

Trinity UCC  
17955 West 3rd Street  
Elliston, OH 43432  
tucc1862@gmail.com  
419-862-3417



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## News From Pastor Ryan:

Hello Church Family,

It is hard to believe that February will again bring about our season of Lent. This year churches across the world will be finding new ways to celebrate this church season. Lent is a season of 40 days marked in the Christian tradition with prayer and fasting where we remember Jesus' temptation for 40 days in the desert.

For many, this season becomes fully focused on depriving ourselves of simple pleasures. Maybe you'll give up chocolate, or soda, or social media. This year more than most we may feel a sense of dread when we think of "giving up" certain things. We've already given up our normal gatherings, sporting events, social engagements and so on. In March we'll reach one year living in a world with Covid-19 precautions. It might seem difficult or even insulting to us to be asked to give up more after we've already given up birthdays, Christmases, Thanksgivings, and a laundry list of other celebrations this year.

So, this year, rather than focusing on what we give up, I'm asking you to focus on what you use to fill yourself up. Many of the things we give up for Lent are things that make us feel full. Food comforts us, excessive television or social media fill our down time, even vices like cigarettes or alcohol might smooth out our emotions and make us feel more "whole". But when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness, He gives us a strong reminder of how we should fill our lives.

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" – Matthew 4:1-4*

Even though Jesus was starving His focus was not on what he couldn't have, but what He had deep in soul, the Word of God. During Lent we can find ourselves obsessing over the things we give up, dreaming of the day we can have them again. However, the purpose of Lent is to take that same energy and use it to study, pray, and meditate on the things of God. It's so easy to focus on the things we don't have, yet God has been gracious in the gifts he pours out on us. Jesus in the desert refuses food, riches, and power because He knows those things will only provide temporary happiness. His eternal joy comes from His connection to God. Jesus reminds us several times in Scripture to focus on the things that are eternal, not the things that can rust and fade.

As we head into another Lenten season and our vision starts to turn to the glory of an empty tomb, remember the miracle wasn't what was missing from the grave, it's actually what FILLED the grave. The love of God filled even the darkest grave with life and that life went out into the world changing everything. We will soon live in a world where the darkness of Covid-19 is fading to memory, when missed engagements are replaced with new and fresh memories. What are you filling yourself with in the meantime? Is it bitterness for what we were deprived? Or is it the Word of God that restores and overcomes all things! Think about that as you are preparing for Lent this year, not just the things you will stop doing, but the things you will start. Try reading your Bible daily, switch the radio to Christian music in your car, call a neighbor every couple days to remind them Jesus loves them and so do you! There's many small things we can do to fill the empty spaces with the love of God!

Be Blessed,

Pastor Ryan



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- February 7th Branching Out returns
- February 8th at 7:00pm Church Council Meeting
  
- March 7th at 7:30 am Men's Breakfast

### Lent Schedule All services at 7pm

February 17th  
February 24th  
March 3rd  
March 10th  
March 17th  
March 24th  
April 1st

# Church Council Minutes

The Trinity United Church of Christ, Elliston Church Council met on Monday, December 14th, 2020. At 7:00 pm. Nyla Denman, President, called meeting to order, and Pastor Ryan Shields opened with prayer. Those in attendance were as follows:

President Nyla Denman, Vice President Desirae McCloskey, Faith Sutter, Bonnie Weaver, Eric Gahler, Ed Gahler, Nate Diekman, Brad Jess, Jayson Hayes, Troy Wittman, Jim Buhro, Pastor Ryan Shields, and Church Secretary Rhonda Mahaney were present. Marty Hoeft was absent.

## **Reports:**

**Recording Secretary:** Meeting minutes from the November council meeting were read prior to the meeting by members. Motion to accept the minutes were made by first Nate Diekman, second by Troy Wittman, MC.

## **Secretary Report:**

Photo Directory Update

Will be shipped in January

Note: Lifetouch church photography is permanently closing and finishing current projects

Snowplow policy created in writing for future

## **Financial Report:**

Review of current budget was made by present council members

Approval of financial report by first Troy Wittman, and second by Brad Jess, MC.

CD Renewal

Motion to renew CD by first Desirae McCloskey, and second by Jim Buhro, MC.

## **Pastor Report:**

Worship

Church attendance chart for the year is attached.

Even with Covid-19 and changing ways of monitoring attendance we averaged 90 worship participants for the year (not counting the last two Sundays in December). Average attendance for 2019 was 91. Our livestreaming service has connected us to many new people and I am hopeful we will see growth in a post Covid world.

Communion served on December 13<sup>th</sup>

Dawson McCloskey baptized on November 15<sup>th</sup>

Eloise Hope Tabbert dedicated in private ceremony on November 21<sup>st</sup>

Praise Band special service this Sunday December 20<sup>th</sup>

Putting together a Digital Christmas Children's Christmas Program to be a part of Christmas Eve

Ministry Teams

Branching Out/Thrive cancelled until 2021

The Deep Dive Bible Study on hiatus until at least February

Met with representatives from Expanders about funding for 2030 Phase One

Missions Team: Working to provide great gifts for the Angel Tree family. Also had 10+ from Trinity for two days at Elmore Community Thanksgiving. We very much impressed their volunteers, as they usually don't have that much help.

## Pastoral Ministries

After my annual review and meeting with Pastoral Relations I revisited who I give consideration as "shut in's". Covid-19 has slightly changed that meaning. Previous list was down to just a couple people to check on. New list has 10. Trying to spend some time on the phone with all of them during the holidays and send cards. In-Person visitation is still strongly discouraged at all hospitals and care centers.

A few health calls this month as well.

Performed marriage ceremony for Alan and Andrea Haar at St. John's on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The last of my St. John's obligations that were postponed due to Covid.

Formally entering the Alternative Pathway to Ordination with the NWOA of the UCC and have a tentative educational pathway.

Communion given to those watching services separately on Monday morning.

Check in's via Facebook, E-mail, and phone calls with members/friends of the church.

E-mail prayer chain connecting with 45 current subscribers.

## Upcoming

Praise Band on December 20<sup>th</sup>

The Longest Night Digital Service Monday December 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm

Christmas Eve Service December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

Due to high number of RSVP's a motion was made, after much discussion, to have a digital only service on Christmas Eve. Motion was first made by Ed Gahler, and second by Nate Diekman, opposed by Desirae McCloskey, MC.

Pastor Ryan surgery Jan 7<sup>th</sup>. Out of office until January 21<sup>st</sup>

## **Committee Reports:**

### **Worship Team**

Nothing new at this time

### **EFY- Branching Out & THRIVE**

Nothing new at this time

### **Mission**

Working on Angel Tree

Attended Elmore community Thanksgiving

### **Trustee Report**

Wood doors in sanctuary

Wanting to fix since they won't lock

Received quote from Northwood Door

Est. \$11,290 with glass, and \$10,098 without glass

Waiting on another quote

Basement ceiling peeling

Will cost \$1,250 to repaint ceiling

Motion to proceed by first Brad Jess, and second by Jim Buhro, MC.

Keaton is working on stapling insulation back where it needs to be

### **Pastoral Relations Committee**

Met with Pastor Ryan

## Church and Ministry

Nothing new at this time

## 2030 Team

Nothing new at this time

## Old Business:

Evelyn Schimming Will

Motion to purchase the empty lot for \$8,000 by first Jayson Hayes, and second by Nate Diekman, MC.

Proposed Changes to Constitution

Will table. Motion made by first Ed Gahler, and second by Nate Diekman, MC.

2030 Proposal

## New Business:

Budget Proposal for congregation reviewed

Motion to present to congregation by first Faith Sutter, and second by Jayson Hayes, MC.

Slate of new officers

Still need deacon

Congregational Meeting January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Will announce that we encourage members to be in person, but if they are uncomfortable they are able to request information be sent to them, or come to church office during week to talk with Pastor Ryan or Rhonda by January 8<sup>th</sup>, motion by first Desirae McCloskey, and second by Eric Gahler, MC.

Motion to adjourn meeting by first Desirae McCloskey and second by Nate Diekman, MC.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm by Nyla Denman.

Respectfully submitted, Faith Sutter, Recording Secretary.

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# Congregational Meeting Minutes

A Congregational Meeting was held on January 10, 2021. At 10:21 am, Desirae McCloskey called the meeting to order.

A new slate of church council officers was presented to the congregation as follows:

President – Desirae McCloskey

Vice President- Lucas Sutter

Recording Secretary- Ashley Gahler

Financial Secretary- Bonnie Weaver

Elder- Ed Gahler

Elder- Brianne Perry

Deacon- Troy Wittman

Deacon- Connie Gahler

Trustee- Brad Jess

Trustee- Jim Buhro

Trustee- Michael Sager

Trustee- Jim Laughlin

A motion to accept the new slate of officers was made by first Nyla Denman and second by Jennifer Laughlin, MC.

Luke Sutter, a member of the 2030 Vision Committee, presented the committee's vision for 2021.

In summary, their proposal included,

1. \$13,000 raised through congregational giving for Benevolence
2. \$5,500 of 2020 Surplus transferred to various ministry teams.
3. \$10-\$15,000 Classroom Renovation
  - a. \$2,895.51 Wittman/Kadlick Memorials
  - b. \$5-7,000 Congregational Giving
  - c. \$5-7,000 Church Match from 2020 Surplus
4. \$6,500 ADA Door/Rekeying Project from Expanders/TLC Funds

A motion was made to accept the 2030 Vision Committee's by first Robin Hansen and second Brad Jess proposal, MC.

Next, the 2021 Budget for Trinity was reviewed by the congregation and explained by Desirae McCloskey. A motion was made to accept the proposed budget by first Brad Jess, and second by Eric Gahler, MC.

Finally, the purchase of Evelyn Schimming's property was discussed. The December 2020, church council moved to purchase just the lot for \$8,000. A motion was made by first Luke Sutter and second by Jim Laughlin, MC to approve the purchase of just the lot for \$8,000. The church leadership will continue to speak with the lawyers and family as nothing is finalized. The property might have to be purchased with the house. If so, church leadership will seek additional congregational approval if they decide to move forward with the purchase.

Desirae McCloskey asked the congregation if there was any new business that needed to be addressed. Nothing noted at this time.

A motion to adjourn the 2020 congregational meeting was made by first Janene Lattimore, and second by Ed Gahler, MC.

Meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Before leaving, Don Corbin came forward to give a blessing for the new council members.

Submitted, respectfully by Faith Sutter, 2020 Recording Secretary

## LENTEN SERMON SERIES

### RED LETTER DAY

In some Bibles the words of Jesus are marked with red letters. This is so we can take special note of what Jesus was telling us throughout the Gospel. Some of the most famous red letter passages are the words Jesus said on the cross. With his last breaths, Jesus provides insight into the nature of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. This Lenten season, hear the final words of Jesus before His death on the cross and prepare for the ultimate Red Letter Day on Easter.

February 21st: "Father, Forgive Them"

February 28th: "Today you will be with me in paradise"

March 7th: "Behold your son, Behold your mother"

March 14th: "My God, have you forsaken me?"

March 21st: "I thirst"

March 28th: "It Is Finished"

April 1st (Maundy Thursday): "Father into your hands I commend my spirit"

April 4th (Easter Sunday): The Final Word "He Has Risen"

## LENT

The Lenten Season is upon us again as we begin to look to the cross of Jesus and the empty grave, the signs of our salvation. This year, all Lenten services will be held at Trinity. Check back for more information on Easter Sunday. All services will be both online and in-person. Our Lenten schedule is as follows:

### ALL SERVICES AT 7 PM

February 17th: Ash Wednesday Service

February 24th: Lenten Study ***He Chose the Nails*** Week One

March 3rd: Lenten Study ***He Chose the Nails*** Week Two

March 10th: Lenten Study ***He Chose the Nails*** Week Three

March 17th: Lenten Study ***He Chose the Nails*** Week Four

March 24th: Lenten Study ***He Chose the Nails*** Week Five

April 1st: Maundy Thursday Service with communion

He Chose the Nails is a 5 Week Video Series led by Pastor and author Max Lucado. This study explores the radical way that Jesus chose to interact with humanity. Every gift from God reveals his love, but no gift reveals his love more than the gifts of the cross. Have we taken time to open these? As we do, we find that Jesus did it all just for us. Unwrap the gifts of grace as if for the first time. And as you touch them, as you feel the timber of the cross and trace the braid of the crown and finger the point of the spike, pause and listen. Perchance you will hear him whisper: "I did it just for you."

### *From Trinity Tidings of Years Gone By —*

*May 1957*

I Believe in the rural church. I believe its progress is fundamental to the future welfare of the nation.

I Believe in the rural community; in its neighborliness; in its serving institutions; in its creative environment of understanding and sympathy.

I Believe in rural people; in the integrity of the men and women of the soil; in the hopes and dreams of their sons and daughters; in their need of Christ.

I Believe in the rural Christ. He was one who loved the flocks and fields, the birds and trees, ripening wheat bending before the clear blowing breeze. He loved the sons of the soil.

I Believe in the new day dawning for Christianizing rural life, the children of the countryside, rural communities and their institutions. I seek rural life for Christ. I believe community religion is essential for any present-day portrayal of Christ. I rejoice to have some part in the growth "Toward a Christian America!"

# Christian Education News!!!!

## TEACHERS

THRIVE Teachers: Dan G., Nyla D., Jan C.

Date	2-3 Nursery	PreK Teacher	K-2 Teacher
Week 1	Rebecca R.	Desirae M.	Kylene L.
Week 2	Faith S.	Brittany W.	Janene L.
Week 3	Jen L.	Ashley G.	Ashley Z.
Week 4	LouAnn Z.	Casi J.	Jamie K.

Branching Out returns on February 7th during the worship service for Preschool and K-2nd classes.

THRIVE returns on February 7th after the service for 3rd-6th graders.

## TITHE.LY



Men's Breakfast Is Back!!!! Men are invited to join us on Sunday, March 7th at 7:30am. If you are interested in serving a meal, or would like more information, please contact Ed G.

Giving to your local church using [Tithe.ly](https://www.tithe.ly) is super easy! We offer a number of different ways to give to your church, which we'll outline in this article.

### #1 - GIVE ON YOUR CHURCH WEBSITE

The recommended way to give is to go through your church's website. They likely have a section titled "Giving" or "Online Giving" where you can give using the Tithe.ly platform. If they do not have that, you can use one of the methods listed below.

### #2 - GIVE ONLINE

If you're on a computer (or any device with an internet connection), you can easily give to your church by heading to [Tithe.ly/Give](https://www.tithe.ly/Give). Once there, search for your church, and fill in the giving form.

### #3 - GIVE IN APP

Want to give to your church using the convenience of your smartphone? No problem! Download the Tithe.ly App from the [App Store](https://www.tithe.ly) (iPhone) or [Google Play Store](https://www.tithe.ly) (Android). Once you've downloaded the app, create an account or log in, locate your church and tap "Give Now" to complete your gift!



## MEMORIAL THANK YOU

We have created a direct link on our website for our weekly services!

If Facebook would happen to have any issues, please use the link below to find the service.

[http://  
www.trinityelliston.org/  
livestream.html](http://www.trinityelliston.org/livestream.html)



### Memorial Thank You

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the families of Evelyn Schimming, Glenn Sager, & Lavonna Bittner. We would like to thank the following for their memorials given in her name.

John & Jackie Bast

## TABLE & CHAIR SIGN-OUT

Just a reminder with holidays and family gathering season upon us, the sign out sheet for the tables and chairs is located in the closet across from the office.

Please contact the office to make sure you are on the list for the date you would like the tables and chairs.

The ONLY tables that are to leave the building are the older wooden style tables. The ONLY chairs that are to leave the building are the wooden chairs. The tables and chairs that can be taken out, are all located in the shed.

## HALL USE RESERVATIONS

There are forms on the wall next to the calendar. You are now required to fill out a form for any event that you would like to have in the church (including any rollover event for holiday parties-rollover dates will be allowed, but we would like the forms filled out as well). Please do not just write it on the calendar any more. Once it is reviewed, it will be added to the calendar. If you have any questions, please contact Rhonda.

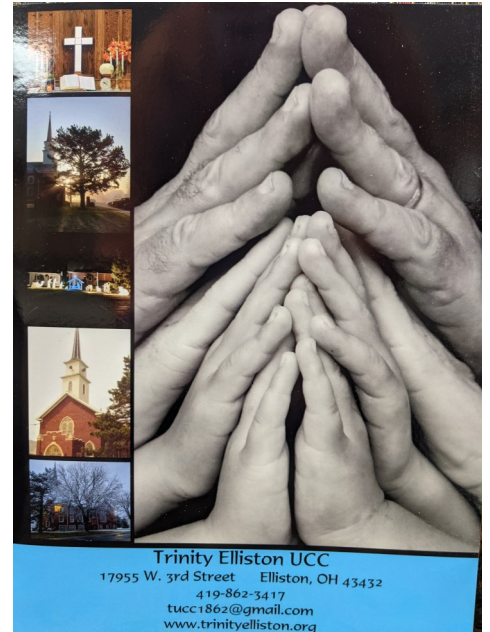
6

Just a reminder that the photo directories are in!

If you had your photo taken/turned in a photo, you have a book with your label on it waiting for you on the table by the elevator.

If you didn't get your photo taken, there are extra books on the table as well.

Enjoy our new directory!



2020 End of the Year Giving Statements are available on the table by the elevator.

2021 Giving Envelopes are on the table by the elevator. If you don't see one for you and you'd like some, please contact the church office.

## MEDICAL LENDING SUPPLIES

It has been wonderful to see the medical supplies donated to Trinity. The basement kitchen area is nearly overflowing, thanks to all of you. That being said, it also bears repeating that those items are available for YOUR use! There are a few wheelchairs, arm slings, compression stockings, and even a shower bag for a cast, to name a few. How about a massage cushion? Some items might come in handy for first aid such as Ace wraps and Band-Aids. So please think of TUCC for yourselves or those loved ones in times of need. Ask any of our medical professionals for help if needed. Thanks! Robin Hansen.



### THANK YOU'S

“I would like to say thank you to the congregation for my bonus that I received. I would also like to say thank you to the people that thought about me during the Christmas time and the gift that was given to me by the church. I really appreciate all of you.”

~Amy Mathews

“Thank you for the Christmas gift plate of goodies. It made our day.”

~Helen & Doyle Sommer

“Thank you to the women’s fellowship for the donation to mission and efforts of Cherry Street Mission.”

~Cherry Street Mission

“A very big thank you to the congregation for the bonus and the Christmas gift. I greatly appreciate it.”

~Rhonda Mahaney

“I wish to say thank you to the carolers for their visit also thank you for the goodies. I really enjoyed them.”

~Vi Gahler

“Thank you for your donation to the Elmore Food Pantry. The generosity of people like you is what feeds our hungry neighbors. Your donation is appreciated by all of us who volunteer at the pantry, and by those whom we serve. May you be blessed in your giving.”

~Elmore Food Pantry

“Thank you so much for your recent contribution to the Genoa Area Community Food Pantry. In the troubling times we are experiencing, this donation will help the food pantry to continue its mission of serving community members in need.”

~Genoa Area Food Pantry

“Thank you church family for all your cards, prayers and warm wishes for a speedy recovery. I am making progress daily. Thank you.”

~Jay Hellwig

## FEBRUARY MISSION SPOTLIGHT

### GRACE COMMUNITY CENTER:

Grace Community Center is a person-oriented organization that began as a church mission of the United Church of Christ in 1969. Throughout its history Grace's concerns have been governed by its commitment to enhance community improvement through encouraging self-determination by its neighborhood residents and providing supportive services. Grace serves an area of approximately 5,000 residents, with 48% poverty rate. Single females head over 60% of the households with several school-age children. Today, the Center offers year-round education and social development programs to young people, family case management, employment and career development, GED preparation for adults, youth development and leadership programs, countless recreation programs, and collaboration with many social service organizations, to better the lives of hundreds of families in the Center's service area.

The Center's mission is "to encourage personal development and self-actualization of individuals. Promoting and supporting social action efforts, that supports and promotes the growth of individuals and families." The work of Grace Center is family focused, creating both self-sufficiency and self-actualization. The Center focuses on educating low-income single moms, developing self-esteem opportunities, seeking, and providing opportunities to assist them to become more employable and therefore more stable. Grace is also dedicated to preserving the neighborhood where Grace is located, promoting, and advocating the building and renovation of homes, safe streets, and community partnerships.

Current programs offered by Grace include:

The Grace Garden Co-Op bringing fresh produce to the inner-city neighborhood

The Savvy Seniors Club providing activities for senior citizens to keep them mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy.

The Grace Food Pantry providing food assistance to needy families.

Adult Mentoring including a Mom's Club and a Dad's Club.

A wide variety of youth programs including STEM education, after school tutoring, mentoring programs, athletic programs, and summer day camp programs.

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PLACE  
STAMP  
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### Trinity UCC

17955 W 3rd Street  
Elliston, OH 43432

Phone: 419-862-3417

E-mail: [tucc1862@gmail.com](mailto:tucc1862@gmail.com)

Facebook:

[trinityunitedchurchofchristElliston](https://www.facebook.com/trinityunitedchurchofchristElliston)

YouTube: Trinity Elliston

Website: [trinityelliston.org](http://trinityelliston.org)

Pastor Ryan Shields

[ryandshields@outlook.com](mailto:ryandshields@outlook.com)

419-410-5309

