

From the Pastor's Desk

As I opened the garage door this morning, the sound of the garbage trucks could be heard echoing down the street. It's a familiar sound—the motor, the gears, trudging up the hill. In the misty morning, two yellow rain suit clad workers stepped out of the vehicle and began tipping the garbage containers. Of course, one of these was *my garbage container*. The garbage began spilling into the back of the truck.

Then in some freakish malfunction of human intellect, a thought of Christmas came piercing my brain. "Why now?" I thought. "Christmas doesn't belong in the same sentence or image with *garbage*."

Suddenly, those containers began multiplying by the thousands of people who live in Concord and Kannapolis. Then it was just an easy step to include Mt. Pleasant and Harrisburg. And of course, that gets real close to Charlotte and it just increases exponentially from there. The garbage gets overwhelming.

The piles and piles of garbage are a reminder of how overwhelming the season of Christmas can be for many people. The pressure of buying and shopping and spending require that decisions be made about "for whom?" and, "how much?" There are parties and family gatherings for which preparation must be made and there are ceremonies to attend. Cooking and baking and decoration during Christmas squeeze our time like no other season's needs. Cards need to be sent...to EVERYONE, because, what if someone gets left out?

Yesterday on the radio I heard that the Christmas cards sent in this country in a single season would fill a football stadium ten stories high! That's a lot of cards—that become a lot of garbage at some point. Someone suggested sending "e-cards" to as many as possible, and

gave the advice to "not feel guilty about not sending cards at all." Good advice, for the guilt piles up too.

Another excessively wasteful image is the opening of gifts and all that wrapping paper that piles up—and eventually ends up—in the garbage. Draw the line somewhere though. Don't get rid of all the fun! And opening gifts is fun!

Christians begin the holiday season not as "Christmas" per se, but as Advent. The fundamental nature of the Advent season is preparation. Recall the expectation of a mother giving birth, of the shepherds in the fields, of the kings from the East, and prepare for the coming of Christ into your hearts and lives in a more relevant way!

Like empty recycling containers whose use was forgotten when the garbage cans were filled, sometimes the more important cycles of living are left out of Advent and Christmas. Sorting out what is really important during the Advent season is a little like sorting out what is garbage and what is recyclable. It begins with a prior decision and commitment to that which sustains our life and our living. It requires some planning, some preparation and some reflection on what are the most important values for our children.

This Advent and Christmas season, give yourself time for recycling your Spirit by attending worship regularly with your family. Spend time preparing for Christ's imminent return to your life. And remember that recycling the good gifts reduces garbage...all year long.

Peace,
Nathan

First Sunday Fellowship

First Sunday Fellowship will be Sunday, December 5th in the fellowship hall following worship. Remember to take a friend with you to the 10:55am worship service and then to go downstairs to the fellowship hall after worship. There will be light wholesome snacks with our fellowship.

Circles

The Morning Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 7th at 9:30am at the home of Elsie Bonds. Please note changes in date, time and location.

The Mildred Suther Circle will meet on Monday, December 6th at 6:00pm at the Texas Steakhouse.

The Sisters in Christ Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 14th at 7:00pm at the home of Teresa Puckett.

Churchmen's Fellowship

The Churchmen's Fellowship will not meet for their Sunday breakfast this month. Instead, on Sunday, December 12, they will sponsor the Annual Christmas Breakfast at 8:30am. The menu is ham, sausage, biscuits, gravy, eggs, grits and rice. The cost is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 12 and under. Please purchase your tickets in advance from any Churchmen's Fellowship member so the men will be able to plan accordingly. Tickets will be available at the door.

The Churchmen's Fellowship members will once again be smoking Christmas hams and turkeys for a nominal cost of \$10 each. Take your meat to the church kitchen on Wednesday, December 22nd any time between 5:30 and 7:00pm. Pick-up will be the following day, Thursday the 23rd, from 5:00 to 7:00pm. For more information and/or details, contact Lewis Eddings at 704.857-7814.

Second Saturday Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, December 11, 2004
Time ~ 7:30am until 10:30am

Volunteers Needed

- 4 Cooks – arrive at 6:30am
- 2 Cashiers – arrive at 7:15am
- 4 for Clean-up – arrive at 10:15am
- 4 for Set-up – Friday evening 6pm
- 5 Servers – arrive 7:00am



A SIGN-UP SHEET IS LOCATED IN THE NARTHEX

Our Gifts, Attendance & Service

2004 Budget	\$ 164,310.02
Needed to Date	151,671.00
Offering to Date (as of 11/28)	117,738 .00
Average Attendance	72
2005 Budget	146,679.50
2005 Pledges	65,000.00

Children's Message

Pam King

Sound System

David Bowles

Acolyte

Blaine McHale

Maintenance

Brian Cranford & Keith Eagle

Liturgists

- 12/5 Kris Monks
- 12/12 Eugenia Holste
- 12/19 Ray Monks
- 12/26 Pam King

Nursery

- 12/5 Kris & Ray Monks
- 12/12 Gina & Michael Pell
- 12/19 Katherine Barrier
- 12/26 Dana Etherton

Christmas Gathering

Gather you kids, grandkids, friends and camera for a viewing of hundreds of Santas in all shapes and sizes. On display is the private collection of Trinity's own Bob Baucom, 195 Miller Ave. SW, Concord. Admission is a donation to Hospice of Cabarrus County. Dates are Sunday, December 5th and Sunday, December 12th from 2pm to 5pm.

My Regular Tithe and Offering My Challenge Goal Giving

In order to end the year on a solid financial footing, Consistory challenges all members and friends of Trinity Reformed UCC to step up to the challenge goal giving of \$6,000.00 by December 19. So, remember your regular offering, then think of a comma and give beyond that. Envelopes are available for your Challenge Goal Giving.

Music Notes

GOD IS STILL SINGING

Okay, the UCC ad campaign says God is still speaking, but we can still hear God singing, too. Not just in the soothing sounds of the Creation that we can hear throughout the solar cycle, if we listen: in the meditation of the trees and their praying in the wind, in the babbling of a mountain brook, or the drumming of a hard rain, or the warbling of a bird's spring-song.

We can hear God even in the midst of the clamor and clang of omnipresent commercialism our holidays have become: in the words of the melodies piped into the stores at the mall, in the lilt of the carols we sing with our children, in the timbre of the organ and the resonance of the drum (especially when played by a child with a happy gleam in her eyes).

During this Advent and Christmas season, many musicians are working to bring live music to Trinity's services. Our new, multi-generational bell choir, the children in the Worship and Arts program, and the adults in the chancel choir are all preparing varied programs. Other musicians in the community are joining us. Several professional instrumentalists are donating their time and talents free of charge! At various times, we'll hear tuba, guitar, violin, bells, euphonium, flute, cello, oboe, trumpet and percussion.

We'll be able to see the shiny brass or silver of horns and winds, and the warm glow of the instruments with strings; we'll feel the intake of a collective breath and bask in the sound of many hearts and minds playing and singing together, live, for the glory of God. Yes, God is still singing. The music is alive. Bring a friend to the services at Trinity, and share the music of Christmas with its timeless message of hope, peace, love and joy.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

On Sunday, December 5 during the 10:55 service, the children of the Worship and Arts classes will present "*Journey to Bethlehem*," a program of traditional music and text. The adult choir will have a small role, too.

CHANCEL CHOIR CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

The 10:55 service on Sunday December 19 will contain music, music and more music. This is the day to hear at least ten different instruments, bells, the chancel choir, and the all-time favorite "Hallelujah Chorus" by Handel.

CHRISTMAS EVE

At nine o'clock on Christmas Eve, we'll enjoy the traditional candlelight Lessons and Carols service, complete with choir, bells, oboe, and other instruments. Come prepared to sing, and bring a neighbor.

Emailing Newsletters

Beginning in January, the monthly newsletters will be sent to you through email instead of through the U.S. Postal Service. You will need to download the free Acrobat Reader software by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

If you do not have an email address and have let the church know this, you will receive your newsletter through first class mail. As with any change, there may be mix-ups so please be patient. Please inform Sallie in the church office if you do not receive your newsletter by the end of the first week of the month.

Consistory Minutes

Minutes of the monthly Consistory meetings are available upon request after approval by Consistory at the following month's meeting.

2005 Offering Envelopes

Your 2005 offering envelopes will be available in the church Narthex on Sunday, December 26 for you to pick up and take home.

Trinity United Church of Christ

38 Church Street NE
Concord, NC 28025-4756
704.782-1024 & 704.782-0141
Rev. J. Nathan King, pastor



September 2004

In an effort to reduce operating costs and in being good stewards with our finances and our environment, beginning in January, 2005, Trinity's monthly newsletter and calendar will be emailed instead of bulk mailed through the US Post Office. The newsletter and calendar are also available on Trinity's website at www.trinityuccconcord.org.

If you have not already done so, you will need to download and install Adobe Acrobat Reader. This is a FREE download and will assist you in viewing Trinity's monthly newsletters on the website and in the monthly mailings. You will find Acrobat Reader by clicking the following link:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

Please remove this page from this newsletter, complete the following information, refold it for Trinity's address to show and return it to Trinity Church so our records may be organized for this up-coming change. You may also email your reply to sstaley46@yahoo.com.

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REMEMBER TRINITY CHURCH IN YOUR WILL AND TRUST

 **God
is
still
speaking,**

**December Birthdays and
Wedding Anniversaries**

- 2 Tara Odom
- 3 Jay & Tracy Rhodes †
- 4 Robin Ray
- 5 Lib Talbert !
- 7 Glenda Smith*
- 8 Mike Monks, Zack Monks
- 9 Dan Barrier, Elsie Bonds, Charlie Vartanian !!!
- 10 Tracee Miller, Kevin Sterling*
- 11 Kay Harbison
- 12 Lorna Colson
- 14 Annie Rhodes
- 18 Michael & Gayle Hansen †
- 19 Bob Baucom
- 25 Katherine Barrier
- 26 Giles & Dot Kindley †
- 28 Amanda Miller
- 29 Judy Barnhardt
- 30 Robin Drake

**Second Saturday
Pancake Breakfast**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

7:30AM UNTIL 10:30AM

\$5 ADULTS

\$4 SENIORS

\$3 CHILDREN AGES 4-11

FREE FOR CHILDREN 3 & UNDER



THE PUBLIC IS INVITED!

December

2004

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
			1 World AIDS Day 8:00 HHW Recycling 'til 4pm 7:00 Chancel Choir Practice	2	3	4
5 9:00 W&A Class 10:55 Worship W&A children present "Journey to Bethlehem" 12:15 First Sunday Fellowship 2:00 Concord Tour of Homes 'til 7pm 2:00-5pm Baucom Christmas Gathering	6 6:00 Mildred Suther Circle at Texas Steakhouse	7 Pearl Harbor Day 9:30 Morning Circle at the Home of Elsie Bonds 7:00 City of Concord Community Development Mtg. in Fellowship Hall	8 Hanukkah Begins 7:00 Chancel Choir Practice	9	10	11 7:30 2 nd Saturday Pancakes 'til 10:30am
12 8:30 Churchwide Breakfast 9:00 Handbells 10:55 Worship 2:00-5pm Baucom Christmas Gathering 6:30 Consistory	13 6:30 "God is Still Speaking" Bible Study 6:30 Cabarrus Quilt Guild/F. Hall	14 7:00 Sisters in Christ Circle at the Home of Teresa Puckett	15 7:00 Chancel Choir Practice	16	17	18 8:00 HHW Recycling 'til 1pm
19 My Challenge Goal Offering 9:00 W&A Class 10:55 Worship with Chancel Choir Music Special	20 6:30 "God is Still Speaking" Bible Study	21	22 5:00 Drop Off Meats to Smoke 'til 7pm 7:00 Chancel Choir Practice	23 5:00 Pick Up Meats 'til 7pm	24 Christmas Fund Mission Offering 9:00 Christmas Eve Communion Service	25 Merry Christmas
26 9:00 Handbells 10:55 Worship	27 6:30 "God is Still Speaking" Bible Study	28	29 7:00 Chancel Choir Practice	30	31 New Year's Eve	January 1 Happy New Year