



Rev. Dr. Keith A. Blank, Pastor

**From
Pastor
Keith**



"I Wonder as I Wander"

I wonder as I wander out under the sky
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor on'ry people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander out under the sky
When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow's stall
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all
But high from God's heaven, a star's light did fall
And the promise of ages it then did recall.
If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing
A star in the sky or a bird on the wing
Or all of God's Angels in heaven to sing
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

Songwriters: JOHN NILES, BARRY WALSH, GRETCHEN PETERS

Whether you've lived in the same place your entire life, or you've relocated numerous times, you have a wanderer's soul. When you think about it, each of us is prone to wander from God. The season of Advent holds an invitation for all of us to readjust ourselves and discover the wonder of a life-changing journey toward Bethlehem...and beyond. This year, I am inviting all of you to take your families and friends on that journey.

Proverbs 27:8 says: "Like a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man who wanders from his home." We are born seekers...we know in our souls that there must be something more than the here and now of the world around us. But we also know that sometimes our seeking hearts can launch us on journeys that lead nowhere.

The melody and lyrics of the beloved carol quoted above capture the situation well for all of us. Originally an Appalachian folk song, the words call each one of us to step outside of our normally scheduled lives and into a journey meant to orient our souls toward the One who came seeking each one of us.

Christmas season has the effect on us...our minds wander back to our own childhood and we wonder where has it all gone.

In a culture where commercial celebrations of Christmas seem to begin a little earlier every year, (I saw decorations in the stores before Halloween), Advent is a call to step off the pop culture superhighway and take the scenic route as we wander toward Bethlehem. Whether this is your first Advent or your eightieth, the journey is new every year. As we walk through time this Advent, we're invited, (and we should invite others), to hear the story and wonder as we wander, discovering anew the wonder of God's gift to us, His son, Jesus.

In real life our wanderings have often led us away from God and all that He has for us. Let us learn and teach the lessons of Advent this year and go into the month of January, knowing that the wandering and wondering is meant to continue, for all of our lives!

The first few pages of the Bible contain the beginning of mankind's "prone to wander hearts and souls." In those pages, we discover that our first parents, Adam and Eve, first wandered from God when together they chose to disobey Him. As a consequence of that choice, God sent them from the perfect home that He had created for them, into a world that was hostile in many ways. There was no way of return to Eden.

Though the journey from Eden has given humanity a history full of pain and sorrow, there is also grace embedded in our wandering. The impossibility of a return to the Garden has meant that we have been given the opportunity to learn to walk with God as we move toward a destination we can't begin to fully imagine or understand.

Again, and again, Scripture shows and tells us that His ways are not our ways. The Bible shows us how God uses imperfect people, ordinary places, and impossible circumstances to unfold His perfect plan to rescue and redeem prone-to-wander humans like you and I. So, during Advent, the question to wander about is what is He trying to tell you specifically, that would call you and your loved ones into a closer relationship with Him?

Know that His grace is always at work in your lives...YES, even during this busy season of man-made distractions and celebrations, he is calling the faithful to rejoice in the story. Think about who you would like to invite to hear it...and truly celebrate! Will you wander aimlessly or will you wonder with purpose for the kingdom? As always, the season itself is calling us to commit to HIM.

Blessings to you all in this season and in the new year!

Pastor Keith

Note: Parts of this article were reprinted from an Advent Devotional Booklet with the same title, written by Michelle Van Loon, @2019 Creative Communications for the Parish, www.creativecommunications.com.



Youth & Family Ministry Page

B.L.A.S. †: The BLAST program is run in a similar fashion as the VBS program we offer in the summer. We start with providing a kid friendly meal, followed by a time of worship with music and the re-viewing of memorized bible verses. We then separate the children into two age-appropriate groups. One group will go to craft/prayer time and the other group will go to bible story/game time. After 30 minutes the groups switch. We end the evening by gathering both groups together again to sing and pray before dismissal. The program runs Wednesday evenings throughout the school year. It is not too late to enroll a child.



We just finished a lesson series on the importance of forgiveness and are currently working on the “superheroes” of the bible. As we approach the holiday season, we look forward to sharing the Christmas Story and the birth of our Savior.

Our weekly attendance average is approximately 17 children an evening. We also have approximately five helpers from Youth group who come to help each evening with the program.

This is an exciting and rewarding opportunity to come along side these children, to disciple them and watch them grow in faith. Please prayerfully consider joining us. You won't regret it!!!!



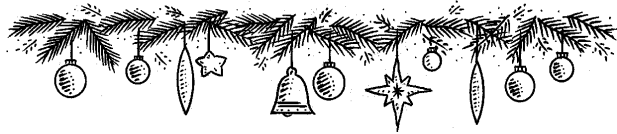
Youth Group: On November 8 & 9, we had our annual 30-hour famine and did a lot of fun things. We started the weekend off with a movie night, had a few lessons on fasting and what it says in the bible, played a lot of games, laughed a lot to distract ourselves from the hunger and ended the fast by attending the Joyce Meyer conference in Hershey. We broke our fast at Kentucky Fried Chicken. Please continue to pray over these teens as they are just starting their walk with Christ.

A Christmas party and gift exchange is planned for the youth group in December. In February, the Youth group will be hosting a night out to a Hershey Bears hockey game and we hope you will consider joining us! Please watch the bulletin for details in the near future.

As we enter the Advent Season, I would like to challenge everyone to bring/invite a friend to church. As members of the Body of Christ we are charged with sharing the good news of the Gospel. Remember, inviting people to church is something easy to do.

In closing I hope you and yours have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

God's Blessings,
Cathy Shaffer
 Director of Youth and Family Ministry
 trinityecyouth@gmail.com



**Advent Season Begins
Sunday, December 1st**

Join Us at
Advent Worship



The Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as we anticipate Jesus' birth. The wreath's circular shape symbolizes eternity, or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World — he brought light and life to a dark world. On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light a new candle. As the light grows, so does our hope and joy. Join us this Advent Season as we prepare for the birth of our Savior!

Communion Sunday

December 15, 2019

Communion will be served at the 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. worship services.



*Christmas Eve
Candlelight Services*

You are warmly invited to join us for our Christmas Eve services as we celebrate the birth of God's son, Jesus Christ.

Tuesday, December 24, 2019

6:00 PM - Contemporary Worship in Fellowship Hall
8:00 PM - Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary



Sunday,
January 5, 2020

SERVICE OF
Remembrance

During worship services on January 5, we will have communion and also take time to remember all those members who have gone to be with our Lord over this past year. Gone but not forgotten as of October 31, 2019 are:

William Fortney
Jim Behney
Nancy Kohl
Nick Roganish

Margaret Morris
Midge Dengler
Martha Wright
Betty Lego

Join us for Trinity Choir's Christmas Cantata



THERE IS
peace in the world
TONIGHT

By Randy Vader & Jay Rouse

Sunday, December 15, 2019 ~ 6:30 PM

"Peace is not the absence of conflict - Peace is the presence of God."

Trinity Evangelical Congregational Church ~ 165 N. 67th Street ~ Harrisburg PA ~ 17111

Join us for Tuesday Adult Bible Study on the Gospel of Luke

9:00 - 10:30 a.m. & 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Bible Study meets on Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. and if you can't make that time, the same study is repeated Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m. Both classes meet in the Library every Tuesday. Call the church office at 717-564-1528 with questions or if you would like to attend.

Trinity Prayer Time

A Tuesday Evening Prayer Gathering

We are a group of people who meet to pray every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. in Trinity's Adult Sunday school room. It's an informal time of prayer. We open with a song and a brief devotional about prayer. Prayer concerns are mentioned and the praying begins. Join us when you can.

B.L.A.S.T.! Kids Program

Building Lives Around Solid Truths!

For ages 3 to 5th grade. The evening begins with a light meal from 5:30-6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall and then B.L.A.S.T.! from 6-7:30 p.m. with songs, bible verses, bible stories, and a craft/prayer time. Email Cathy Shaffer with questions at trinityecyouth@gmail.com or call 717-564-1528.

ODB (Our Daily Bread) Men's Breakfast

Thursday mornings @ 7:30 a.m.

Promenade Restaurant on Derry Street

Join Pastor Keith for food, fellowship and faith! No need to call ahead, just show up and bring a friend!

What is Trinity Seniors?

Trinity Seniors is a community-wide Senior Citizens Ministry that allows us to outreach to all senior citizens in the Rutherford area. We meet in Fellowship Hall at noon the second Wednesday of each month (except December). Lunch is provided for a nominal fee of \$5.00 and there is a variety of programs of interest to senior citizens. The next gathering is January 8, 2020. All seniors in Rutherford are invited to attend. This is a great opportunity to mingle with your neighbors and friends. Join us and bring a friend for this time of food, fun, fellowship, & faith!

Remembering Our Homebound Members and Friends this Holiday Season



We have several members and friends who are homebound or in assisted living. If you would like to help brighten their day by sending them a card or note to let them know they are thought of, please email or call the church office for names and addresses at 717-564-1528 or trinityecchurch@verizon.net.

When bad weather hits . . .

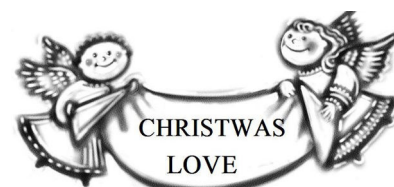
and worship services/programs must be cancelled, look for "Trinity E.C. Church - *Rutherford*" on the following television stations WGAL-NBC 8, WHTM-ABC 27, WHP-CBS 21 or The CW-15. Please make sure you see or hear "*Rutherford*" which will differentiate our church from the other Trinity churches in the area.

Upside Down?


Even amid increased secularization, God makes the core Christmas message known. Take, for example, the story of a "winter pageant" a mother attended at her son's grade school. Songs of reindeer, snow and Santa included one titled "Christmas Love," in which the youngest performers held up letters as the song progressed: "C," "H," etc.

When a little girl unknowingly held her "M" upside down, the older kids snickered and the adult audience smiled acceptingly. But as the song drew to a close and all the letters were revealed, surprised recognition struck the Christians in the room.

"CHRISTWAS LOVE," read the string of student-borne letters. God's truth had penetrated the human clutter and confusion around Christmas — as it has power to do throughout our lives: "Christ was love." And of course, he still is.




Activities Page

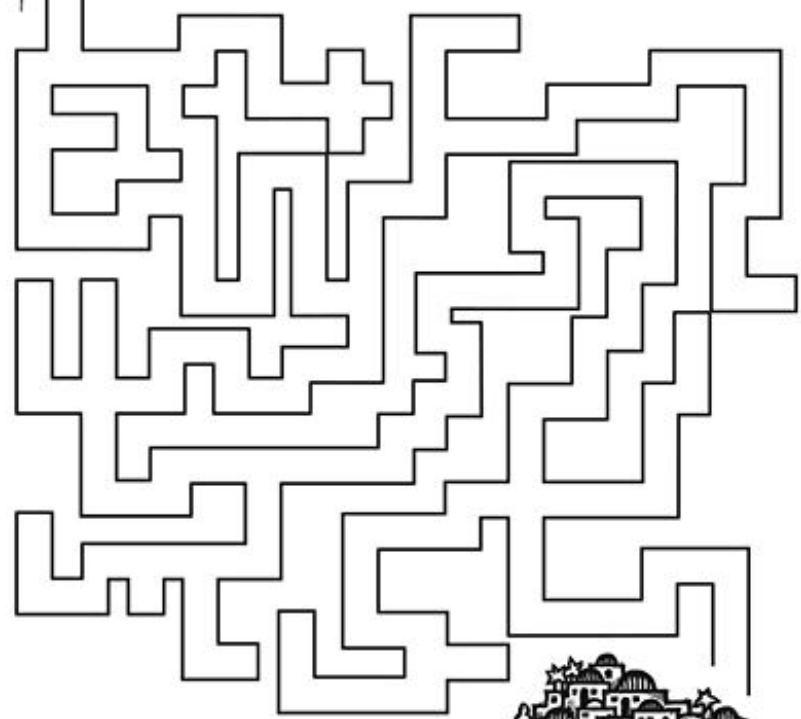


PUZZLE


JOURNEY TO
BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

 **START** *Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.*



BETHLEHEM



CHRISTMAS

joy

Make this fun decoration as a reminder of the joy Jesus brings.



What you need:

- Pencil
- Poster board
- Scissors
- Craft pom-poms (red, white, green, silver, gold)
- Glue

What you do:

1. Trace large capital block letters J, O and Y on the poster board.
2. Cut out the letters.
3. Glue pom-poms on one side of each letter, completely covering it.
4. Share JOY by displaying the letters in your home.