Augustinian

Augustus Lutheran Church **An Historic Church for Today's People**



DECEMBER 2023

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Giving is the language of love, and Christmas epitomizes God's awesome love and giving to us. God knew what we needed the most, so, at this time approximately 2,000 years ago, he gave us the most indescribable gift: "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (Galatians 4:4). God's gift of his Son is the greatest gift that we will ever receive. God's gift truly keeps on giving for, through Jesus, we receive full rights as children of God.

As God's children, we know that the Jesus is the reason for the season. We rejoice knowing that God has given us his Son. God has sent him into the world to be the only gift that we need. Jesus took on our own flesh and walked among us, and he willingly laid down his life in order to save our lives for eternity.

How do we respond to what God has given us? Shouldn't we be asking, "What have I given to him?" Certainly, we don't go to the malls to shop for Jesus, but we do know that we please him by our faithful acts of love and obedience. The best gift that we can possibly give him is our hearts and to show him our love by faithfully and obediently doing what he asks of us. Our heavenly Father is pleased when we seek to please him by doing his will. In fact, we do his will by merely allowing him to work in us. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

During this Christmas season, remember that, even though we don't gift-wrap gifts for Jesus, we can give him the gifts of our love and obedience.

May God's blessings be upon all of you as you rejoice and stay focused on the most indescribable gift, the gift of Jesus.

Have a blessed Christmas!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Weleck

Christmas Eve Schedule (December 24, 2023)

8:00 a.m. – Christmas Service (Brick Church Chapel) No Sunday School and no 10:30 a.m. service

5:00 p.m. – Living Nativity (Old Church – Dress warmly and bring a flashlight)

7:00 p.m. – Family Service of Lessons & Carols (Old Church – Dress warmly and bring a flashlight)

9:00 p.m. – Candlelight Carol Communion (Heated Brick Church Nave)



From the Bench



Dear friends,

I hope you have our Christmas Concert on your calendar – **Sunday, December 10**th **at 4 pm**. No tickets required! We'll open with a prelude by Augustus' Bell Choir. Then, accompanied by a 10-piece orchestra of strings, woodwinds, harp, trumpet, organ, and a community choir of over 30 singers, we will both hear and sing songs of Christmas. Lately, I've realized that while the radio stations start playing Christmas carols at Halloween, there is not a good place to **sing** them **together**. There is nothing like group-singing of Christmas carols. So come and help keep the tradition of carol-singing alive! The program is called "A Celebration of Carols" by Joseph Martin. And the icing on the cake will be a light reception with hot and cold cider, hot chocolate, and Christmas cookies. Huge thanks to all our patrons and advertisers for helping to underwrite the cost of the orchestra and printing. The concert free-will offering is our annual fundraiser for the music department. Please invite your friends of all ages and come!

This year, Christmas Eve is on Sunday. We have four (4) worship opportunities that day – all celebrating Christmas. Our morning 8:00 am service in the chapel will focus on Christmas. If you are a person who doesn't like to drive at night, this is the service for you! Although there will be no 10:30 am service, we will have our usual three evening services on Christmas Eve (5pm and 7 pm in Old Church, 9 pm in heated Brick Church).

The following Sunday, December 30th, we will have one service of Lessons and Carols at 9:30 am in Brick Church.

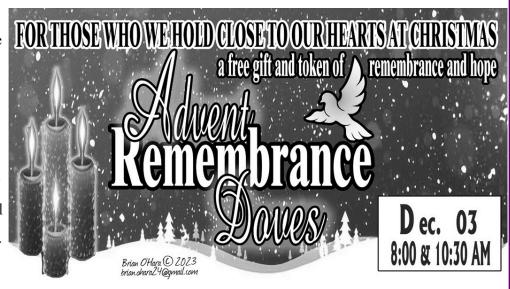
So many reasons to celebrate, most of all that God loved us so much that he sent Jesus to be our Savior. Joy and peace to you this season!

~Laurie Mueller

OUTREACH COMMITTEE ADVENT REMEMBRANCE DOVES

A Pair of Doves spiritually represent love, friendship, and peace. When two doves couple together, they enter into partnership for a lifetime. A pair of doves can signify a union of two or more people or entities with a positive outlook for the future. At Christmas, people tend to remember those that have gone before them. If

you are thinking of someone special this Christmas Season, we will be offering you two free remembrance doves in memory of that person. One to keep to adorn your Christmas Tree reminding you of their presence throughout the season, and one to leave at Augustus adorning the Christmas Tree in the nave to remind you that they are with Jesus, the one we are celebrating at Christmas. The doves will be made available on the first Sunday of Advent on December 03, 2023. Be present to receive yours!



Gracious Givers

Lay Reader Message

Jesus, the Light

Are you waiting for something that seems to be too long in coming? Maybe it's a job promotion or a raise. Maybe it's just employment of any kind! Perhaps you've been praying for someone's salvation, and you don't see any sign of God's working in that person. It's difficult to wait. People in Jesus' day were waiting for a Messiah. It seemed to many that his coming was long overdue, but Paul writes in Galatians 4:4-5, "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." Our waiting is over! The Light has come into the world!

Simeon was one who knew that "the time had fully come," and "moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts" (Luke 2:27). There he saw the child whose parents brought him there to fulfill what the Law required of them. Simeon knew Jesus was the light. He proclaimed, "For my eyes have seen your salvation . . . a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:30, 32).

Unfortunately, not all who were waiting for the Messiah recognized him when he came. In John 1:4-5 we read, "In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it." Still today the darkness misunderstands the Light. Yet he continues to shine, and, as he shines, he dispels darkness.

And he calls upon us to shine also. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, described a lamp that is put on a stand so that it lights up the whole house. Then he said, "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

The only way to dispel darkness is to fill it with light. As stewards, it is our joyous task to be reflections of Christ's light. So we are "prepared in season and out of season: [we] correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2). We are always prepared "to give an answer to everyone who ask [us] to give the reason for the hope that [we] have. And we do so "with gentleness and respect keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against [our] good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander" (1 Peter 3:15-15). In this way we proclaim that the waiting is over! Jesus, the Light, has come into the world!

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Sunday School News!

Advent begins on December 3rd! Our 3-in-1 students have made Advent chains for our Sunday school students to countdown to Christmas. While they're counting, they'll be practicing the nativity program to be presented at the 10:30 service on December 17th. All children aged 3 through 6th grade are invited to participate in the program and they always do a great job—you won't want to miss it.

<u>Many thanks</u> to Ann Walker who made several beautiful new Bible times costumes for our children to wear in their nativity program!

After the nativity program, we will break for Christmas until January 7th when we will have a baby shower for Jesus and learn about the wise men who brought gifts to the Baby Jesus. Donations of diapers, wipes, and other baby necessities will go to needy families in our area through the St. James Outreach House in Collegeville.

On Christmas Eve, our 3-in-1 students and Senior High Youth Group will present a Living Nativity in the Old Church at 5 p.m.

There's no better place to celebrate Advent and Christmas than Augustus, thanks to our amazing young people!

Grace & peace,

Sonya Sowards Director of Christian Education





SENIOR YOUTH GROUP NEWS

The Senior Youth Group would like thank all those who participated in Trunk or Treat in October. We had 16 cars decorated and over 150 attendees. We'd also like to thank all those who supported us in our Apple Pie fundraiser. We made 110 pies this year.

In December we'll be attending the Trappe tree lighting, we'll be having our annual Christmas Party and we'll be handing out Christmas cookies to the congregation. On the 3rd Sunday in January, February and March we'll be having our soup sales. If you'd like to make soups for us, it would be much appreciated.

The SYG will have openings for two leaders beginning in September of 2024. If you're interested in being a leader, please reach out to one of us for more information. The current leaders have been doing this a long time and we'll be stepping aside over the next 2 years. It's a very rewarding experience and we'd like to pass on our knowledge to a new group of leaders. New people bring new ideas and that is always a good thing.

Thank you for your support throughout the year.

Chris Dogonniuck, <u>bulldog7224@comcast.net</u>
Cathy Meeley, <u>tcmeeley@verizon.net</u>
Joe Schaffer, <u>joe.schaffer.44@gmail.com</u>
Gary Wessner, <u>gtwess@comcast.net</u>



Annual Family Christmas Party!

Join the Augustus Family in preparing the House of the Lord for the Christmas Season. It takes many hands to get the church ready and we definitely need your help to make it happen! From decorating the tree in the nave, to hanging the garland and wreaths, there is lots to do in a short period of time. We will also be serving lunch...because a party without food is just a meeting. Look for details in the near future and a sign-up sheet in the Muhlenberg Center. Contact Brian O'Hara or 610-489-0417 for more details. The event is sponsored by the Outreach Commit**tee** and is open to the entire Augustus Lutheran Church Family.

Sunday School Christmas Pageant!

Nothing is more precious than watching a children's production at Christmas. You will not want to miss this event! The Augustus Lutheran Church Sunday School will perform their annual Christmas Pageant during the 10:30 AM service on Sunday December 17, 2023 in the Brick Church. This is a fantastic church service for both adults and children alike and enjoyed by all. Start your Christmas family tradition at Augustus!



2023 Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

Mail to: Karen Lachenmayer Phone: 610-715-4850

412 Dartmoor Road E-mail: karenlachenmayer@gmail.com

Schwenksville, Pa. 19473



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Christmas Poinsettias

The **Outreach Committee** is once again hard at work preparing the church for Christmas. We have an opportunity for every member of the congregation to join in this church-wide endeavor.

Every year, the **Worship & Music Committee** provides a vehicle for every congregant to facilitate the decorating of the church for Christmas. We are asking that you prayerfully consider buying at least one poinsettia this year to entrench the sanctuary in red and white. If you can do multiple poinsettias, that would be even more fantastic and appreciated. These embellishments can also be seen by those patrons who are watching our Christmas services at home.

Additionally, if you do not wish to take your poinsettia home with you after the Christmas Day service, please let us know on your form. The Outreach Committee will tag any donated plants with the Augustus Logo and a message of hope. The plants are then taken to assisted living homes and distributed to let the residents know that Augustus cares about them. So, every donation is greatly appreciated and nothing goes to waste. We hope that you will join us in this endeavor.





REMEMBER OVER CHRISTMAS

During the Holidays, consider sending a Christmas card to Augustus Family members who are ill, alone, or homebound.

Let them know they are in our thoughts during this special time of year.

Janet Saylor-Rhoads 111 Oak Street Gilbertsville, PA 19525

Dave and Fran Ivarson 602 Greenwood Avenue Collegeville, PA 19426

Helen Newton 837 South Trappe Road Collegeville, PA 19426

Muriel Ludwig 800 Maple Avenue 143 Westview Court Harleysville, PA 19438

Caesar Gorski 147 Bluebird Crossing Meadowood Sr. Living Lansdale, PA 19446

Marsha Llewellyn 74 East 5th Avenue, K102 Collegeville, PA 19426

Hazel Giera Parkhouse Nursing 1600 Black Rock Road Royersford, PA 19468 Dolores Allebach Parkhouse Nursing 1600 Black Rock Road Royersford, PA 19468

Phyllis Oehlert 51 W. Arcola Drive Apt. 401 Limerick, PA 19468

Elizabeth Rutter 30 Hockle Road Schwenksville, PA 19473

Peg Dewane 23231 Shannondell Drive Audubon, PA 19403

Jane Whitman 419 Park Avenue Collegeville, PA 19426

Shirley Latshaw 27 West Main Street Collegeville, PA 19426

Ron and Carol Oelschlager 32 Trappe Road Collegeville, PA 19426

Alice Franks 277 East Third Avenue Trappe, PA 19426

Nancy Clelland 180 Gatweay Drive Souderton, PA 18964

Sara Jane Shaffer 20 ½ Carhart Avenue Binghamton, NY 13905

Mr. and Mrs. David Cornish 85 Sixth Avenue Collegeville, PA 19426

Mr. and Mrs. James Lorah 145 Seventh Avenue Collegeville, PA 19426

Dorothy Moorehead 162 Pennapacker Road Trappe, PA 19426

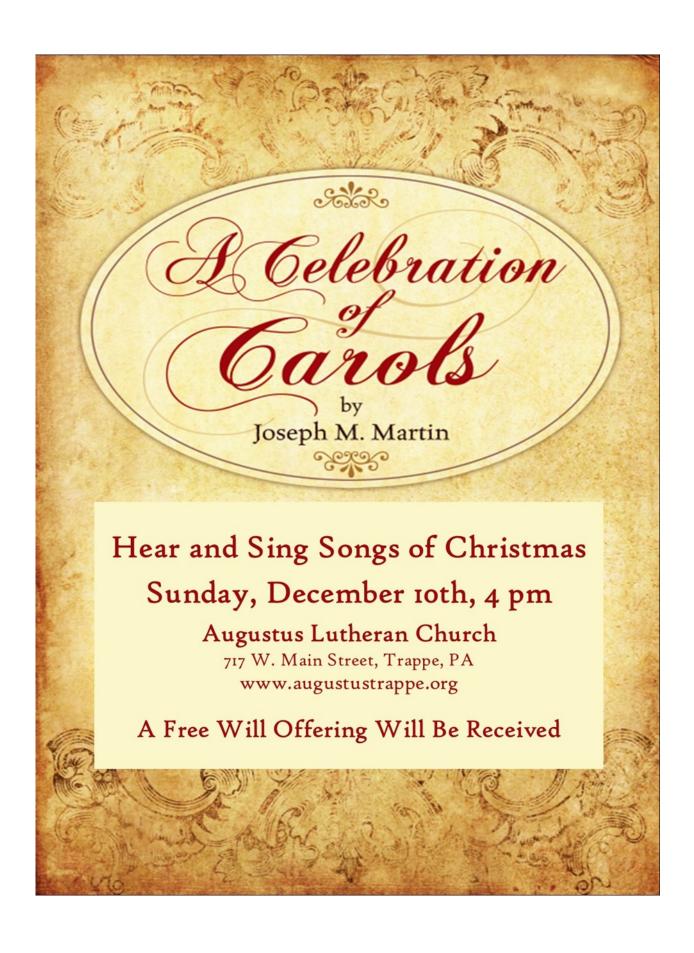
Frank DePaul 58 Saylor Road Schwenksville, PA 19473

Nate Judisch 20 Brookdale Drive Royersford, PA 19468

Looking for the Perfect Gift for Someone Who Has Everything?

In the Augustus Spirit of "helping our neighbors in need" consider making a donation to a favorite charity as a gift for friends or family. There are so many worthwhile organizations in our area and around the world! From the Daily Bread Food Pantry in Collegeville, to the Norristown Hospitality Center, Gemma Services in Philadelphia, our missionaries working through the ELCA, the Heiffer Project, numerous organizations helping children, working towards cures for diseases, ending homelessness, easing poverty...so many! What better way to give this Christmas?





Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

What Is a Steward?

"A steward is more than a servant, slave, or 'organizational church member.' A steward is one who, having received a trust from God, is in partnership with God through Christ for the working out of God's purposes for man and the world" (Joseph F. Jones).

Testing your Knowledge of Scripture

Can you identify who the following person may represent in Scripture?



If you said the widow in the story of the widow's mite, you were right. In Luke 21:1-4 we read, "As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 'I tell you the truth,' he said, this

poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.' "Jesus commends the widow, who gave all that she had, not just the excess, as the others did. This story tells us that the level of generosity is much more important than the size of the gift. Even though she gave the last of her money, the widow did not expect to go hungry because she knew God would provide. She gave sacrificially, knowing that God would take care of her. Giving is an act of trust.

Whom or What Are You Trusting?

Lack of trust is a major hindrance to our growth as stewards. Do we trust ourselves, someone else, or things rather than God? If our trust is misdirected, our fellowship with God will suffer, and we will not be fruitful stewards. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Where is our trust?

Having checking and savings accounts with adequate funds is helpful, but we must always remember that wealth in and of itself does not fulfill us nor provide any lasting value, happiness, or security. Money can deceive us in subtle ways. Do you find yourself worrying whether or not you have enough money? Do you hoard it? Is money your security and the topic that occupies your thoughts?

When we give in to our natural tendency to want to accumulate, we begin to think that we need many things. As our incomes grow, so do our wants and desires. We see money as the way to happiness. We think that, when we have money, we have all we need and become self-reliant. Unless we make the decision, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to live more simply and care more intentionally for others, we will

spend all that we have on ourselves (we may even spend more than we have).

Our attitude toward money and things can change when we begin to trust God and his presence and provision. As the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:19:

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches."

When we become more zealous to choose God's ways, we will experience his promises, comfort, and peace that result. We will find that God's grace is sufficient for all of our needs.

God will grant us the strength not to succumb to the temptation to trust money and possessions. He will grant us the sight to see the pull that our materialistic world has on us as well as the understanding that we will find lasting peace and contentment only in Christ. As Jesus said: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

On the Lighter Side

Three young boys were bragging about their fathers.

One of the boys said, "My dad works in the office, and he sits behind a desk and makes \$50 an hour."

The son of an attorney said, "That's nothing. My dad talks on the telephone for half an hour and makes \$75."

Not to be outdone, the son of a pastor said, "That's still nothing. My dad talks for 20 minutes, and it takes four people to collect all the money."



A Stewardship Thought

Our relationship with Christ makes it possible for us to be content in all circumstances. Without Christ we will never be satisfied. We are, by nature, people who have insatiable appetites for more things, success, and power. A relationship with Christ quenches our worldly appetites and brings about a redirection of interests to eternal things. We become willing to accept God's will and learn to be satisfied with what God gives us.

A Christian steward does not dedicate his time, talent, and treasure that they may become God's, but because they are God's.

Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!

Augustus Book Club

The next meeting of the Augustus Book Club will be held on Monday, December 18 2023 at 7:00 pm in the home of one of our members. We will discuss our favorite books, have some refreshments, and generally relax and have fun. We might even do a craft! Want more info?

Contact Karen McClain 610-489-9625 or office@augustustrappe.org





Church Office Hours Over the Holidays

The Church Office will close at noon on December 22nd.

The Office will be closed on December 25th, 28th, 29th, and January 1, 2024

Normal Office hours resume January 2, 2024

One of the greatest gifts you can give is your time.

Contact the church office to help with our weekly worship. 610-489-9625 or office@augustustrappe.org



Before It Was Known as Augustus Lutheran Church

Most of us accept the fact that the Old Church, the Brick Church, and the Parsonage have always been there, but have you ever wondered what it was like before the Rev. Henry Muhlenberg arrived in the Colony of Pennsylvania? How did this congregation begin in the early 1700's?

So, the story begins in 1717 when the first German settlers, John Jacob Schrack and his family, purchased 250 acres of land in an area which is known today as Trappe. Soon other German Lutheran settlers followed him into this region. As this area became more populated, the courts created "Providence Township" in the County of Philadelphia in March of 1729.

The earliest record that I found regarding the establishment of a Lutheran Congregation in Trappe was a land purchase. On December 20, 1722, Herman IndeHaven sold 1 acre (42 perches by 4 perches or 65 feet by 693 feet) to "Nicholas Cressman and Frederick Marstellar – Church Wardens of the "**Dutch Lutheran Congregation and their Society**". It is likely that a barn was erected on this property, which was used for worship services. It is also likely that the land was used for burials.

In the 1720-30's, there was a lack of German Lutheran ministers in the colony of Pennsylvania. There were, however, itinerant ministers (including Swedish Lutheran ministers) who would occasionally hold a worship service in the barn, but, in general, the German Lutherans were not particularly fond of the Swedish Lutherans. So, the elders and wardens of the Dutch Lutheran Congregation of Providence (Jacob Schrack, Nicholas Cressman and Frederick Marstellar for example), would periodically request pastoral aid from Germany.

The first written records of the Congregation at Providence were recorded by John Casper Stover in 1730 when he recorded the baptism of Amelia Elizabeth Marstaller. At that time, he was not an ordained minister. Stover recorded births and marriages for the Providence Congregation. Burials were not recorded until 1745 under the direction of the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg.

The first pastor of whom we have some knowledge was John Christian Schultze. He arrived from Germany in September 1732. It should be noted that no records were found regarding his ordination so there are serious doubts that he was an ordained Lutheran minister. In any event, he was the pastor for the Philadelphia, Providence, and New Hanover congregations. He worshipped in the barn in Providence but left no record of any pastoral acts. He remained here a few months, as in the spring of 1733 he was commissioned by the three congregations, to go back to England and Germany and raise money for the building of the Churches and to secure additional pastors. Unfortunately, he never returned because he was arrested (on more than one occasion) for misappropriation of the funds he collected. Before Schultze left for Germany, he ordained John Casper Stover in the spring of 1733, who took charge of the Providence Congregation but only for a short time. Stover left the area in the spring of 1734 for Lancaster County where he continued his Lutheran ministry. He did come back occasionally to the Trappe area and conducted worship services in the barn.

Requests for a German Lutheran Pastor to come to Pennsylvania were sent by representatives of the three congregations (Providence, Philadelphia, and New Hanover) to the Halle Foundation in Germany and the Court Chaplin in London. It was in 1742 that the requests were answered when the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg graciously accepted the call to come to Pennsylvania. He met with the Church leaders of the Providence Congregation in November 1742. He preached several times in the barn and was accepted by the congregation in late December 1742. He continued to worship in the barn until the new structure was completed. It should be noted that Henry Muhlenberg



called the congregation the "Providence Congregation" and not the Trappe Congregation because the village of Trappe did not formally exist until about 1765.

Rev. Henry Muhlenberg was a "take charge" individual and he soon realized that the barn was too small to serve as a Church so in January 1743, he drew up plans for the new church. It was to be built of stone and not wood measuring 39 shoes wide by 54 shoes long. Stone was the material of choice because wood structures decayed much too rapidly in this area. The land for the building was purchased by the Congregation in March 1743 and consisted of two adjacent one-acre tracks of land. Each lot measured 65 feet wide by 693 feet long.

The reason for the long narrow lots was all about taxes. All properties were taxed based on the frontage and 65 feet was the best value for the lowest amount of taxes. Churches were not exempt from paying taxes.

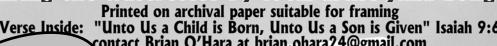
Construction of the church began in May 1743 and the building was under roof by the end of August 1743. The first service was in September 1743 in the building with an unfinished interior (i.e., no pews, pulpit, or galleries). Work on the interior continued and in October 1745, when the interior was finished and the debt was paid off, the Rev. Muhlenberg dedicated the Church to "the Society holding the Augsburg Confession" and named it Augustus after the founder of the Halle Foundation (August Hermann Francke).

Submitted by Pat O'Hara

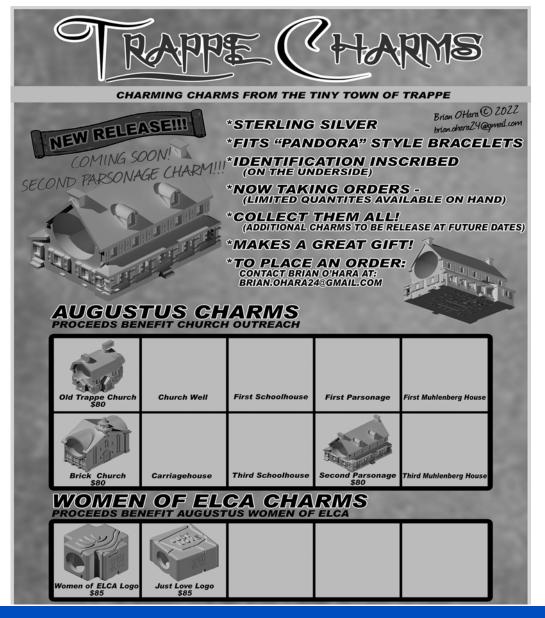


OLD TRAPPE CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARDS

Featuring the watercolor by local artist Julia Longacre







Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
***	D	ece	mbe	er	1	2
3 Advent I 8:00 am Holy Communion 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion *Remembrance Doves!	4	5 7:00 pm Vestry Meeting	6 9:30 am Quilting 1:00 pm Staff Luncheon 6:00 PM 3-in-1 6:00 PM Sr. Youth Group	7 6:00 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Vocal Choir	8	9 9:00 am Christ- mas Decora ing Party
10 Advent II 8:00 am Holy Communion 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Holy Communion 4:00 pm Christmas Concert	11 7:00 pm Knit & Crochet	7:00 pm Community Club	13 9:00 am Soup Kitchen 6:00 pm 3-in-1	14 7:00 pm Vocal Choir	15	16 5:00 pm Sr. Youth Cook Making/ Christmas Party
17 Advent III 18 8:00 am Holy Communion 9:00 am Adult Bible Study 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am The Service with Children's Christmas Program 11:30 am Living Nativity Practice	7:00 pm Book Club Christmas Party	19 9:30 am Quilting	20 2:00 pm Staff Meeting 6:00 pm 3-in-1	21 7:00 pm Vocal Choir	22 Office Closes at Noon	23
24 Christmas Eve 8:00 AM Holy Communion NO Sunday School	25 Christmas Day	26 NO Committee Night	27 NO 3-in-1	28 NO Choirs Office Closed	29 Office	30
5:00 pm Family Service 7:00 pm Candlelight Service 9:00 pm Candlelight Communion Service	Office Closed				Closed	
31 New Year's Eve NO Sunday School	ماد	▲ s ∧ ¢		J JY4 :	♦ ₩	

