



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
READING, PENNSYLVANIA
Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025



*Christ Preaching (The Hundred Guilder Print) (c. 1647–1649)
Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669)*

Jesus answers John's doubts not with argument but with the witness of the healed: the blind see, the lame walk, and the poor hear good news. Rembrandt's crowded 'Hundred Guilder Print,' where light pools around Christ amid a press of needy bodies, turns that catalog of miracles into a meditative scene of messianic compassion and judgment in which every viewer must decide whether to draw near.

WELCOME TO TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

FOUNDED IN 1751

*The Rev. Hans E.
Becklin*
SENIOR PASTOR

*Deaconess Deborah
Matern Graf*
DEACON FOR
FORMATION
AND SERVICE

*Dr. Cameron
Lee Wentz*
CANTOR

Matthew Mellen
DIRECTOR OF
TECHNOLOGY AND
COMMUNICATION

Rachel Gambone
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
COORDINATOR

Peter Graf
FINANCIAL
ADMINISTRATOR

Pam Wasmuth
BOOKKEEPER

John McKeon
PROPERTY MANAGER

Dave Troche
SEXTON



*The Rev. Fred S.
Opalinski*
PASTOR EMERITUS

*Karen S.
Eddinger*
MINISTER OF MUSIC
EMERITA



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY as we worship God through word and sacrament in this landmark building, home to our congregation since 1791. Our liturgy is rooted in tradition; all are welcome to participate as they feel comfortable.

TRINITY IS A VIBRANT CONGREGATION with members from around Berks County and beyond. If you are interested in learning more about membership, speak with a member of our staff.



DURING WORSHIP, we pray, sing, listen, chant, read, and move our bodies. Please silence your cell phone so as not to disturb this rich experience for yourself or others.

THE HIGHLIGHT OF OUR WORSHIP is receiving the Eucharist, the true Body and Blood of Christ. All who trust that Jesus is present in this holy meal are invited to receive Him with us today. Detailed instructions for communion can be found on page 19 of the bulletin.

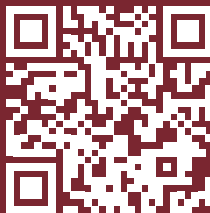


CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME in our worship! A changing table can be found in the all-gender restroom on the first floor. Our Meditation Room has space for nursing or a sensory break. Restrooms can be found on the first floor and are accessible by elevator. Our AED is mounted on the wall in the stairway next to the baptismal font.



WE WELCOME ALL LGBTQ+ people as full participants in our common life. We're proud to proclaim this publicly in our city and wider church as a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

OUR WORSHIP IS AN ACT OF OFFERING. By being here, we present ourselves and our time to God.



WE ALSO PRESENT our tithes and monetary offerings to God. During the offertory procession, they are brought forward along with the bread and wine used for the Eucharist.

WE NO LONGER pass an offering plate in the pew. However, an offering plate for cash or checks is available in the narthex. You can also share your offering electronically using this QR code.

The HOLY EUCHARIST AT 10:00 A.M.

Congregational words are in bold print.

PRELUDE

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Timothy Albrecht
(b. 1950)

CHORAL INTROIT

Come Unto Us

Karen Marrolli
(b. 1975)

*As the Introit begins,
please stand in body
or spirit and face the
processional cross.*

Trinity Choir

Come unto us and fill us,
fill us with your light;
fill us with your hope;
fill us with your love;
fill us with your light.

APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

GATHERING HYMN

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

ELW 242

*Continue to follow
the processional cross,
turning as it
passes you.*



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen,
b. 1950

Music: REJOICE,
REJOICE
Marty Haugen

Text and music © 1983
GIA Publications, Inc

*In Advent instead
of being directed
to God the Father,
this prayer is often
directed to God
the Son, showing
us how Advent is
particularly focused
on the identity and
work of Jesus.*

Please be seated.

*Young people come
forward as the
congregation sings
a refrain, found on
page 18. During this
time, we learn about
the liturgy together.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of all who look
to you, Lord God, and strengthen
our faith in your coming, that,
transformed by grace, we may walk
in your way; through Jesus Christ,

READING

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.]]

Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for
joy.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

THE WONDERS OF WORSHIP

Gospel Acclamation

our Savior and Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Isaiah 35:1-10

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

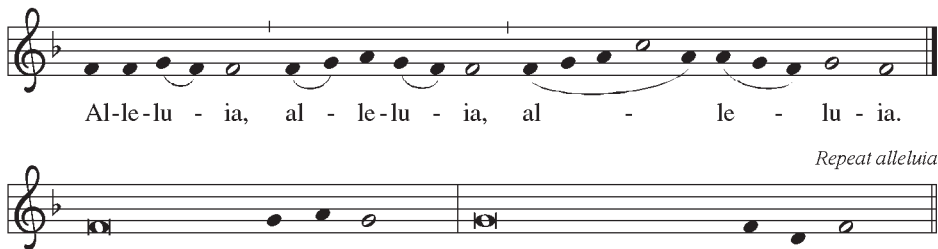
A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

*Please stand
in body or spirit to
welcome the Gospel.*

*The congregation
sings the Alleluia and
Proper Verse.*

*The Alleluia is
repeated after the
verse.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



**I am sending my messen- | ger before you,
who will prepare your | way before you.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2-11

**The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.**

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What, then, did you go

out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

**The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Hans E. Becklin

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*

HYMN OF THE DAY

People, Look East

ELW 248

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new

of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming

trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look
that in course and the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look

east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon,
1881-1965

Music: BESANÇON
French carol;
arr. Barry Rose,
b. 1934

Text © Miss E. Farjeon
Will Trust, by permission
of David Higham
Associates
Arr. © 1999 Novello &
Company Limited

APOSTLES' CREED

*Together, we confess
the faith of the
Church.*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*Please kneel
or be seated.*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.
Amen.

*After a brief silence
each petition
concludes:*

*After the final
petition:*

IN OUR PRAYERS

IN IMMEDIATE NEED

- ♦ Family & friends of Peg Coleman
- ♦ Family & friends of David Ruth
- ♦ Mary Drehs
- ♦ Darryl Jeffries
- ♦ Peggy Wentz
- ♦ Nancy Zweig

TRINITY HOUSEHOLDS

- ♦ Carol Batdorf
- ♦ Albert Beadencup
- ♦ Jill Hull & Don Bechtel
- ♦ Nels, Hans & Marissa Becklin
- ♦ Evelyn, Sarah & David Bierly

ONGOING NEEDS

- ♦ Harry Feinauer
- ♦ Frances Frezeman
- ♦ Christine Motley
- ♦ Walter Schur
- ♦ David Strobel
- ♦ Dar Unger
- ♦ Rob Unger
- ♦ Danielle Andress
- ♦ Donnie Diesinger
- ♦ Christina McMahon
- ♦ Hildegard Pohl
- ♦ Yadar

*All may make the
sign of the cross, the
sign that is marked
at baptism, as the
presiding minister
begins.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts
are open, all desires known, and
from whom no secrets are hid:
Cleanse the thoughts of our
hearts by the inspiration of your

Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly
love you and worthily magnify
your holy name, through
Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence is kept for
reflection.*

Most merciful God,
**we confess that we are in bondage
to sin and cannot free ourselves.
We have sinned against you in
thought, word, and deed, by what
we have done and by what we have
left undone. We have not loved
you with our whole heart; we have
not loved our neighbors**

**as ourselves. For the sake of your
Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on
us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead
us, so that we may delight in your
will and walk in your ways, to the
glory of your holy name. Amen**

Almighty God, in his mercy, has
given his Son to die for us and, for
his sake, forgives us all our sins. As
a called and ordained minister of
the Church of Christ, and by his
authority, I therefore declare to

you the entire forgiveness
of all your sins,
in the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Please stand.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

*Please greet one
another and then
be seated.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*The offering, bread,
and wine are
brought forward
and the altar is set.*

OFFERTORY

Drop Down, Ye Heavens

Cameron Wentz
(b. 1990)

Trinity Choir

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.

Be not angry, Lord, remember not iniquity forever:
Sion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

Know me and believe me: I am the Lord, beside me there is no Savior.

Comfort, my people, my salvation shall not tarry:
fear not, I will save thee: I am the Lord, thy redeemer.

- English Hymal, ed. Cameron Wentz

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Nourishing God,

you are water in the wilderness and
streams in the desert. Through this
meal, satisfy our parched places,

that we may rejoice and be for the
world signs of your kingdom come.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

*The presider greets
the assembly and
invites all to give
thanks.*

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O God, creator of heaven and earth.
You rescued your covenant people, led them on all their journeys,
and taught them by the prophets.
You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but may have eternal life.

*During the Words of
Institution, the bread
and wine are elevated
for the congregation
to revere and adore
Christ's presence in
our midst.*

IN THE NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED,
OUR LORD JESUS TOOK BREAD,
AND GAVE THANKS; BROKE IT,
AND GAVE IT TO HIS DISCIPLES,
SAYING: TAKE AND EAT;
THIS IS MY BODY, GIVEN FOR YOU.
DO THIS FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

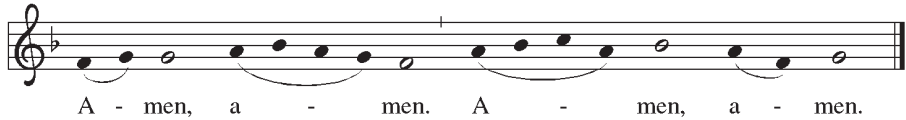
AGAIN, AFTER SUPPER,
HE TOOK THE CUP, GAVE THANKS,
AND GAVE IT FOR ALL TO DRINK,
SAYING: THIS CUP
IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD,
SHED FOR YOU AND FOR ALL PEOPLE
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.
DO THIS FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.



Pour out your Holy Spirit in this meal,
and make us one in this community of faith
and with your people throughout the world.

Glory and praise to you, O God,
Author of life,
Word made flesh,
Power of the Most High,
now and forever.



LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.



*Silence is kept as the
bread is broken.
Please be seated.*

*Detailed instructions
for communion can
be found on page 19.*

*This hymn can be
found in the red
hymnal (ELW).*

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy
on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

Christ Be Our Light

ELW 715

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy
and gladness.

Send us forth, eager to share the

feast, welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the
name of Jesus.

Amen.

*As a sign of God's
blessing, you may
make the sign
of the cross.*

BLESSING

May God who comes among us,
Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.

Amen.

Face the processional
cross, turning as it
passes you.

SENDING HYMN

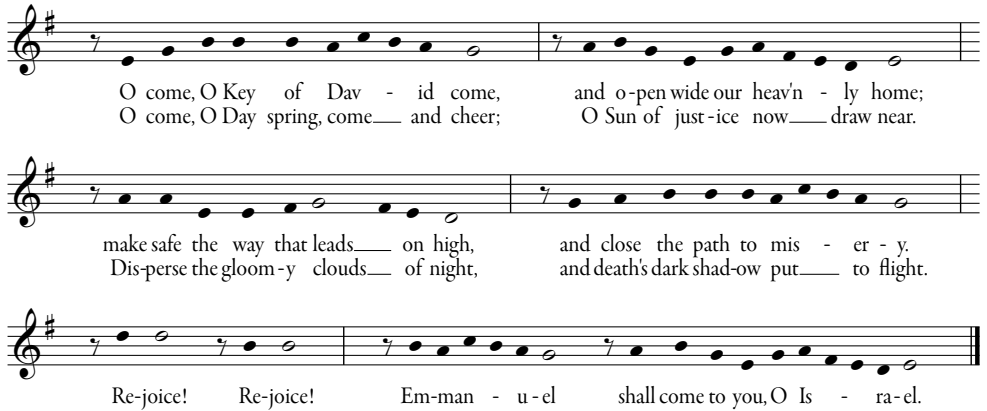
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Verses 5 & 6)

ELW 257

Text: *Psalteriolum
Cantionum
Catholicarum*,
Köln, 1710;
tr. composite

Music: VENI,
EMMANUEL,
French processional,
15th cent.

Text: sts. 2. 6. 7 © 1997
Augsburg Fortress



O come, O Key of Dav - id come, and o - pen wide our heav'n - ly home;
O come, O Day spring, come and cheer; O Sun of just - ice now draw near.

make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to mis - er - y.
Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and death's dark shad - ow put to flight.

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Veni, Emmanuel

Gerhard Krapf
(1924 - 2008)



WONDERS OF WORSHIP SONG

I won-der. I won-der. The won-ders of wor-ship, what does it mean?

I won-der. I won-der. The won-ders of wor-ship, what does it mean?

Come and see! Come now and see!

SOURCES AND PERMISSIONS

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WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

In-person: 88

Online: 58

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

In-person: 13

STEEPLE NOTES

Steeple Notes is our bi-monthly news publication which includes news about our church community, updates on ministries and outreach programs, and articles that foster spiritual growth and connection.

Print editions are usually available in the Narthex. You may also read our digital edition by scanning this QR code.



COMMUNION INSTRUCTIONS



All who trust that Jesus Christ is present in this holy meal are invited to receive communion.

Please follow the direction of the usher; if your pew is located on one of the side aisles, walk to the rear of the sanctuary. Two lines will form in the center aisle. The left line will commune at the left side of the altar rail; the right line will commune on the right side.



When you reach the front of the sanctuary, there are serving trays located on the tables. Please choose either an empty glass to receive wine, or, if you prefer, a prefilled glass in the center ring containing grape juice. After taking your cup, proceed to the rail. Fill in around the rail from the center to the ends. You may stand or kneel as is your preference.

The pastor will give you a piece of bread; eat it when you receive it. If you prefer a gluten free alternative, please inform the pastor.



Then, an assistant will come to offer wine from a pouring chalice. Please extend your glass to be filled with wine or indicate that you have grape juice. After drinking the wine or juice, you are welcome to remain in place for a moment of meditation.

After you finish your time of reflection, please return to your pew, depositing your empty glass in the trays located on the tables at the head of the side aisles.

LEADING OUR WORSHIP TODAY

PRESIDING MINISTER
ASSISTING MINISTER
CANTOR
LECTOR
COMMUNION ASSISTANT
ACOLYTE
GREETER

Pr. Hans E. Becklin
Albert Pohl
Dr. Cameron Lee Wentz
Ellen Huyett
Hannah Long
Abbie Smith
Eric Rosenbaum

USHERS
MEDIA TEAM

Cecilia, Christine & Josh Motley
Jacinda Motley, Amy Bornhofen,
Jennifer Smith

ALTAR GUILD

Allison Kallbach, Amy Litvinov,
Cheryl Moody, Brooke Rosenbaum, Doris Strobel

WORSHIP PLANNERS

Program Staff

WORSHIP SPONSORS

These offerings help to defray the cost of altar flowers and the television broadcast.

TONY, SHERRI, ALI & MEG SACCO
in loving memory of Joseph Sacco, Tony's father

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

9:00 AM

Trinity Together Sunday Forum - Hintz Room

10:00 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP - Nave

11:15 AM

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - Nave

COFFEE & CONVERSATION - Hintz Room

11:30 PM

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE - Welcome Center

MIXED ENSEMBLE REHEARSAL - Nave

2:00 PM

COMMON GROUND WORSHIP AND MEAL

3:30 PM

PRE-CONCERT PRESENTATION - Nave

4:00 PM

HGMC: RADIANCE OF THE RAINBOW - Nave

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

1:00 PM

PROGRAM STAFF MEETING

7:00 PM

VESTRY - Bard House

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16

9:30 AM

STAFF MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

12:05 PM

MIDDAY WORSHIP - Chapel

6:30 PM

TRINITY RINGERS - Bell Room

7:30 PM

TRINITY CHOIR - Bard House

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

9:00 AM

Trinity Together Sunday Forum - Hintz Room

10:00 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP - Nave

11:15 AM

COFFEE & CONVERSATION - Hintz Room

CHRISTMAS DECORATING - Nave

11:30 PM

MIXED ENSEMBLE REHEARSAL - Nave

12:30 PM

TRINITY CHOIR CHRISTMAS EVE REHEARSAL -
Nave

2:00 PM

COMMON GROUND WORSHIP AND MEAL

2:30 PM

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

WONDERS OF WORSHIP: GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

