



# The Messenger

## “Virtual” Christmas Eve at Trinity

### Have you ever been told to stay home on Christmas Eve?

Christmas Eve at Trinity is a long-standing tradition of gathering in the sanctuary for the beloved Candlelight Service of Holy Communion. 1200 or more worshippers have gathered at multiple service times from mid-afternoon to midnight to welcome the Christ child, the Word made flesh.

In our short-lived attempt to return to “in person” worship this fall, with pews taped off and seating in Centennial Hall and the Courtyard set at six-foot intervals, pastors, musicians and congregational leaders could not imagine how to welcome our Christmas Eve congregations into our facilities. Lotteries and reservations were mentioned, ways that some churches are keeping their congregations small, but we finally agreed that until we could welcome the whole community back into our house safely, we would refrain from hosting those services “in person” in 2020.

In mid-December two recorded versions of Christmas Eve at Trinity will be shared with the whole congregation for celebrating that liturgy at home. Trinity pastors, musicians and worship leaders will provide recorded videos and many of the most familiar Christmas carols and scripture will be included in a worship setting we know well. An added offering will be that the Christmas Eve liturgy will be presented in both traditional and Rejoice praise formats via our YouTube channel in 2020. Watch for information beginning in mid-December for how to access our Christmas Eve services at Trinity.

### The Children’s Christmas Program December 13



A great Lutheran tradition is an annual event at Trinity! This year is no exception. As you may have guessed, the Children’s Christmas Program will look a bit different in 2020.

Trinity’s pre-school through elementary aged children will present the story of

Jesus’ birth in a video recording broadcast during the live-stream worship service on December 13 at 9:15 a.m. The program will be integrated into the blended service, replacing the readings and homily.

4th and 5th graders will read dialog and scripture adapted from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Younger children will be featured in a slideshow set to favorite Christmas hymns.

Families with pre-school and elementary children will be emailed information on how to participate, or they can contact Rachele Battreall.

### The Longest Night December 21



The Longest Night is a simple service of lament, petition and comfort that was created to accompany those who struggle during the holiday season and to acknowledge the pain experienced by many in our world.

Together we will remember God’s promises and offer our stressors and sorrow in the context of worship. A service for the darkest night of the year, the Winter Solstice, we remember that while the darkness is real, we journey together with hope, preparing our hearts for the light of Christmas born among us.

The Longest Night service will be an opportunity to share our joys and our losses through reflective prayer, candle lighting, mutual support and compassion.

This virtual worship experience will be offered through our YouTube channel on December 21.

# What's Happening at Trinity in December?

## Weekly at a Glance

### **Sundays**

*Virtual Sunday School*

Live Streaming of Worship, 9:15 a.m.

### **Mondays**

Art Class, 4:45 p.m.

### **Tuesdays**

Fit4Mom, 7:30 p.m.

### **Thursdays**

*Good Night Trinity*

Art Class, 4:45 p.m.

*At the time this newsletter went to print, the people of the state of Michigan were beginning a new level of COVID-19 restrictions for three weeks through Tuesday, December 8. After that time, restrictions may change. Please know that you will find up-to-date information about Trinity events via the weekly eBlasts or by calling the church office.*

## Daily Calendar

### **Sunday, November 29**

*Virtual Advent by Candlelight*

### **Tuesday, December 1**

Spiritual Growth Committee Meeting,  
5:30 p.m.

### **Wednesday, December 2**

Advent Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

### **Thursday, December 3**

Resound Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6 p.m.

### **Friday, December 11**

Friday Morning Women's Bible Study,  
9:30 a.m.

### **Sunday, December 6**

High School Bible Study, 9:15 a.m.

High School Youth Group, 6:30 p.m.

### **Monday, December 7**

Blood Drive, 12:30 p.m.

Property Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.

### **Tuesday, December 8**

TLC Quilters, 10 a.m.

Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.

### **Wednesday, December 9**

Advent Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

Youth & Family Committee, 7 p.m.

### **Thursday, December 10**

Entering the Narrow Gate, 9:30 a.m.

Resound Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6 p.m.

### **Friday, December 11**

Friday Morning Women's Book Club,  
9:30 a.m.

### **Sunday, December 13**

Children's Christmas Program,  
9:15 a.m.

Stephen Ministry Peer Support,  
12:30 p.m.

High School Youth Group, 6:30 p.m.

### **Monday, December 14**

*Messenger Submissions Due*

Congregation Council, 6:30 p.m.

### **Tuesday, December 15**

Worship and Music Committee  
Meeting, 7 p.m.

### **Wednesday, December 16**

Advent Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

### **Thursday, December 17**

Resound Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6 p.m.

### **Sunday, December 20**

High School Youth Group, 6:30 p.m.

### **Monday, December 21**

*The Longest Night Virtual Service*

### **Tuesday, December 22**

TLC Quilters, 10 a.m.

Stephen Ministry Peer Support,  
6:30 p.m.

### **Wednesday, December 23**

Advent Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

### **Thursday, December 24**

*Christmas Eve Virtual Worship*

### **Friday, December 25**

*Christmas Day - Office Closed*

### **Monday, December 28**

Cub Scouts – Parents, 6:30 p.m.

## Mark Your Calendar for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Mark your calendar for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation when we will receive reports, elect leaders and adopt a budget for 2021. As we continue to refrain from "in person" gatherings, the 2021 Annual Meeting will be in a Zoom format. We will gather on Sunday, January 17, 2021.

# A Message from Pastor Bob Linstrom



## Good news and great joy while pandemic distancing

*Good news and great joy to all the world:  
Today is born our savior, Christ the Lord.*

*from the Midnight Mass*

The familiar Christmas Eve Gospel invites us to join Mary and Joseph as they make pilgrimage to Joseph's familial home in Bethlehem, the surprising setting for the good news and great joy announced by heavenly messengers. The pilgrimage was required by the emperor's census we're told, and it was a 90-mile walk south from Nazareth along the Jordan River flatlands, then west over the hills surrounding Jerusalem, and on into Bethlehem. A grueling trip, even if one of the sojourners was not approaching nine months pregnancy – most good OB/GYN's would advise against travel after 36 weeks in a pregnancy. They might suggest refraining even sooner if traveling by donkey.

Most years the well-loved story of the birth of the Christ child as told in Luke chapter 2 is the stuff of Christmas Eve warmth, wonder and evocative, familiar story. I find myself this year reflecting instead on what must have seemed an unacceptable upheaval for the mother and the guardian of Jesus. Surely, they wished to be in familiar surroundings, at home with their community of faith, their friends and family in Nazareth. The stable cave in the Bethlehem hills must have seemed lonely, and most unseemly.

Surely, we would wish to be in the sanctuary of Trinity Lutheran church for the well-loved Christmas Eve Candlelight Services of Holy Communion this year on December 24. For those who do not travel to be with family, gathering with the throngs of worshipers on Christmas Eve is as foundational as gathering at the family table on Thanksgiving. Both will be compromised in 2020, and we will find our situation unacceptable, unseemly.

*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the LORD more than those who watch for the morning . . .*

*Psalms 130:5-6*

So, we wait, with the ancient Psalmist and with people of faith through all of history who have faced 'unacceptable upheaval.' Perhaps we will take stock of our blessings at Christmastime in 2020, those of us fortunate enough to have good health and a safe place to know Christ born among us, God with us, Emanuel. Perhaps we will seek to care for those who genuinely know 'unacceptable upheaval' in this season.

We have the Word of God to sustain us. So, for now, we wait.

Blessings to you, O people of Trinity. May you be safe, may you be well, and may you be held in love. It remains a privilege to serve as one of your pastors.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Bob Linstrom

## Advent Midweek Vespers on Wednesdays in December

A season of hope and expectation, during Advent we pause in the life of the church to provide a counterweight to the remarkable busyness of the holiday season. Advent Midweek Vespers on Wednesday evenings have been well-loved in our life together at Trinity, with the sanctuary as the setting for the singing of Holden Evening Prayer after breaking bread together and sharing supper in the Courtyard.

The discipline of midweek worship will be different as we journey to the manger in Bethlehem amid the COVID-19 pandemic in December of 2020. As this newsletter goes to print in mid-November, a definite plan for providing a "virtual" option via Zoom or live streaming is not yet finalized – watch for updates in Friday eBlasts in late November and early December and join us as we take on a discipline of midweek devotion, making ourselves ready for the miracle of Christmas.

## Trinity Congregation Council Members 2020-2021

*Standing committees of the Congregation Council coordinate the mission and ministry of Trinity and provide their leadership in developing new programming. Committees have a Council committee person who acts as the liaison between the Council and committee.*

*If you are interested in contacting a Congregation Council member, please refer to information in the Trinity Directory or call the main office.*

*Executive Committee members and Committee liaisons are:*

### Congregation Council Executive Committee

President: Paul Crist

Vice President: Karen Unruh

Treasurer: Chris Engle

Secretary: Carol Butler

### Congregation Council Members

Children's Ministry: Karen Unruh

Communications: Nicole Rodammer

Congregational Life: Eric Gohlke

Endowment Fund: Mike Mason

Fellowship: Amy Fox

Finance: Chris Engle

Health Ministries: Carol Butler

Hospitality: Jamie Kuntzman

Human Resources: Steve Heacock

Outreach: John Fox

Property: Mike King

Property: Rick Radke

Spiritual Growth: Brad Kessel

Stewardship: Amelia Crist

Worship and Music: Kate Bredwell

Youth and Family: Tess Lundgren

Youth and Family: Ryleigh Fischer  
(Youth Representative)



2020 has been a challenging year for your Worship and Music committee! Just like most people and groups, we have had to be creative and make numerous changes and adjustments due to the pandemic. And while it has been a challenge, some good has come out of it all.

For most of this year, we have worshipped remotely. The good that has come from this necessity is that our online services have connected with many people, beyond those who might normally come to Trinity to worship. Many congregation members who travel to cottages during the summer were able to worship through the YouTube livestream. Trinity members who have moved away from the area have enjoyed taking part. College students who are far away and members who are home-bound have benefited from this new means of worship. And the good news is that even once we are able to worship together in person safely on a regular basis, we plan to continue the livestream ministry. We are also very excited that the sound and video system in the sanctuary will be upgraded over the next few months, which will enable live-streaming from upstairs as well as from Centennial Hall. Having services available in the online format is a great outreach tool for meeting the needs of our community, both near and far.

Another challenge faced this year by the Worship and Music Committee, along with the Re-Entry Committee and the Congregation Council, has been attempting to return to some form of in-person worship. The outdoor services on the church lawn have been well-received. Plans were made in late September and early October to return to in-person indoor worship at the end of October. However, as these plans were completed and we approached our first indoor service for Reformation Sunday on October 25, Covid-19 cases began to surge. Upon the advice of several medical professionals, we again suspended indoor worship after two weeks, returning to a blended-style live-stream service at 9:15 a.m., along with one final outdoor service on November 8, thanks to some lovely fall weather.

As of this writing, plans are being made for two versions of a pre-recorded Christmas Eve service: one in a contemporary Rejoice Service style and one in a Traditional Service style. The idea is to have these available online for members and friends to watch from home at whatever time they choose, starting on December 23. Look for more info to come! While it won't be the same as being together, it will enable us to truly care well for each other by keeping others safe and reducing potential community spread of the virus.

We look forward to the day when we will be able to worship, with lots of music, in person! But until that time, we strive to help make our new forms of worship meaningful and we are thankful that technology helps provide a path for this. We appreciate your support and prayers!

Respectfully submitted,  
Kate Bredwell

## Year-End Giving of Stocks and Securities

As you are planning year-end giving to Trinity, gifts of stocks and securities are made through Norris Perné & French, by following these instructions:

When contacting the firm that is holding your securities you should give the following information:

- DTC Number: 0226
- Receiving Firm: National Financial Services/Fidelity
- Receiving Account Name: Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Account Number: 645-063880

Please be advised that you will also want to indicate which securities and how many shares you would like to donate.

REMINDER: do not sell shares in your account as this can trigger capital gains.

Should you have any questions or need assistance with this process, you may contact Elizabeth Poole at 616.459.3421.

**YOUR YEAR-END  
GIVING  
MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

## Sanctuary AV upgrade authorized by the Congregation Council

At its October meeting, the Congregation Council acted to begin a major upgrade of the sanctuary AV system. Bringing the audio capabilities to a standard that would allow excellent reproduction of the spoken word in a great acoustic space for music has been an aspiration for many years at Trinity. The proposal from Hamilton AV, the same company that developed the AV system in Centennial Hall and the Courtyard with the new building project, will bring that audio quality to our traditional worship space.

In addition to the audio upgrade, a Bluetooth hearing assistance system is in the design, along with a full replacement of the video recording system in the sanctuary. Live streaming of worship from the sanctuary will be one of the outcomes of the overall AV upgrade.

Construction documents are under development as this newsletter goes to print and aspirations of having the AV system proposal out to bid by early 2021 would result in completion of the system by March of 2021.

## Trinity Lutheran Church Budget vs. Actuals

### Month of October 2020

	Budget	Actual	Variance Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	
Total Income	96,629	88,090	(8,539)	- 8.8%
Total Expenses	119,070	108,203	10,868	9.1%
Net Income (Loss)	(22,441)	(20,113)	2,329	



### 2021 Fiscal Year-to-Date February 2020 to October 2020

	Budget	Actual	Variance Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	
Total Income	815,671	957,467	141,796	17.4%
Total Expenses	847,987	739,463	108,524	12.8%
Net Income (Loss)	(32,316)	218,004	250,321	

# A Message from Associate Pastor Dan Schewe

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." – Matthew 1:23

People of Trinity, I miss seeing you, I miss being with you. I miss talking with you on a Sunday morning. I miss shaking your hand or sharing a hug. I miss handing you bread and sharing the words, "This is the body of Christ given for you." I greatly miss being physically present with you.

This pandemic has forced us physically apart. Thankfully we have found a myriad of ways to try to stay connected through the technology of our day, but it isn't the same as being right there next to you. There is something powerful about being in the presence of one another that I greatly miss.

In this passage from Matthew the author is reminding the readers of the promise given to the people through the prophet Isaiah, that a woman will give birth to a son and that son will bring the presence of God to the people. God will be with them.

Not a God aware of their plight. Not a God watching from a distance. Not a God who created and walked away. No, this one will bring the presence of God right to where they are. God will be with them, right now in the midst of the mess of their lives.

This is what we celebrate at Christmas, that God was born to be with us. God comes into our presence to be with us because God loves us.

While we refrain from being physically with each other for a bit longer, take comfort that God is with you right now. In the midst of these strange and dark days you are not alone, God is with you and so are we.

I eagerly look forward to a time when we can gather again, but until then I take comfort in the ways we can be with each other.

Shalom,  
Pastor Dan



## Immanuel: Finding Hope and Joy During Advent

**An Ecumenical and Community Wide Event  
Tuesday, December 1 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. \***

How will we celebrate the Advent and Christmas season when the world is holding its breath? Festive events and traditions with family and friends are called into question. We want to be filled with joy and we hope to find peace and rest, yet emptiness, anxiety, worry and loneliness are ever present realities. Over 2000 years ago, Immanuel—God with us—transformed the world, breaking through darkness. As we enter an unprecedented holiday season, this familiar Advent word, Immanuel, takes on a deeper meaning.

Join LeRae Kuperus as she presents on finding Immanuel in our own hearts first, in gifting ourselves with self-care, and in loving others with a heart of fullness. LeRae will interweave stories from her experiences as a Chaplain and encourage us to keep our hearts malleable—open to moments when the power of Immanuel breaks through and reminds us that Jesus believes in us.

Pastor LeRae Kuperus is Chief Officer of Mission Integration and Spiritual Formation at Wedgwood Christian Services. She is an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church and is endorsed as a Chaplain.

\* RSVP by Monday, November 23 by going to <https://giving.parishsoft.com/App/Form/ebd35464-38fc-4f62-8791-edddc2b65cd3>. This is a Zoom presentation; a link will be emailed to you. This program is co-sponsored by the Catholic Information Center and the Cathedral of Saint Andrew Ecumenical Ministry.



# A Message from Assisting Pastor Karen Niemeyer



## Lament is a Christian Form of Prayer

This fall I took part in a Grace Group of about twenty other Trinity folks who met online to study and discuss N. T. Wright's book, God and the Pandemic. One of the challenging topics we talked about was the Christian practice of lament and how it can be an important part of our Christian lives, especially during this time of hardship caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. We read some of the well-known biblical laments from the Old Testament books of Lamentations, Job and the Psalms, all of which underscored that lament is a Christian form of prayer and that we are invited to lament and pour out our fears, our pain, our complaints and our sorrows to God.

In our study book N. T. Wright reminded us that as we are going through this challenging time, "We are simply to know that when we are caught up in awful circumstances, apparent gross injustices, terrible plagues and....suffering strange sicknesses with no apparent reason, let alone a cure – at those points we are to lament, we are to complain, we are to state the case, and leave it with God."

In past Trinity Griefshare groups we have also discussed the value of lamenting; and we have been reminded that when we are suffering for any reason, including death of a loved one, that lament and faith go together. We learned that when we lament we are simply being honest with God and crying out, "Lord, I hurt and am in pain, but I trust you and I know you are in control," just as Jesus did on the cross when he sobbed, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Especially at this time of the year as we look forward to the hope of Christmas, it's important to remember that while continuing to grieve losses caused by the pandemic – the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, the loss of good health, the loss of a social life, the loss of holiday gatherings with family and friends – we are always invited to go to God in lament, freely complaining to him about whatever tough times we're experiencing.

### A Lament in a Time of Pandemic

Oh Lord, how long will we continue to be isolated, alone, shut off in our homes,  
away from our family, away from our friends?

Afraid when we go to work. Afraid for our kids at home and at school.

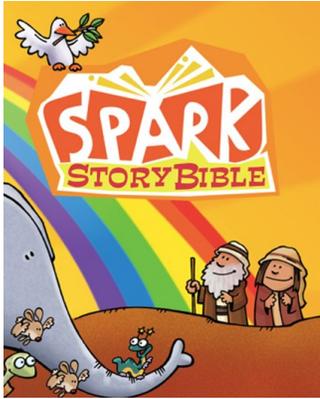
Lord, we are tired.

We feel forgotten, we feel forsaken, we feel a never-before-experienced loneliness.

Remember us, Lord. Restore us to you, to each other, together. Amen.

Together in Christ,  
Pastor Karen

# Children's Ministry



## Virtual Sunday School through Spring 2021

Weekly Sunday School video lessons and printed materials will be available through spring 2021. Three-year-olds through fifth graders are encouraged to participate. Materials available include worship bulletins, coloring pages, and craft ideas.

The Bible lesson video, posted each Friday, is taught by one of our Sunday School leaders and follows the Revised Common Lectionary. This means children will learn about the same lessons heard in the worship service. Registration is ongoing and can be found on Trinity website ([tlcgr.org](http://tlcgr.org)) under the Children's Ministry tab. Questions can be directed to [kids@tlcgr.org](mailto:kids@tlcgr.org).

## Good Night Trinity!

Children are invited to join "Good Night Trinity" story time! Each week, a different Trinity member will host a 10-15 minute read-aloud. The books will be faith-based and/or have a positive message. Some will be well-loved classics and others may become new favorites! As we get closer to the holidays, kids will hear Christmas themed stories.

"Good Night Trinity" will be enjoyable for kids of all ages, but especially for our Sunday School aged children. Parents can look for a link on Thursdays, either in your email, or on the TLC Children's Ministry Facebook page.



## December and January Confirmation Class Schedule

We are currently planning on Confirmation Classes and Middle School Youth Group to continue to meet via Zoom. The sessions are being recorded and saved to an unlisted YouTube playlist that families can access with a link from Pastor Dan.

November 29 to January 3: No class for our Thanksgiving and Christmas break.

January 10, 17, 24 and 31: Youth group from 2 to 3 p.m. and class from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

*Stay connected with our middle school ministries via Remind: text @66afab to the number 81010 and follow the prompts.*



# High School News

## First Sunday of the Month Bible Study – December 6

All high school youth, and their friends, are invited to join Pastor Dan for Bible study during the 9:15 a.m. service on December 6. We are planning on meeting via Zoom. Watch our Remind messages if things change. We will be exploring the scriptures and how they connect and guide our lives. Get your donuts and join Pastor Dan!

## High School Youth Group – Sundays at 6:30 p.m.

All High schoolers and their friends are invited to join us for our weekly youth group on Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. We are continuing to explore who our neighbors are and how we can care for one another in these strange times. For where and how we are meeting watch the weekly emails from Pastor Dan and our weekly YouTube updates. **There will be no youth group on December 27 or January 3.**



## Online Game night – December 13 at 6:30 p.m.

Join us for a night of online games on December 13 at 6:30 p.m. There will be competitions and prizes for the winners. Watch Pastor Dan's weekly emails for more information!

## Mission Trip

Next summer we are going to Winchester, Kentucky from July 5 through 11 to help rebuild homes and lives. Along the way we will experience God in transformational ways! We are currently accepting \$50 deposits to reserve your spot on this trip. If you have any questions please reach out to Pastor Dan.

*Stay connected with our high school ministries via Remind:*

*For updates on youth group and programming text @6aef4g to 81010 and follow the prompts.*

*For updates on next summer's mission trip text @7hfg6gf to 81010 and follow the prompts.*

# Advent Begins on Sunday, November 29



The “new year” in the life of the church begins with the four-Sunday season of Advent on Sunday, November 29.

During Advent we pause in the life of the church to provide a season of hope and expectation on our spiritual journeys to the manger in Bethlehem.



## Advent Devotionals

Remember to read Trinity’s 2020 Advent Devotionals. Written by and for the members of Trinity Lutheran Church, the daily devotions are for use during each of the days of Advent.

Daily emails containing a devotion will be sent to all Trinity members for whom we have email addresses. Please make sure that we have your current email address. If you do not begin receiving Trinity’s daily devotional emails on the first Sunday of Advent, November 29, contact the church office to update your information.

A limited number of hard copies of the devotional booklet are available outside the main office at Trinity for people who prefer to have a copy of the actual booklet or for whom email is not available.



## Advent by Candlelight (Virtually Prerecorded) 2020

The teens and women of Trinity cannot gather together in person in 2020 to reflect on the Advent season and the coming of the Christ child. This year, you are invited to gather the family at home, decorate your table, make a batch of Christmas tea, plan a meal or a dessert and gather everyone in the household together on the first Sunday of Advent, November 29. Plan now for a family Advent by Candlelight and reflect on the season by checking out the prerecorded message for this event on the Trinity YouTube channel.

### Christmas Tea Recipe

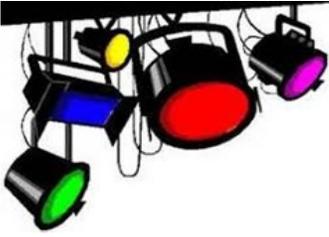
Sweet with a hint of spice - Great for parties, easy to make in large batches  
Number of Servings: 9

#### **Ingredients**

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 6 cups water    | 2 cinnamon sticks     |
| 1 cup sugar     | 1 cup orange juice    |
| 1 cup tea (hot) | 1 cup cranberry juice |
| 6 whole cloves  | ½ cup lemon juice     |

#### **Directions**

Boil 6 cups water with 1 cup sugar for 5 minutes. Add 6 whole cloves and 2 cinnamon sticks. Pour 1 cup boiling water over 2 tea bags and steep for 5 minutes. Add tea to pot of sugar water. Mix in 1 cup orange juice, 1 cup cranberry juice and ½ cup lemon juice. Heat until ready to drink.



### Quiet Service: Jeanette Sorensen

Jeanette Sorensen is a gentle soul, who has quietly found ways to serve and plug in at Trinity. A retired Speech-Language Pathologist, mother of two, and a Stephen Minister, she shares many talents in supporting, nurturing, and guiding others to be heard and to hear the voice of God in their hearts. Jeanette offers private spaces for others to be heard in the journey of life.



Jeanette grew up in Moline, Illinois, attending First Lutheran Church in Moline. She graduated from Augustana College and married soon after graduation. She supported her husband as he pursued both his graduate and post doctorate educations. Her two daughters live in West Michigan and she has four grandchildren. She has been single since 1978.

Initially, Jeanette attended the late traditional service at Trinity, but moved to the 9:15 a.m. Rejoice! service after meeting others through social events at the church. She loves worshipping with a group of friends and sharing breakfast together after the service.

Jeanette serves in quiet, yet vibrant, ways at Trinity. As a Stephen Minister, she has supported Pastor Karen in the Grief Share group, having been drawn into that group after her mother's passing three years ago. She continues to serve others, informally, utilizing the gifts of her Stephen Ministry training. She participates in the Earth Keepers group, loving all activities surrounding earth preservation. "God gave us so much, when He gave us this planet." "I very much believe in the need for all of us to take care of each other, the animals, the plants, the insects, the water and the air we breathe." Jeanette steps in as the need arises; making voice call visits to offer encouragement and support, offering transportation for others, and occasionally adding a helping hand in Sunday School or in the kitchen for community meals. She serves as a Communion Assistant and Greeter.

God's comfort is found in Psalm 23. Jeanette shared this powerful reading with her mother while journeying through the thin spaces where the distance between Heaven and earth narrow. As her mother moved through Hospice care to her final passing, the oral reading of this Psalm offered vision and comfort. "I ask God to help me every day to listen to Him and tell me what He wants me to do." She encourages us to do the same and explore all of the wonderful opportunities that Trinity has to offer. Please consider "to join in and do things," asking "God what He wants you to do."

Note: The purpose of Behind the Scenes at Trinity is to praise God and to encourage others to use their special abilities to serve Him. Although people featured here have been reluctant to be highlighted, they've agreed to be published to encourage others to experience the joys of serving.

If you'd like to suggest people to feature in future articles, please contact Cathy Olson (cawolson@gmail.com) or Pastor Karen.

*Pastor Karen and Angela Davis, Director of Congregational Life, are aware of a wide variety of activities in our church community. Please do not hesitate to reach out to discover opportunities for service. There will be many new opportunities when we begin to open our doors and come face to face (mask to mask) again!*

## For All the Saints

*On All Saints Day, November 1, we remembered Trinity members who have gone before us since All Saints Day, November 1, 2019.*

"If we have died with Christ, we shall also live with him; if we are faithful to the end, we shall reign with him."

### **Julia Alice Bauer**

January 28, 1949 – December 9, 2019

### **Randall Raymond Preston**

May 10, 1929 – December 21, 2019

### **Kathryn Elizabeth Christenson**

August 24, 1915 – February 14, 2020

### **Diane Ruth Tanis**

December 27, 1946 – April 26, 2020

### **Francis Edward Bolthuis**

July 19, 1931 – May 22, 2020

### **Michael Gary Franz**

February 6, 1943 – September 29, 2020

### **Susan Lynn Kwast**

April 6, 1958 – September 29, 2020

### **Anne Hanson**

January 27, 1926 – October 7, 2020

### **William Robert Heyne**

June 9, 1933 – October 9, 2020

### **William Grant McClimans**

September 27, 1924 – October 13, 2020

### **Phyllis Jean Gehl**

June 24, 1945 – October 29, 2020

### **Roger Arthur Perham**

August 4, 1934 – October 30, 2020



## New Columbarium Vault Dedicated on All Saints Day

During the summer of 2020, a quiet development occurred at the base of Trinity's Cross Tower while most of our congregation sheltered in place. A new 70-niche Columbarium vault was installed in its masonry shell, expanding our overall Columbarium for the interment of ashes to 140 niches. The original 70-niche unit was developed about 18 years ago and all but seven of its niches had been purchased by families in our congregation.

In a blowing snow with strong, cold gusts of a wintry wind, the new Columbarium unit was dedicated on All Saints Day, November 1, 2020. Giving thanks for the resting places of the saints, we will seek to care well for the Columbarium and hillside Memorial Garden for another generation.



## Christmas Gifts for New Americans



Plans are underway to provide Christmas gifts for some of the recently arrived New American families in the Grand Rapids area. Trinity is currently assisting a new refugee family, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and working with Samaritas in their resettlement. We will be working together as a congregation to provide Christmas gifts for each of the six members, adults and children, of the Amani family.

**New!** Trinity members will also have an opportunity to provide 16 children of recently resettled New American families with gifts! We are hoping that *each child in a total of five families will receive a small gift wrapped box the size of a shoebox filled with an assortment of small gifts* to bring joy to them for this holiday. While Christmas may not be a holiday typically celebrated in their countries of origin, it doesn't take the children long to figure out that this American holiday involves gifts! Depending on the response from Trinity, we could provide additional New American children with these gift boxes!

Please look for information about how to gift these precious families in upcoming Friday eBlasts.

## A Note from Director of Discipleship Sylvia Stouten

When most of us think of Christmases past, we think of gathering together with family and friends and celebrating with traditions we hold dear. Christmas of 2020 will present challenges to our plans and hopefully we will be willing to forego some of those gatherings if it means staying safe and healthy. But can you imagine going through this time of pandemic without a home? Or adequate food?

As I thought about what Trinity members might want to keep in mind during the 2020 holiday season, I began to focus on three things:

- 1) Please reach out, as you are able, directly to non-profits in the greater Grand Rapids area with financial support and gifts-in-kind. Every organization would welcome your help and most have ways to donate online.
- 2) Volunteering your time is still critically important. Some organizations like Dégagé Ministries are desperate right now. If you feel like your circumstances allow you to safely volunteer in person, please do so. When the pandemic is finally over, I hope that Trinity members will volunteer together in large numbers once again to be of help in the community through Interfaith Hospitality Network, Dégagé Ministries and many others that rely on volunteers.
- 3) Pray for the incredible numbers of people who are currently finding it a challenge to have their basic needs met. And pray for the leaders of the non-profits that strive to do the best they possibly can during the pandemic. This is such a complicated environment in which to safely serve those who have the greatest needs.

If you need suggestions for how to best be of help to others during the holidays, please be in touch with me. I would be happy to assist you in exploring ways to make the holidays a little more pleasant for others.

## Trinity Earth Keepers Find a Way to be of Help



It was a beautiful Saturday morning on October 31 for being outdoors in God's creation. Trinity Earth Keepers Bob Dever and Carol and Vince Schumacher participated in an Eco-Service Learning Day at Prairie Wolf Park in Caledonia. Organized by the Kent Conservation District, volunteers helped with controlling aggressive non-native invasive species including buckthorn. They also learned about habitat restoration and non-native invasive species that alter ecosystem processes in complex ways.

Trinity Earth Keepers look forward to gathering again sometime in 2021 to plan events and carry out activities for all of us to learn about issues related to the environment and to be of help in caring for God's creation.

## Health Ministries—Walk & Talk



### December Focus: The Gift of Health

*Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call him "Emmanuel," which means 'God is with us.' Matthew 1:23*

December is typically filled with celebrations, songs and gifts. This year, there is more anxiety around gatherings and gift giving. Weighing the risks and benefits of mental, spiritual and physical health is heavy on our hearts. Through our weekly Walk & Talk devotions, we'll be asked to reflect on the gifts we have been given.

Our Monthly Zoom Gatherings have been so connecting and encouraging! Watch the weekly emails for the next date and time.

It's never too late to invite a friend or family member to join in. We love seeing our Walk & Talk group continue to grow. Each week you'll receive an email with a brief message and weekly devotion. Monthly zoom links will be provided as well.

Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0a44a4a92aa5fb6-walk> or connect with Rebecca Ulrich or Kristin Bradley.

## Blood Drive at Trinity—Monday, December 7



### Holiday Blood Drive

After a quota-breaking drive in September featuring 14-gallon donor Paul Getzin and first-time donors Peni Aldrich and Mark Youngren, our quota has been upped by six donors, so we need every eligible donor to come out in December! Versiti will be here on Monday, December 7 from 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. to accept your precious holiday donation and gift you with a warm winter hat in return. COVID protocols will apply: wear a mask, come alone, and observe social distancing.

You can sign yourself up at [https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/121614](https://donate.michigan.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/121614) or contact Sue Babin at 267.218.5967 or [smbabin@yahoo.com](mailto:smbabin@yahoo.com) to schedule.

Please go to <https://www.versiti.org/versipass/michigan-versipass> the morning of the drive to answer your pre-donation health questions.

Remember, the need is constant. This is one gift definitely worth giving this season!

## A Special Thank You Note



Our family thanks you for the cards and notes we have received. Your prayers have helped us through this difficult time.

- Bev Heyne

## The Ministry of Listening

Think of a time when you really felt cared for. Chances are someone focused on what you had to say, was attentive to your needs, and listened to how you felt instead of telling you how you should feel or what you should do.

In Stephen Ministry, a great deal of time is spent in teaching and practicing listening skills because of its importance as a caregiving tool. Here's a sample of what Stephen Ministers learn in their training about listening:

- 1. Listening is active.** It takes energy and commitment to listen really well. Focus your attention on what the other person has to say instead of thinking of what you'll say next.
- 2. Listening takes patience.** Often you need to build trust before someone will open up to you.
- 3. Listening involves more than just words.** Pay attention not only to what is said, but to what is not said. Pay attention to body language, too. Does it agree with or contradict a person's spoken words?
- 4. Good listeners aren't completely silent.** They restate key thoughts or ideas to be sure they understood correctly, and they ask focused questions to encourage the person to reach a little deeper.
- 5. Listening happens over time.** One conversation might build upon an earlier one. As you listen over several conversations, are there any recurring themes or patterns in what the person has said? Are there any contradictions from what was said earlier? These are signs there may be more to explore underneath.
- 6. Listening is confidential.** A great way to build trust and show the person you really care is to maintain confidentiality and not to share with others what was told to you in private conversation.

Jesus was the model of a good listener. Much of his ministry was listening to people. By listening to what people had to say he demonstrated how much he really cared about them. Do you remember the stories of the woman at the well, Nicodemus, or the disciples on the road to Emmaus? These were all times when Jesus showed his care and concern by first listening to people and then giving them what they needed.

Our Stephen Ministers at Trinity follow Jesus' model as a listener and caregiver, helping to make this a caring place where members and guests truly feel people care about who they are and how they feel. Just as our Stephen Ministers use good listening skills to communicate how much they care, so can you! Listening is a great gift we can give to one another, and one we can all use in our everyday caring and relating.



# Stony Lake Camp Capital Appeal

Our family joined Trinity Lutheran Church in 2013. We were in search of a church family that was very active. We wanted a place for our kids to grow up that was very invested in the youth of the congregation. We found that here at Trinity. We got them involved and we sent them off to Stony Lake Camp that first summer. I was nervous. I remember Pastor Sarah Stobie telling me to take a deep breath and know that the girls would be fine and that they would have a great time. I was still nervous. Pastor Sarah's husband, Pete hugged me and told me he'd look after them, too.

I spoke with Nicole, the Program Director, and Kristen, a camp counselor, at length when I dropped them off. I'm pretty sure I cried on my way home. I was not as worried about our daughters Nyki and Alaina; those two can pretty much hold their own. But our daughter Katarina has disabilities, and Stony Lake is not a disabilities camp. But they assured me Katarina would be looked after and would have a great time. This was the first time she had left my side for an over night. Ever.

I arrived an hour early on pick up day. I remember staying out of view but listening to closing ceremonies and seeing my girls singing, holding a piece of string, and hugging everyone afterwards. We'd all made it through the week, and it had changed us. The girls had fallen in love with Stony Lake, the counselors, the activities, the songs, and the feelings they couldn't fully describe. Stony Lake blessed our whole family -- not only the girls but Tim and I had grown and stretched, too. They gave Katarina a level of independence that she hadn't had before because they were willing to step out of their norm and make a place, a loving, safe place for a girl with differences. The girls have attended camp every year. And each year, dropping them off and seeing the counselors welcome them back by name and with such warmth has made Stony Lake very important to us all. This summer would have been our family's eighth year at Stony Lake.

The girls were so excited driving home that first year, telling lots of stories. Then Alaina piped up with a very emphatic, "And we are coming back next year Mom! Don't forget to sign us up." Stony Lake is always the first thing on our summer schedule before we start to make plans for anything else.

So when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and things started closing down I was worried. A news report stated that church camps were hit hard and two out of every three camps were canceling programs. And most alarming is that some of those camps were closed permanently and the land sold. I reached out to Pastor Dan, who reassured me that the camp director, C.J. and Nicole were o.k. and that Stony Lake was going to weather this pandemic. He also said that we would be looking to support them. I know a lot of families like ours did not ask for a refund this summer but instead donated that money to support the camp through this hard time.

C.J. and Nicole put together a program called Quarantine Campfire, which was a Zoom meet-up with Nicole and the band playing camp songs and singing with all the kids and checking in with them. My kids looked forward to those meet-ups, which gave them a chance to experience a little bit of Stony Lake during the pandemic. It was something the kids really needed, a little piece of normal even if it was in a not-so-normal format.

This is a big reason why we are supporting the capital campaign for Stony Lake. Renovating the camp is great, and adding new buildings will make the camping experience even better. But giving back to C.J. and Nicole and all the counselors and staff who are the heart of Stony Lake is the biggest reason. Because they have been there for all of our Trinity kids. And of course we have Stony Lake marked on our summer calendar for when they re-open.

- Tess Lundgren



# Stony Lake Camp Capital Appeal

Every summer, 30 to 35 of Trinity's children and teens travel with Pastor Dan to Stony Lake Camp, our synod's camping ministry west of New Era near Lake Michigan. Stony Lake is part of our synod's "Living Water Ministries." The camp seeks to be a safe place for all of God's children to experience intentional community centered in Christ where they are formed in their faith, developed as leaders, and equipped as servants of the gospel. Summer weeks at Stony Lake have world-changing implications as participants experience the love of Christ in each member of the community and return home to share that same love with others.

For generations, Trinity has sponsored young campers at Stony Lake. Our congregation is now being asked to step up and make a significant capital gift to help launch new facilities at our church camp as it seeks to be a vital and relevant ministry in the years ahead. Living Water Ministries is embarking on its first major facilities renewal project and capital campaign in its 75-year history at Stony Lake Camp. We have agreed to embrace the capital appeal and raise up to a \$100,000 lead gift for the new construction.

Please see the brochure included with this newsletter mailing and consider a generous yearend gift to support this challenging capital appeal.



So far we have raised **\$55,116!** \* Thank you to everyone who has already given to the appeal in memory of Andy Larson. If you haven't already, please prayerfully consider giving a gift to help us build a cabin. Make your gift payable to Trinity and marked "Stony Lake Camp Capital Appeal." \* This number will be updated in Trinity's weekly eBlasts!





## Offer Your “Estimate of Giving” for 2021

November 15 was “Consecration Sunday” at Trinity. There was an invitation for members and friends of Trinity to make their Estimates of Giving for 2021, their pledges of offering giving for the year ahead, as an act of worship that morning. However, as we continue to refrain from “in person” worship, the people of Trinity are making their commitments for the year ahead by returning Estimates of Giving to the church office.

An additional “Estimate of Giving” form can be found on the back cover of this newsletter so that you may offer your pledge for our shared ministry in the year ahead – please plan to return your Estimate of Giving to the church office soon as our Finance Committee and Congregation Council use those estimates to plan the 2021 budget for our shared mission and ministry.



## Trinity is Live Streaming our Rejoice Service - How do I find it?

We are streaming our 9:15 a.m. Sunday “Virtual Worship” service on YouTube. To find it, do the following:

- Follow the home page link to “Virtual Worship” on Trinity’s website, select “video” to be connected to the stream.

OR

- Go to YouTube, either by opening the app on your phone or by visiting the webpage on your computer.
- Search for ‘Trinity Lutheran Church Grand Rapids.’ The first option should be one with a picture of our cross tower.
- When you click on it you will be brought to our channel. If the service is live (from about 9:10 to 10:20 a.m. on Sunday morning) there will be a video with ‘Live Now’ on it. Simply click on the video and you will be connected to the stream.
- We also save past services in a play list called ‘Rejoice Worship,’ so you can view a past worship service at any time. (On Sundays it may take a couple of hours from the time worship ends until the time that YouTube makes the video available).

*If you have a YouTube account, please subscribe to the Trinity channel. This will allow our videos to show up in your video feed and when we reach enough subscriptions allow us to change our YouTube url.*

Please Note: We are on GRTV!

Our Sunday services are being broadcast on GRTV channel 25! Our services air on Sundays from 11 a.m. to noon. The broadcast is a week behind, so this Sunday’s service will air next week. Find us wherever you find GRTV!



## Trinity’s Current Inclement Weather Policy

If you are thinking about driving to Trinity and the weather is snowy and/or icy, please reconsider. Typically when Forest Hills Public Schools close during the day, all Trinity daytime activities are cancelled and the church offices are closed. But it may not be realistic to base our building/programming plans on school cancellations this winter.

If an event is scheduled at Trinity and FHPS is not holding “in person” classes, please check WOOD TV8 or WZZM TV13 for updates on Trinity cancellations. Please be as certain as possible that it will be safe for you to be out on the road. We count on you to use your best judgment when it comes to your personal safety this winter!

# December Birthday and Anniversary Celebrations!

## **December 1**

Grace Gooch

## **December 2**

Maya Anderson  
Nancy Anderson  
Brenda Baker  
Jane Legault  
Nyki Lundgren  
Harper Posthumus  
Helen Slider-Johnson

## **December 3**

John Bradley  
Frank Remsburg  
Lucas Smokovich  
*Lindsey & Nathan Peters*

## **December 4**

Katelyn Basher  
Becca Gosch  
Linda Hicks  
Debbie Kulas  
Louise Pfau  
*Kristen & Michael Sytsma*

## **December 5**

Brittany Mathews  
Connor Price  
*Karen Betz-Griewahn & Elwyn  
Griewahn*  
*Amy & Glen Myers*

## **December 6**

Sarah Ashby  
Emily Larson

## **December 7**

Jacob Brackmann  
Marilyn Fredrickson  
Maya Rosloniec  
Michael Smokovich  
David Thorsen  
*Kelly & Matthew Blair*

## **December 8**

Charlotte Czerew  
Lily Lothschutz  
Erik Wood  
*Sandra & Bob Ortiz*

## **December 9**

Dale Barkema  
Ethan Curtiss  
Jack Danielson  
Christine Duyser  
Kori Grooters  
David Marquardt

(December 9 continued)

Kati Missman  
Gary Stevens  
Jason Stevenson  
*Sarah & T.J. Turnage*

## **December 10**

Brad Blair  
Cynthia Gardiner  
Shirley Kleiman  
Taylor Knoll  
Terry Knoll  
Jim Owens  
Breslin Waite

## **December 11**

Amy Fox  
Petra Rotzell  
Jim VanderWall

## **December 12**

Terry Brace  
Kathy Bush  
John Edwards-Linstrom  
Kim Engle  
Jack Frick  
Brenda Heacock  
*Marcy & Eric Larson*

## **December 13**

Riley Day  
Nicky Halverson  
Josey Johnson  
Luke Robach  
*Melody & Leo Ditchcreek*  
*Christine & Tom Malvitz*

## **December 14**

Kate Bredwell  
Michelle Morin  
*Judy & Terry Carlson*

## **December 15**

Lauren Gallagher  
Jodi Nikolajuk  
Jim VanDeusen  
*Nancy & Dave Krupp*

## **December 16**

Annierae Lang  
Meri Leidel  
Stephanie McLeod  
Toni Petersen  
Abigail Siminski

## **December 17**

Allie Dragoo  
Ethan Huckstep  
Jennifer Hughes  
Sandy Kishman  
Madelyn Malvitz  
Jim Smith  
Ted Turnage  
Madelyn Williams  
*Susan & James Boyse*

## **December 18**

Royce Frecka  
Sid Hoeksema  
Grayson Kimble  
Ben Schewe  
Lisa Wilson  
*Carrie & Dave Boer*  
*Laura & Joe Fisher*  
*Beth & John Hall*

## **December 19**

Evan Krummel  
Robert Linstrom  
Kyle McKee  
Tyler McPheron  
Scott Stoll  
Susan VandenBout

## **December 20**

Randy Kuntzman  
Amy Myers  
Sue Perry

## **December 21**

Bill Ahrens  
Jason Loepp  
Inara McNally  
Lauren Sytsma  
Dave Talsma  
*Sharon & Bill Schaefer*

## **December 22**

Henry Bouwman  
Joseph Elliott  
David Kuecherer  
Nathan Legault  
Sam Mielock  
Ethan Oliver  
Tom Price  
Bill Westveld

## **December 23**

Mike Horn  
London Laakko

## **December 24**

Julia Cole  
Marge Willman

## **December 25**

Amanda Lynn

## **December 26**

Michael Bernard  
Erin Childers  
Samantha DeBoer  
Dave Huckstep  
Kathy Meuser  
Nancy Moga  
Allison Tooley  
Bennet Wollen

## **December 27**

Zoe Bredwell  
Kayla Cairns  
Hannah Kuhlmann  
Sam Linstrom  
Nick Rodammer  
Nicholas Soczek  
Shawn Ulreich  
Sara VanderBaas  
Eric Wollen

## **December 28**

John Ardolino  
C. Bob Carlson  
Glen Myers  
Kelly Smith

## **December 29**

John Baker  
Larry Frazier  
Lara Freeburger  
Paige Lackey  
Calvin Platt

## **December 30**

Kirsten Begin  
Bill Brandner  
Karen Legault  
Cindy Mirque  
Alex Saum  
Brendan Saum  
Emma Vigna  
Holly Volkerding

## **December 31**

Grady Gooch  
Josh Keller  
Dan Prusak  
David Smoes  
Layton Sykes

*If you have a special milestone birthday or anniversary, please contact the main office at Trinity to let us know!*

# Estimate of Giving Form

Be welcome to clip out the form below to use it to pledge your Estimate of Giving for 2021! Additional copies will be available in the church office.

## My/Our Estimate of Giving for 2021

So that others may know God's grace and engage in God's work, I/we plan to offer \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week to support Christ's mission through Trinity Lutheran Church.

I/we additionally plan to offer \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week/month/year to service our building project mortgage.

- This amount reflects a commitment to percentage giving.
- This amount reflects a one percent increase in giving.
- I/we are unable to make a commitment at this time.

First and Last Name(s)

Street Address

City

State

Zip Code

Telephone

Email



2700 Fulton Street East  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616.949.2510 [tlcgr.org](http://tlcgr.org)

Office Hours: 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM (M-F)

**Mission:** *Trinity Lutheran Church is a dynamic family called by God to nurture each other in our daily journeys of faith and to joyfully increase our response to all people in need, sharing God's gifts of love and grace.*



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## Staff

**Direct Dial:**  
616.949.2510

(then dial extension #)



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