clatter of each little hoof.

To get in the house is the difficult part,
So I'll slide down the chimney of each child's heart.

My sack will hold toys to grant all their wishes.
The supply will be endless like the loaves and the fishes.

I will fill all the stockings and not leave a track.
I'll eat every cookie that is left for my snack.

I can do all these things Lord, only through You,
I just need your blessing, then it's easy to do.

All this is to honor the birth of the One,
That was sent to redeem us, Your most Holy Son.

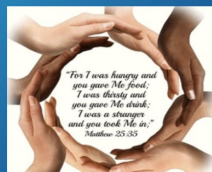
So to all of my friends, least Your glory I rob,
Please Lord, remind them who gave me this job."



"Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Heavenly Father."

- Matthew 5:16

Stewardship - a way of life



As Christian stewards, we all have our God-given talents and treasures. Let us use these to reach out to others and respond to those in need.

Thank you for your generous giving ♥.

STEWARDSHIP
a way of life

H

ello brothers and sisters in Christ!

I love December. We get to celebrate the greatest gift ever given to us this month. I am going to remember the reason for the season and focus on giving to God vs. worrying over what cookies to bake or when I am going to get my shopping done. It's not about the latter; it should be all about celebrating Jesus' birthday.

If I have learned anything over the last year, it's that most of us (including me) spend money on materialistic items we don't need. So I have decided this season I plan to give back to God above and beyond what I committed to for the year because the best Christmas memories I have are the ones when my family helped out someone that was not as fortunate as we were. I pray others will do the same.

Trinity supports so many awesome things around the world and here close to home through our church and our apportionments. None of it could happen without our generous, giving congregation. If your estimate of giving is behind for the year, would you please consider bringing it current before the end of the year? One way you could do this is if you want to give a gift to someone that has everything materialistic, give a gift to Trinity in their honor and the blessings will come to the giver, the honoree and, most of all, the person that is helped with that gift.

Our church needs help to meet our goals and also to fund our ability to bless others with help, please consider helping us fulfill that commitment.

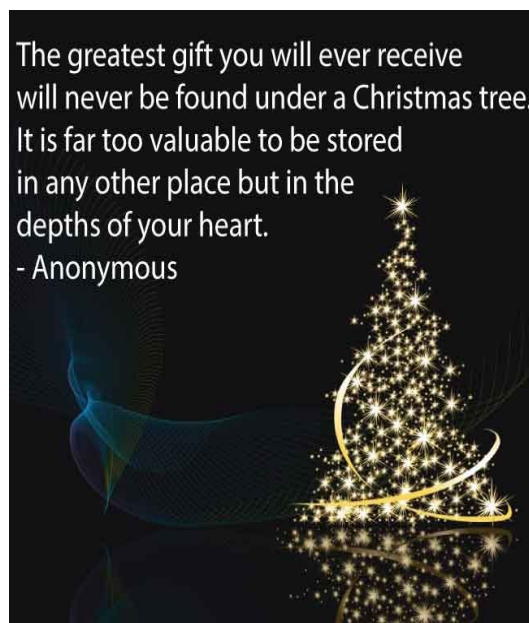
Merry Christmas!

Yours in Christ,

Bonnie Smith, Treasurer

The greatest gift you will ever receive will never be found under a Christmas tree. It is far too valuable to be stored in any other place but in the depths of your heart.

- Anonymous





REV. FEDERICO PEREZ, JR.
Pastor
fperez@riotx.org

Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m.
In Person —

You may wear your mask
as you feel comfortable.

Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m. is also available
on Facebook Live, &
www.tumcsa.net

Pastor-led Bible Study
7:00 p.m. on Sundays
Zoom room

Prayer Meetings:
- **Wednesdays** via zoom
at 2:15 p.m.

Church office phone
210-684-0261
Office hours:
Mondays—Thursdays
11:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
or **call for an appointment**

e-mail:
ofcadmin@tumcsa.net
6800 Wurzbach Road,
San Antonio, Texas 78240
www.tumcsa.net

NOVEMBER 2024

ATTENDANCE IN WORSHIP

IN THE SANCTUARY (IN-PERSON)

NOVEMBER 3	28
NOVEMBER 10	33
NOVEMBER 17	33
NOVEMBER 24	34

FACEBOOK LIVE – (PEOPLE REACHED)

NOVEMBER 3	106
NOVEMBER 10	117
NOVEMBER 17	96
NOVEMBER 24	82

*TITHES & OFFERINGS

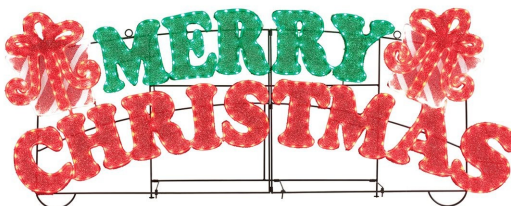
NOVEMBER 3	\$3,880
NOVEMBER 10	\$5,169
NOVEMBER 17	\$4,303
NOVEMBER 24	\$190

RUMMAGE SALE (OCTOBER) \$60.00

(*Tithes & Offerings report taken from
ONLY the counters;
online and text giving NOT included).

Happy Birthday to:

TRACEY PEREZ	1-Dec
DAVID C. LOPEZ	17-Dec
DON KHAN	19-Dec
MARCIA ALLEY	21-Dec
CAROL WILSON	27-Dec
DAVID DYE	30-Dec
DON KETCHUM	30-Dec
PAT PUTZ	30-Dec



DONATE ONLINE

Simply scan this
image using your
phone's camera
(or QR code
reader).



You may also go
to:

www.tumcsa.net
then click on the
“Donate” button.

DONATE FROM YOUR SMARTPHONE.

You may also **text**
giving to:
844-210-1179
(Type in the
amount you wish
to donate, then
hit send).



If we have missed your
special day, please notify
Cynthia in the church office.
Thank you!

A Friendly Reminder



◆ On Sunday, December 15, there will be a Trinity Family Reunion. Please bring a dish for a potluck luncheon after the worship service. Join us for great fellowship and singing time.



◆ Please mark your calendars for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24 at 7 pm.



◆ There are envelopes available in the narthex for poinsettia dedications. You can dedicate your love offering in memory of a loved one, in honor of someone special, or simply as a contribution to the church. A donation of \$14.00 per plant would be greatly appreciated. Please use the envelopes labeled “My Christmas Offering.”

Weekly Recurring Meetings where everyone is invited:

- Sack lunch ministry each Sunday at 9:15am. Everyone is welcome to help.
For more information, please contact Don Ketchum.
- Pastor-led Bible study every Sunday via zoom at 7:00pm.
- Prayer meeting every Wednesday via zoom at 2:15pm.

Please call Cynthia for zoom links or visit our website at www.tumcsa.net.

Trinity is asking for volunteers to...

..... lead Sunday school meetings at 9:00 am in the Null building or the Zoom meetings on Thursdays at 3:00 pm. Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve.

..... broadcast our worship service live on Facebook (on rotation).

..... help with the Family Life Committee alongside Alisa Roberts, Susie Yamoah, Carol Lewis, & Sandra Dance. Family Life is responsible for our social activities, e.g., July 4th luncheon and sing-along, Trunk or Treat, Thanksgiving luncheon, Super Chili Bowl Cook-off, “Fat Sunday instead” (Sunday before Ash Wednesday), and other event celebrations.

..... read at our Sunday’s worship services, on rotation.

..... help in the church office with very light clerical duties such as answering phones, assisting visitors, and other tasks alike. Help is needed on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 11am-2pm.

..... serve refreshments and clean up after church on the 1st Sunday of every month.

..... donate refreshments such as cookies, doughnuts, sweet breads and beverages to serve after the first Sunday worship services; please contact Stacie Brown.

If you are led to serve in these areas, or any other ministries not mentioned, please contact Cynthia in the church office or Harriet Phillips.



Flea Market/Yard Sale/Pop-up (every 2nd Saturday of the month)

- ⇒ Bring your tables.
- ⇒ The cost is \$15.00 per space.
- ⇒ You may bring your canopy and chairs.
- ⇒ Invite your friends, and come and have a picnic 😊.
- ⇒ Either prepay at the church office:
(Mon-Thurs) between 11am and 2pm or bring in the day of – CASH Only and the exact amount, please.
- ⇒ Great visibility on Wurzbach. Will advertise on social media and the church's electronic marquee.

DECEMBER 14, 2024 | | 9 AM-2 PM | SATURDAY

Trinity United Methodist Church

6800 Wurzbach Road, 78240. 210-684-0261 church office.

Come early for a good location.



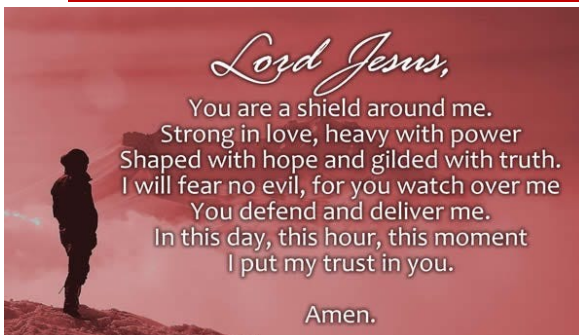
Don't worry
God is never blind to your
 tears, never deaf to your prayers,
 and never silent to your pains.
He sees, He hears
 and He will deliver.

Let us pledge to uphold
 our church with our
 prayers



Please pray for our
 church every day at noon
 by simply saying

"JESUS I TRUST IN YOU"



Let us pray:

TAKE A MOMENT FOR GOD

Dear Lord, I thank You for this day. I thank You for my being able to awake once again, to see, and to hear this morning. I'm blessed because You are a forgiving God and an understanding God. You have done so much for me and You continue to bless me. Please forgive me every day for anything I have done, said or thought that was not pleasing to You, and I ask Your forgiveness. Please keep me safe from all danger and harm. Help me to start this day with a new attitude and plenty of gratitude. Let me make the best of each and every day to clear my mind that I can accept all things. Let me not whine and whimper over things I have no control over. Let me continue to see sin through Your eyes and acknowledge it as evil. And when I sin, let me repent, and confess with my mouth my wrongdoing, and receive Your forgiveness. And when this world closes in on me, let me remember the example of Jesus—to slip away and find a quiet place to pray. It is the best response when I'm pushed beyond my limits. Continue to use me to do Your will. Continue to bless me that I may be a blessing to others. Keep me strong that I may help the weak. Keep me uplifted that I may have words of encouragement for others. I pray for those who are lost and can't find their way, I pray for those who are misjudged and misunderstood. I pray for those who don't know You intimately. I pray for those who don't believe, and I thank you that You are in my heart. AMEN.

*From:
Trinity UMC Prayer team*



Trinity UMC Prayer Team †

“God, help me navigate whatever challenges I encounter this day. Be my comfort and my rock. Guide me to do Your will and be an instrument of Your peace today and each day. Amen.”

**Come
Let Us
Pray**



*Prayer team meets every Wednesday at 2:15pm via Zoom.
Please join us or send us your prayer request at www.tumcsa.net*





ARC Team with 100 Cold Weather Backpacks filled for our homeless brothers and sisters down at Travis Park.
They did a great job!



Christmas Gift Bags for our homebound (shut-ins)

Each Sunday in Advent, tote bags for our shut-ins in be on a table in the narthex along with cards you can sign to send them your Christmas greetings. We have mugs and warm socks in each of the tote bags.

Everyone is invited to add a little something extra to the Christmas bags (e.g., candies, cookies, etc.). Please let Cynthia know if you would like to help deliver the bags.

WE MAKE IT EASY!
WE COME TO YOU!
GET PAID TODAY!

SELLING YOUR CAR?

HONEST • SIMPLE • LOCAL
210-825-7025



MOBILE AUTO TRADES

If you need assistance with getting your loved one's vehicle out of their name legally, please call 210-825-7025. We will come to help!

Additionally, if you know anyone who is selling their vehicle, let us know. If we end up purchasing the vehicle, we will offer you a \$200 referral fee.

Thank you, Byron Burge





'Tis the Season

2024 Holiday Handbell Concert Series

Friday 12/13
7:00 pm

Madison Hills Baptist Church
15413 O'Connor Rd., 78247

Saturday 12/14
3:00 pm

Second Baptist Church
3310 E. Commerce St., 78220

Tuesday 12/17
7:00 pm

Army Residence Community (ARC)
7400 Crestway Rd., 78239

Thursday 12/19
7:00 pm



Abiding Presence Lutheran Church
14700 San Pedro Ave., 78232

Friday 12/20
7:00 pm

Christ Lutheran Church
6720 Broadway, 78209

Sunday 12/22
3:00 pm

Trinity Baptist Church
319 E. Mulberry, 78212
(w/ Heart of Texas Concert Band)

 RiverCityRingers.org  RiverCityRingersSA

Concerts are free and open to the public. Donations appreciated!
River City Ringers is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.