



Volume 8, Issue 12
2023
December

The Trinity Times



December



WE RANG THE BELL!

If you were shopping at the Lebanon Market on Saturday, November 11 between 9 & 2, you probably saw familiar faces ringing the bell for the Salvation Army. We thank Barb & Dave Wallett, Reba Sterner, Sally DeJesus, and Dean Zehring for representing Trinity in this important mission!



Note from the Director:

*Hi Sally,
I wanted to thank you for organizing your team from Trinity United Methodist Church for bell ringing this past weekend. You genuinely have compassion for others in the community.
Thank you, Terry Weaver*



First Sunday of Advent

December 3 is the first Sunday in Advent. The secular world has been putting out Christmas decorations even before summer was over, but for Christians, Advent is the season of waiting and expectation for Christmas – the birth of Christ, the Nativity of Our Lord. We prepare our homes and hearts for four weeks before Christmas. As in past years our Advent Worship Services will have the lighting of the Advent Wreath. If you are on Zoom, you may wish to have your own “safe” advent candle ring to light or turn on. Please volunteer to help with the reading of the litany and lighting of the candles on the Advent wreath during the worship service.



December... Upon Us Already?

Wow! Time is moving so quickly. This is the frenzy time of year and it's difficult to not get tired just thinking about it.

So why do we make such a big deal out of December? Of course the answer is Christmas! With all the Christmas decorations, shopping, movies, cooking, Christmas music, and the traffic, we know it is December! What is it about this time

of year that compels us to change our usual way of doing and being, to work as hard as we can to celebrate Christmas?

It's simple - we allow the joy that surrounds and infuses our hearts during the Holiday season to flow around us so that our spaces, our work, cars, and homes are all aglow with the joy of Christmas.

We all have favorite Christmas traditions. Each time we embrace them, we are brought closer to the remembrance of home and love that we experienced in our youth. But we also have renewed hope that the times we will celebrate today and days to come will bring the hope, joy, peace and love that were promised in the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Some of the most beautiful songs ever sung, and/or written were written to celebrate Christmas. The song, **O Holy Night** is one of my favorites. The words describe how a weary world rejoices at the coming of Christ the Lord.

In Matthew 1:23 (NRSV) we read: **“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”**

It's time to celebrate the presence of the light of the love of Christ in our hearts and in ways that give honor and glory always and forever to the newborn king.

Come Lord Jesus! Come rescue the weary, make all things new, bring forth justice and peace, end hunger, poverty, oppression, hate, war, and all pain and suffering. Come Lord, Jesus!

Do you hear the angel voices in the cacophony of sounds this season! It's not noise it's a celebration! Our task? Simple! Hear the joy, experience the love, hold on to the hope, and celebrate the peace of Christ always, forever, and ever. Amen

Pastor Jessica

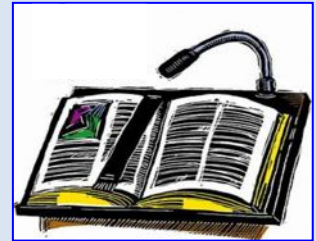
LISTENING CORNER..



07 - Lori Grandi 13 - Joe Hollich
 07 - Roxanne Miller 17 - Bob Neblock
 11 - Earlene Demler 19 - Rick Clark
 12 - Nathan Sechrist 20 - Reba Sterner
 12 - Linda Loeper

December Liturgists

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| December 3 | Barb Querry |
| December 10 | Dea Kishpaugh |
| December 17 | Gloria Clark |
| December 24 (9:15) | Sally DeJesus |
| December 24 (7:00) | TBD |
| December 31 | TBD |



If you are unable to serve as lay reader, please call... 717-838-2812.



Thanks to everyone for donating your time and items for our Holiday Bazaar. We had a good attendance on Friday night and some of us came in Saturday morning to sell additional items. As far as we know, there are no expenses. All items and ingredients were donated! Here are the receipts from the Bazaar:

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------|---|-------------------|
| Hot Dog Stand | \$211.00 | } | \$1,359.25 |
| Crafts | \$169.25 | | |
| Bake Table & Chow Chow | \$879.00 | | |
| Donation | \$100.00 | | |
| Silent Auction | | | \$2,149.00 |

Bazaar total →→ \$3508.25



Congratulations & Thanks to all!!

Barb Querry and the Bazaar Committee

December Missions



In December, we will continue to collect monetary donations for the United Women in Faith Christmas Stocking Project. Stockings are sent to nursing homes with an attached tag that identifies the name of the donating group. Checks can be sent to the church with UMW missions in the memo.

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*



| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>The Baron family</i> | <i>Joy Ellen Bastien & family</i> |
| <i>Jason Boyer</i> | <i>Jill Brickley</i> |
| <i>The Brossman family</i> | <i>The Clark Family</i> |
| <i>Chris Daubert</i> | <i>Joyce Dissinger</i> |
| <i>The Geist family</i> | <i>Kim Hollich</i> |
| <i>The Jacobs family</i> | <i>Yvonne Kuhn</i> |
| <i>Tom Leahy</i> | <i>The Neblock family</i> |
| <i>Beverly Palm</i> | <i>Linda Perini</i> |
| <i>Alissa Plant</i> | <i>Sydney Rice</i> |
| <i>Pastor Jessica & family</i> | <i>Don & Bonnie Sherman</i> |
| <i>Marilyn Smith</i> | <i>The Snavely family</i> |
| <i>The Snyder family</i> | <i>Karen Stine</i> |
| <i>Reba Sterner family</i> | <i>Jack Stouffer</i> |
| <i>Pat Swartz & family</i> | <i>Tina Washington & family</i> |
| <i>Tony & Monk</i> | <i>Judith Wentzel</i> |
| <i>The Wire family</i> | <i>Joyce Twigg & family</i> |
| <i>Carol Yeagley & family</i> | <i>Dave Wease & family</i> |
| <i>George Wilkins family</i> | <i>The Zehring family</i> |

*Our Church, Community, Country, and World
Families & recovering victims of violence
Issues surrounding the Ukraine
All who are sick & shut in & their caretakers
An end to war, hatred, divisiveness, & oppression
All those impacted by disasters around the world
The victims & families of the Maine mass shooting
The family of our DS, The Rev. Jenny Freymover
Our men and women in uniform
Our children to know, learn, and grow, in the Lord.
Our Government leaders*

Poinsettia Garden



At our live and zoomed church service on Christmas Eve at 7:00, we will fill the sanctuary with a poinsettia garden in memory and honor of loved ones. The cost of each poinsettia is \$8.00. Flower orders will be accepted through November. Be sure to include the wording you wish printed in the December bulletins.

It is with sadness and deepest sympathy that we announce the passing of Joyce Dissinger on Saturday morning, November 25, 2023. She will be remembered for her fondness for purple, a big heart, concern for others, and love of cooking. Funeral arrangements have not been announced.



Our condolences to Walt Zehring's family. Walt joined the great cloud of witnesses on November 9, 2023. We received notice of his passing with these words from son, Dean...

Dad is sitting and talking with Jesus. He went to Heaven at 4 am this morning. He is no longer in pain. There will be a private service for the family at our convenience.

Please send your cards & remembrances to...

***The Family of Walt Zehring
535 Bollman St., Lebanon, PA 17042***

Christmas Card Shower - Homebound Members – 2023

*Emily (Allwein) Barondick – 220 S. 4th Avenue, Reading, PA 19611
Rachel Brossman, Spang Crest, Room 216, 945 Duke Street, Lebanon, PA 17042
Penny Brown, Willow Terrace 3B, 800 Willow St., Lebanon, PA 17046
Chris Daubert, Willow Terrace 2J, 800 Willow St., Lebanon, PA 17046
Earlene Demler, 217 S. Mill Street, Cleona, Pa 17042
Claire Earle, 1 Boyd Street, Cornwall, PA 17016
Mark Fortna, Lebanon Valley Home, 550 E. Main Street, Annville, PA 17003
Carol Masemore, 1012 Marvin Ave., Lebanon, PA 17042
Marilyn Smith, 419 Yeagley Road, Myerstown, PA 17067
Pat Swartz, Spang Crest, Room 325, 945 Duke Street, Lebanon, PA 17042
Joyce Twigg, 809 Garden Avenue, Lebanon, PA 17046
Betty Wentzel, Market House Place, Apt. 4 L, 550 Willow St. Lebanon, PA 17046
Birdella White, Cornwall Manor Hillside 2, P.O. Box 125, Cornwall, PA 17016
Carol Yeagley, Gail & Henry Emrich, 3771 NE 58th Terrace, Silver Springs, FL 34488
Kathy Zehring, Cedar Haven, Room ???, 590 S 5th Ave, Lebanon, PA 17042*





DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR!

Dec. 3 ... Good Cheer Sunday & Communion
Dec. 6... Staff Parish Meeting (7 pm - Zoom)
Dec. 10... Caroling to the Homebound (2:30)

Dec. 11... Ad Council (7 pm Zoom)
Dec. 17... Christmas Breakfast (9:00) and Worship (10:00) (NO SUNDAY SCHOOL)
Dec. 21... Blue Christmas Service (7:00)
Dec. 24... Worship with Carols (9:15)
Dec. 24... Christmas Eve Service (7:00 pm Live & Zoom)
Jan. 6... Worship & Communion
Jan. 6... Planning Meeting and Lunch



Christmas Breakfast

The annual congregational Christmas Covered Dish Breakfast will be held on Sunday, December 17th at 9 am at the church. Please invite your family and friends. There is a sign-up sheet in the hallway.

The church service on that day will start at 10 am and there will be no Sunday School.

Good Cheer Sunday

Every year on the first Sunday of December, we take a collection for our good cheer fund. This provides Christmas gifts for our home-bound members. Please consider placing money in an envelope, or give a check and designate it for "Good Cheer" to help provide these gifts.

We will be caroling to some of these members on December 10, and others will receive their Christmas gift over the next 3 weeks.



Pastor Jessica thanks all those who helped her move into her new apartment. Her new address is:

**752 Soliday Court
Lebanon, PA 17046**

Carol Yeagley's new phone number is: **352-421-5234**

Blue Christmas Service



On Thursday, December 21 at 7:00 we have planned a Blue Christmas Service. Blue Christmas (also called the Longest Night) is a day in the Advent season marking the longest night of the year. A Blue Christmas Service is a time for prayer reading, remembrance, singing, candle lighting and silent reflection for all who have difficulty embracing the Christmas Season. Although Christmas is for many a time of joyful celebration, there are those who have experienced pain, loss of loved ones, and life changes. The Blue Christmas Service allows participants to honor their memories and celebrate the arrival of Christmas with hope, even while in mourning for times gone by and loves that have been lost.

You will leave the service refreshed, renewed, and restored with the love of God that shall never pass away.

Adult Sunday School – December



Profiles in Faith is the focus of our lessons in December as we begin the winter theme of **Faith That Pleases God**. This quarter's lessons examine how individuals from Scripture lived faithful lives that pleased God. Their stories reveal how we can honor God through our lives of faith. Real faith includes believing, trusting, hoping, depending, relying and obeying God and His word – not in anything or anyone else. According to researchers, empathy, and compassion for others are also important parts of faith. People who seek to help others in the face of danger and adversity do so because they genuinely care about the safety and well-being of other people. Consider these thoughts and join us in our weekly discussions.

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| December 4 | The Faith of Ruth | Ruth 1:6–18, 22 |
| December 10 | The Faith of David | 1 Samuel 17:31–37, 45, 48–50 |
| December 17 | The Family of Faith | Matthew 1:1–17 |
| December 24 | Expectant Mothers' Faith | Luke 1:36–45, 56 |
| December 31 | The Faith of the Wise Men. | Matthew 2:1–12 |



This quarter begins by exploring the faith of various people from Scripture. One person who demonstrated unwavering faith was Ruth the Moabite. Because of her faith, she had confidence that the Lord would be with her and her mother-in-law, even in desperate circumstances.

Demonstrating faith is not easy; sometimes faith requires that people stand alone. The young shepherd David faced this reality as he confronted the Philistines. In doing so, David went against the expectations of his people and his king. Likewise, it was not easy for Mary, a young, unwed pregnant woman in the first century AD. After receiving a word from God, she joined her pregnant relative Elizabeth. Together, the women expressed faith in God's plan and his promises. Similarly, certain Magi faced threats to their lives as they followed God's directives. Living with faith requires boldness to act and a trust that God will sustain.



When examining how God prepared these people from Scripture, we should try to put ourselves in the shoes of the faithful ones being examined. It's easy to look at the final results of their experiences and forget that these individuals had no idea to where it would lead. They didn't know what God had in store for them.

This should strengthen our faith during very difficult trials, and help us to maintain hope. We know that God is working for a greater good. We have seen the results of His work in the lives of the great men and women of the Bible, so we can be even more assured that *He will never leave us or forsake us*. Join us in December as we discuss how God prepared the world for the birth of Jesus.

December 3

1. Naomi said that she was too _____ to have a husband. *Ruth 1:12*
2. Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem at the end of the barley harvest. T/F *Ruth 1:22*

December 10

1. David fought which animals? (Choose two: boar, bear, lion, snake) *1 Samuel 17:34*
2. The Philistine came to David with a sword, a spear, and a _____. *1 Samuel 17:45*

December 17

1. Jesus is "the son of David, the son of _____." *Matthew 1:1*
2. Matthew's genealogy is grouped into three sets of fourteen generations. T/F *Matthew 1:17*

December 24

1. After the baby leaped in Elizabeth's womb, who or what filled her? (wisdom, peace, the Holy Spirit) *Luke 1:41*
2. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for six months before returning home. T/F *Luke 1:56*

December 31

1. Jesus was born when _____ was king. *Matthew 2:1*
2. When the Magi saw the star, they were filled with fear. T/F *Matthew 2:10*



Pastor's Discretionary Fund

Throughout the year the pastor is asked to help members of Trinity or the community as they go through difficult times. Now with the Christmas season upon us, please consider helping those in need by making a special gift marked for the "Pastor's Discretionary Fund".

Help Plan 2024 Calendar



All are invited to the annual fellowship planning meeting on Sunday, January 7th at 11:30 a.m. We will have pizza for lunch. Please put the date on your calendar. (The snow date is January 14.) Ideas for Munchin' Methodists, the BAZAAR, Spaghetti Dinner, repairs in the church, and special Church Fellowship trips will be in the mix of activities to be considered. Bring your new ideas to share and help plan a 2024 of fun-filled fellowship and community events!



IN THE NEWS...

Gloria Clark was selected as *Academy Professor of the Emeritus Academy* at Penn State University. This new program is designed to recognize and promote the ongoing involvement of emeriti faculty in scholarly and creative activities. The Emeritus Academy aims to provide a community-based approach that fosters continued intellectual curiosity, professional growth, and collegiality.

Gloria's research centers on the life and works of the seventeenth-century dramatist, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. *Hispania* published her latest article, "Incantations, *Comedias*, and Epigenetics: The Ruiz de Alarcón Brothers Cast an Eye on Magic in the Seventeenth-century Spanish Empire" in this month's issue.

Her most recent book was an English translation of the nineteenth-century Spanish novel, *Marianela*, in 2020. Her Emeritus Academy project will be to collate, edit, and prepare a book-length manuscript from her articles, papers, and conference presentations on Juan Ruiz de Alarcón.



Munchin' Methodists

On Wed., December 13 at 10:30, the Munchin' Methodists will head to the Lebanon Vo Tech in

Avon for a Christmas luncheon. This event is limited to 12 people to sign-up in the parlor on a "first come, first serve" basis. If there are more signed up, we will try to get other seats, but at this point that appears unlikely.

CHURCH IN THE 21st CENTURY

In years gone by Sunday school and worship services were where you became involved in the life of the church. But times and lifestyles have changed and we now need to seek new ways for people to become involved, learn, and stay connected. We Zoom our worship services, team meetings and do posts on our

website and Facebook so that those who can't be part of live worship or a meeting can stay connected via a computer, phone, or iPad.



Whereas Sunday School was our primary way to do Bible learning, we now make Bible Studies available on different days of the week and even zoom some of those studies. Although zoom opportunities do not provide in-person contact, they do provide meaningful time with a small group of people and an opportunity to discuss a book of the Bible, a certain topic, or a book related to the Bible. Attending a Bible study offers additional benefits, as well. The Bible can be one of the most confusing books you will ever read and it can be hard to understand its meaning. When you are part of a Bible Study you open up your understanding on what the book or topic really means.

InterLink

(Thoughts to consider in the upcoming week.)

Study Text: Ruth 1; 4:13–22

KEY VERSE: *Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.”—Ruth 1:16*



Before and After

Tragedy creates a “before” and an “after”—before the job loss, the accident, the fight; after the break-up, the death, etc. When tragedy strikes, we might question God’s sovereignty or fear that he is using his strength to punish us through our pain. No matter how strong our faith, tragedy can leave us raw and feeling that we are merely surviving. Reading the stories of tragedy found within the Bible can offer comfort. When we see examples of how others remained faithful to God, we are inspired to persevere. And even more, when we see how God demonstrated his faithfulness to others, we can regain confidence in his provision no matter our current circumstance. God has often used local and global ecological crises to get people’s attention, and then get them to places where they would not go voluntarily. This happened in the story of Ruth, where famine sent Naomi and her family away in search of food. The famine in Egypt eventually brought Jacob and his brothers back to Joseph. The vulnerability caused by these ecological disasters was instrumental in revealing the ultimate kindness and compassion of God. In Naomi’s case, she drifted toward ideas about God (and suffering) that were not true—much like Job’s experience. However, once the trial is over, the biblical characters are able to look back, in hindsight, and see the full scope of God’s gracious plan.

Dressed in Christ

At the end of our street, my trick-or-treating children and I met an elderly woman sitting in a lawn chair, a bowl of candy in her lap. “Trick or treat!” the children called. Unexpectedly, the woman began to cry. “Oh, what’s wrong?” I asked. She replied, “My husband passed away. This is my first time passing out treats without him. He loved seeing the children in their costumes.” My children spontaneously hugged the woman, and we prayed for her. I had been reluctant to allow my children to go trick-or-treating. But even in costumes, we were all dressed in Christ to meet our new friend. Who in their distress needs to experience Christ through you?

Catching the Vision

Janice and Wendy met in a widows’ support group and became friends instantly. Janice had not been active in her faith for many years until Wendy started inviting her to church events. Together they joined a women’s Bible study and served on their church’s missions team. There, they started to catch a vision for world missions. A visiting missionary who had served many years in Turkey began sharing with them how many widows and orphans had migrated from Syria and Iraq as a result of the civil wars. Neither of the women had formal training as missionaries or in the Bible. But they could give smiles and hugs and share tears with women who had been through losses similar to their own. Janice and Wendy departed for Turkey and began learning the language and culture. They bonded with dozens of women who had endured severe hardship. God fulfills his promise to set “the lonely in families”. Are you in a position now to be brought into a family or to invite others into yours? Ask the Lord for eyes to see the harvest he has set before you.

- 1. What circumstances could entice you to start your life over away from home?**
- 2. When have you interpreted God’s hand in your life as punishment?**
- 3. How do you decide whether to go forward with a risky plan or fall back on an easier action?**

The Faith of Ruth

Lesson 1, Ruth 1:6-18, 22, NIV

How Do You Shop?

Pretend you are new to the country and need an explanation of how to go grocery shopping. Ask your partner clarifying questions. After asking five questions, switch roles with your partner. Here are some prompts to get you started:

1. How do you get to the store?
2. Is it safe to leave your car unattended in the parking lot?
3. How do the doors to the store work?
4. Do you have to pay to rent a shopping cart?
5. How many groceries are you allowed to buy? Are there ration limits?
6. Can you taste the food to see if you like it before you buy it?
7. Does the store sell exotic meat? Where can I find it?
8. Can I barter over the prices or trade for them with my home-grown vegetables?
9. What are the ways to pay for groceries? How do I get money if I don't have any?
10. How could I use a computer and shop online?

How can a different cultural context make something routine (like shopping for groceries) difficult?

What Would You Give Up?

Comedians of previous generations often told “mother-in-law” jokes that have left us with the impression that relationships with in-laws are always challenging. But Ruth was willing to change her whole life for her mother-in-law. What would you give up for yours (or, if you are unmarried, for an elderly friend not related to you by blood)? Circle each item below that you would be willing to sacrifice to take care of another person:

Some of your free time

Your parents and extended family

Some of your money

Your country

Living in a separate household

Your religion

The opportunity to get married

Other: _____

The opportunity to have children

Trinity United Methodist Church

Where "Faith, Hope and Love abide to encourage all to respond to the call of Christ."

1st Sunday of Advent – December 3, 2023

(The service begins at 9:15 with the fellowship area opening at 9:00.)

To be a part of worship on the computer go to... <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87571261714>
or join by phone by dialing 1-646-876-9923 and entering 875 7126 1714 when prompted.)

*The flowers on the altar today are presented by Jim & Betsy Allwein
in memory of her father, Winslow Allen*

Gathering Music

Prelude

Connie Steinke, Organist

Welcome & Announcements

Liturgist: Barb Query

Advent Litany:

L: What strength do I have, that I should still hope?

P: **What prospects, that I should be patient?**

L: those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

P: **They will soar on wings like eagles.**

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 64: 1-9

Bible O.T. pg. 694

Advent Candle Lighting - The Candle of Hope

Advent Prayer

Almighty God, we come to you as imperfect people. May your anger turn to mercy as we call upon your name. Forgive us and have mercy upon us for our hope is in you. Amen

Hymn #196 *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

Rowland Prichard

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit, rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit, raise us to Thy glorious throne.



Apostles Creed

UMH 881

Old Testament Reading

1st Corinthians 1: 3-9

Bible N.T. pg. 166

Gospel Reading

Mark 13: 24-37

Bible N.T. pg. 50

Special Music

Light a Single Candle - Wingate

Trinity Choir

Doxology & Celebration of Gifts

Song

Shine Jesus Shine

Lord, the light of your love is shining, in the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us, set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me.

Chorus:

Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light.

Lord, I come to your awesome presence from the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness, search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me (*Chorus*)

As we gaze on your kingly brightness, so our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory, mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me (*Chorus*)

Sermon

Missing Pieces

Pastor Jessica Ross

Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer

Holy Communion

Hymn #218

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

It came upon a midnight clear, that glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold
Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all gracious King
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world
Above its sad and lowly plains, They bend on hovering wing
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

And ye beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow
Look now for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing
O rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.



Benediction

Benediction Response *O Come, O Come Emmanuel (chorus)*

UMH #211

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee o Israel.

Postlude

Organist: Connie Steinke



The Faith of Ruth *Ruth 1: 6-18, 22*