



# What's Happening at Trinity in January?

## Weekly at a Glance

### **Sundays**

*Virtual Sunday School*

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

Zoom Fellowship Time, 10:30 a.m.

### **Thursdays**

*Good Night Trinity*

## Daily Calendar

### **Friday, January 1**

*New Year's Day - Office Closed*

### **Sunday, January 3**

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

### **Monday, January 4**

Property Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.

### **Tuesday, January 5**

Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.

### **Thursday, January 7**

Endowment Fund Committee, 6 p.m.

### **Friday, January 8**

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

### **Sunday, January 10**

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

Middle School Youth Group, 2 p.m.

Confirmation Class, 3 p.m.

High School Youth Group, 7 p.m.

### **Monday, January 11**

*Messenger Submissions Due*

Congregation Council, 6:30 p.m.

### **Wednesday, January 13**

Bible Study Forum with Pastor Bob  
via Zoom, 10:30 a.m.

Youth & Family Committee, 7 p.m.

### **Thursday, January 14**

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

### **Friday, January 15**

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

### **Sunday, January 17**

Annual Meeting of the Congregation,  
12 p.m.

Middle School Youth Group, 2 p.m.

Confirmation Class, 3 p.m.

High School Youth Group, 7 p.m.

### **Monday, January 18**

Finance Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.

### **Tuesday, January 19**

Health Ministry Action Committee,  
6:30 p.m.

### **Wednesday, January 20**

Bible Study Forum with Pastor Bob  
via Zoom, 10:30 a.m.

### **Thursday, January 21**

Pandemic Prayer Group, 11 a.m.

Children's Ministry Meeting, 8 p.m.

### **Friday, January 22**

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

### **Sunday, January 24**

8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation

Parents Meeting at 11 a.m.

Middle School Youth Group, 2 p.m.

Confirmation Class, 3 p.m.

High School Youth Group, 7 p.m.

### **Monday, January 25**

Outreach Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.

Walk & Talk Zoom Gathering, 7 p.m.

### **Tuesday, January 26**

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

Tuesday Evening Women's Book Club,  
7 p.m.

### **Wednesday, January 27**

Bible Study Forum with Pastor Bob  
via Zoom, 10:30 a.m.

### **Friday, January 29**

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

### **Sunday, January 31**

Middle School Youth Group, 2 p.m.

Confirmation Class, 3 p.m.

High School Youth Group, 7 p.m.

# A Message from Pastor Bob Linstrom



**“It is as though we want to be dwarfs when God wants us to be giants”**

It is from page 10 of Desmond Tutu’s book, [Made for Goodness: And Why This Makes All the Difference](#),<sup>1</sup> written with his daughter Mpho Tutu, that his call to claim our ‘giant selves’ is issued. Don’t act small. Made in the very image and likeness of God, as the Genesis creation story tells us, we are made for goodness. From the front cover flap, the publisher sets forth the mission statement implicit in Tutu’s charge. “Now, more than any other time in history, our world needs this message: that we are made for goodness, and it is up to us to live up to our destiny.” We are made for goodness, and the world in which we live is poised to be remade in that image.

[Made for Goodness](#) was published ten years ago, but perhaps the urgency to embrace its teaching could not be greater as we begin 2021. In the spirit of his guiding principles of forgiveness and reconciliation, Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and post-Apartheid chair of the South African “Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” offers a compelling encounter with the darkness of life and invites the reader to take on that which brings light, disciplines of goodness, practices that are key to finding fulfillment, meaning and happiness for our lives.

As we begin to view the challenging year of 2020 in the rearview mirror, I would invite you to join me in early 2021 reading [Made for Goodness](#) and pausing weekly during my Wednesday morning adult forum for reflection and provocation. We will take on one chapter per week, a modest reading assignment of 15 to 20 pages weekly for those who acquire the text. But you will be welcome to join us even if you are not reading along. I will seek to summarize and represent Tutu’s themes in our weekly sessions.

Archbishop Tutu asserts that, created in the image of God, we are made for goodness. Let us explore this truth together.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Bob Linstrom

<sup>1</sup> Desmond M. Tutu and Mpho A. Tutu, [Made for Goodness: And Why This Makes All the Difference](#) (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010).

## [Made for Goodness](#) – a Wednesday Adult Forum



The people of Trinity are invited to join Pastor Linstrom in the winter of 2021 for a Wednesday morning Adult Forum study forum based on Desmond Tutu’s [Made for Goodness: and Why This Makes All the Difference](#). This multi-week study begins on January 13 and will be offered weekly on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. and via Zoom meetings and recordings.

The series will be using Tutu’s book as source material, will explore what it means that “we are made for goodness and it is up to us to live up to our destiny.” There will be ten copies of the book available in the church office for \$12 each. Additional copies of Tutu’s text are available online via Amazon or other book sellers.

With his daughter Mpho Tutu, we are encouraged to engage the work of Desmond Tutu, and the call to hope, joy and the claim to the goodness we were made for. The themes for the sessions in the weeks ahead are as follows:

January 13	Chapter 1 – “The Difference Goodness Makes”
January 20	Chapter 2 – “Stop ‘Being Good’”
January 27	Chapter 3 – “An Invitation to Wholeness”
February 3	Chapter 4 – “Free to Choose”
February 10	Chapter 5 – “The Habit of Wrongness”

Join us on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom this winter for study and conversation!

## 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)



The custom of making New Year's resolutions dates back over 4000 years ago to ancient Babylon and a 12 day religious festival, Akitu. During the festival, which took place in March, people would plant crops, crown a new king (or pledge loyalty to the existing one), make

promises to pay debts, and return borrowed items. The belief was that if they kept the promises the gods would look upon them favorably in the year to come. Our contemporary resolutions are often of a more secular nature with healthy eating, exercising more, spending less, and saving more as common resolutions. While customs and practices have changed throughout the ages, what remains the same in a new year is an opportunity to reflect and resolve to do better.

The start of a new year is also a time for planning and scheduling. Meetings, appointments, celebrations, trips, and various other reminders get added to our calendars. For any church committee, the calendar is an essential tool. On February 5, 2020, I was busy prepping bite-size appetizers and desserts along side the other members of the Hospitality Committee for the reception following the "Holden Evening Prayer Around the World." A few weeks later we had our "calendar meeting." The committee is responsible for coordinating the fellowship hour following weekly services and also most events at church that involve food. We plan menus, recruit volunteers, and help prep, set up, serve, and clean up at those events. The calendar included the Bound Conscience Forum Supper, Lenten Soup Suppers, Confirmation Reception, Mother's Day and Graduation Sunday, New Member Receptions (May and November), and the Parish Picnic Potluck and Pig Roast. These are some of the events that bring our congregation together in celebration and fellowship.

Shortly after that meeting, our in-person worship and times of fellowship were put on hold as the global pandemic made its way to West Michigan. Who could have imagined in March that our time of separation would continue for so long? I miss worshipping in church, offering the sign of peace in person, and gathering for those special events. I know that this time will not last forever and that we will, someday, make plans again and enjoy the presence of one another in worship and fellowship.

At the time of this writing it is mid-December and I just watched the Children's Christmas Program during the live stream worship. I watched it with a huge smile on my face and tears in my eyes as the children of our congregation told the story of the birth of our Savior and Lord, remotely from various locations. I was once again reminded that although separated physically, we remain connected through our faith. I was filled with a renewed sense of hope. Amidst challenging times, we know that God is with us. As we begin a new year with cautious optimism, our planning may not be fully underway, but it is closer, and we can still make resolutions. I resolve to carry that sense of hope with me and trust that God will see us through difficult times.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit Romans 15:13*

Jamie Kuntzman

## 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.

## January Giving - the Fiscal Year Draws to a Close

### Our Shared Stewardship to Support Trinity’s Mission and Ministry

*“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21*

January is the last month of Trinity’s fiscal year – the new budget year begins in February. As we prepare to adopt the new 2021 budget at the January 17 Annual Meeting of the Congregation, be reminded of the importance of your faithfulness in offering giving in the quiet of early winter at Trinity. Give generously and take your part in the vital mission that has been entrusted to us at Trinity.



## Trinity Lutheran Church Budget vs. Actuals

### Month of November 2020

	Budget	Actual	Variance Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	
Total Income	107,232	91,861	(15,371)	- 14.3%
Total Expenses	84,648	79,007	5,641	6.7%
Net Income (Loss)	22,584	12,854	(9,730)	



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

	Budget	Actual	Variance Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	
Total Income	922,903	1,049,328	126,425	13.7%
Total Expenses	932,635	818,469	114,166	12.2%
Net Income (Loss)	(9,732)	230,859	240,591	

# A Message from Associate Pastor Dan Schewe

## Necessity is the mother of innovation

For the past ten months, and who knows how many more, we have all been forced to make major changes in our lives. Work and school have moved into our homes and online in ways we have all had to adjust to. Our schedules have been forced to adapt in ways we may have thought impossible. We have traveled less, we have gathered in person less, and we have all learned how to use a myriad of video conferencing tools! There are so many ways our lives were forced to change that we are aware of and so many more we are still unconscious of.

Everyone and every industry has been forced to innovate due to this pandemic. We see it around us every day. Just think about getting takeout for dinner and how that process has changed. It was necessary for us to innovate.

We see this at Trinity in how we are projecting online worship into the future and how we envision groups gathering online. We, like everyone else, have had to innovate. It hasn't always been easy, but we have grown through it and learned so much.

Throughout this pandemic these signs of innovation have been one of the bright spots that have helped me get through it. Seeing how so many, in so many different ways, have found new ways of doing things, and in many instances better and more efficient ways that we were closed off from before. This has given me hope for our future.

Yes, this pandemic has forced us to change, and I think it has been a good thing.

We are also reminded that God is always up to something new. Again and again in the scriptures God shows a new direction for the people of God, one they may have been closed off to for a variety of reasons. But God helps them innovate and find their way through the new reality they are living in. Remember that God says to God's people "Behold I am doing a new thing" (Isaiah 43:19) and "Behold I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

God is ahead of us, pulling us toward the future God has for us. Ours is the task of following and trying to see the path laid before us. There will be struggles and we will mess it up, but these are the pains of growth. This was true in the past and is true for us now. God is leading us into new things and I, for one, am excited to see what they are!

Shalom,  
Pastor Dan



## Middle School News

### January and February Confirmation Class Schedule

The current plan is to continue Confirmation Classes and Middle School Youth Group via Zoom. The sessions are being recorded and saved to an unlisted YouTube playlist that families can access with a link from Pastor Dan. Watch your email for changes.

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.

February 7, 14, and 21: Youth group from 2 to 3 p.m. and class from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

February 28: Possibly service from 3 to 5 p.m. instead of class. Watch for updates.

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



# A Message from Assisting Pastor Karen Niemeyer



## GriefShare Seminar

Wednesdays, March 3, through May 26, 2021  
4 to 5:30 p.m.

Once again, we will be holding a weekly *Griefshare* Seminar, beginning Wednesday, March 3, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. and continuing for the next 12 weeks. If you are grieving the loss of a loved one, please join us. We will gather either in person in Trinity's library or online via Zoom – to be determined depending on the Covid-19 safety situation as we near March 3.

Whether we meet at church or online, our weekly gatherings will include a 40-minute video featuring nationally recognized experts on grief recovery topics such as "Is This Normal?" "The Challenges of Grief," "Grief and Your Relationships," "Why?" and "Guilt and Anger." Following the videos there will be time for discussion for those who would like to do so. A \$15 registration fee will cover the cost of each workbook.

Here are some comments about the seminar from past participants:

*Having been in GriefShare a year after my mother passed away was perfect timing in my grief process. Halfway into the classes, a grief I had suppressed from years prior resurfaced and I am grateful to have had this opportunity to face it and allow that grief to be acknowledged. GriefShare taught me not only how to be gentle with myself while I grieve, but also how to be gentle with others when they are grieving. Our in-person GriefShare meetings were interrupted by the pandemic orders to stay home. We all learned to navigate through Zoom and I feel the online meetings made our group more cohesive than when we were in person. So cohesive that we began a Zoom Bible Study together.*

Kris Baker

*I attended the GriefShare series of classes twice. I did not understand the journey I was embarking upon. I felt positive outcomes were support and strengthening my relationship with God. My journey continues, but I am at peace.*

Janet Chobanian

*The GriefShare program gave me an important perspective, to know that other people are working through many of the same questions and concerns that I had. By sharing with my fellow "grief journeyers" (face-to-face and quite well using Zoom), I could work to sort out my emotional and physiological reactions to the loss of a life-long partner.*

George Bauer

*Through my GriefShare group and weekly sessions, I found strength and weekly encouragement. Every one of us comes from a different background and situation. We are all looking for hope, comfort and ways to heal. It helped me find that strength through positive encouragement, realizing that grief has its ups and downs and there is no specific timeline, it is ongoing. While my grief is my own, others experience it differently. What works for me may not work for everyone, and that is okay. GriefShare has helped give me some tools and advice to work with and carry with me. I can organize and clarify my thoughts and ways of doing things now to help deal with stress and anxiety. I'm learning to set aside my pride and ask for help when I need it, not just from God, but a good friend that just listens, not offers advice. The GriefShare book is also a great resource to pull out and look back on when needed.*

Jane Ogilvie

Having come through a year when so many have experienced a variety of losses can make grieving the death of a loved one all the harder. Please consider joining us Wednesday afternoons to learn more about grief and how we might support each other on our journeys through the grief process.

To register, please contact me (*pre-registration is required for this seminar/support group*).

Together in Christ,  
Pastor Karen

# Children's Ministry

## Children's Programming offered Virtually

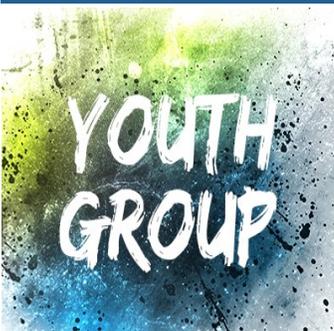
Our **Sunday School** program will continue to be offered virtually in 2021. Each week on Friday, registered families will receive an email with links to a lesson video, coloring pages, worship bulletin, and other materials. We use a Lutheran, lectionary-based curriculum, designed for children ages 3 years through grade 5. Registration is ongoing and can be found on the Trinity website under the "Children's Ministry" tab. If your child was registered during fall 2020, you will continue to receive lessons over email through the spring.

**Good Night Trinity** story time is hosted each week by a different Trinity member. These 10-15 minute read-aloud videos are a great way for kids to wind down before bed or relax anytime! Books chosen are faith-based or have a positive message. Parents can look for an email link sent every Thursday.

A great way to access Sunday School materials and Good Night Trinity videos is to join the **TLCGR Children's Ministry Facebook page**. Our "closed group" is open to Trinity families with newborn through 5th grade children and TLC staff. Posts can only be viewed by members of the group. We will use Facebook to stay connected, post weekly Sunday school lessons and videos, updates on events, photos, and faith-related activities.

In case you missed this year's delightful **Children's Christmas Program**, it can be viewed on Trinity's YouTube channel.

# High School News



Be sure to watch check our YouTube channel and look for my weekly emails for current updates. As we all know too well, plans can change quickly these days!

## First Sunday of the Month Bible Study – January 3

All high school youth, and their friends, are invited to join Pastor Dan for Bible study during the 9:15 a.m. service on January 3. 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 7 p.m.

All high schoolers and their friends are invited to join us for our weekly youth group on Sunday evenings at 7 p.m. We are continuing to explore who our neighbors are and how we can care for one another in these strange times. We are currently meeting on Zoom. For updates check your weekly emails from Pastor Dan and our weekly YouTube updates.

## Mission Trip

Next summer we are going to Winchester, Kentucky, from July 10–17 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: text @2ehkd8 to the number 81010.*

*Stay connected with our mission trip via Remind: text @a289cd to the number 81010.*

# 2020 Children's Christmas Program

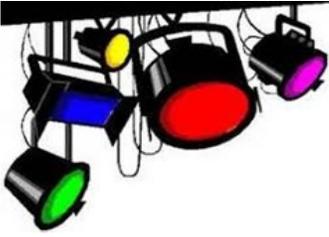


# Trinity Neighbors Contacts

We give thanks for the following Neighborhood Contacts:

Zip Code/Description	Area	Contact
49301-A	Ada	Joe & Mary Beth Iaria
49301-B	Ada	Bob & Liz Dever
49301-C	Ada	John & Kris Fox
49306	Belmont	Mike & Biruta Fessenden
49316	Caledonia	Chas & Marcia Schaner
49319-49321	Comstock Park	Lance & Kim Owens
49331	Lowell	Frank & Sandy Rothfuss
49341-A	Rockford	Nick & Nicole Rodammer
49341-B	Rockford	Dave & Sarah Huckstep
49418	Grandville, Wyoming	Dan & Sue Babin
49503	Grand Rapids Central	Steve & Brenda Heacock
49504	Grand Rapids West Side	Gail Mazurek
49505	Grand Rapids Northeast	Chris & Joanna Waite
49506-A	East Grand Rapids	Steve & Amy Stephan
49506-B	East Grand Rapids	Norm & Jan Palm
49506-C	East Grand Rapids	Lisa Mead
49508	Kentwood	Diane Field
49512	Kentwood	Chris & Joanna Kutschinski
49525-A	Northeast Grand Rapids	Brad & Gayl Kessel
49525-B	Northeast Grand Rapids	Jim & Sue Coates
49546-A	Cascade	Dan & Carol Butler
49546-B	Cascade	Ted & Sarah Frecka
49546-C	Cascade	Vince & Carol Schumacher
49546-D	Cascade	Grace Lanning
49546-E	Cascade	Bill & Renee Fisk
49546-F	Cascade	Bob & Louise Pfau
Misc.	Alto, Middleville, Dorr	Cindy Zientarski
Misc.	Southwest	Mike & Kim Danielski
Misc.	Northwest	Terry & Susan Knoll
Misc.	Jenison, Hudsonville, Nunica	Marjorie Paul and
Misc.	Allendale, Marne, Coopersville	Jeanette Sorenson





### Partners with a Passion for People: Dr. Bill and Kathy Bush

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, *but also to the interests of others.* Philippians 2:3-4

Bill and Kathy Bush are passionate about helping people, so it's no wonder that they have fashioned their family and their professional and volunteer lives around “looking to the interests of others.” The Bush's are a close family with four children, including Ben and wife, Amber, Lindsey and husband Nate, Elizabeth and Andrew, along with grandchildren Ryder, Ryce and Brylee.



When Bill, a pediatrician, and Kathy, a pediatric nurse, are not working together at Forest Hills Pediatrics, they have been active at Trinity in leading Bible studies or volunteering in the Stephen Ministry, the high school youth group, the Hospitality Committee, and the Congregation Council. But the outreach closest to their hearts is our church's participation in Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN). Kathy tells this touching story of when she first considered being one of Trinity's IHN Coordinators:

“After being encouraged to be a Trinity IHN Coordinator, I said I would give it a try. On my very first Sunday afternoon, as I was waiting for the families to be dropped off, I couldn't wait to show them their bedrooms that we had transformed from Sunday School rooms, the toys that I had neatly organized, and the perfect meal that would be served promptly at 6 p.m. The IHN van pulled into the parking lot, and four parents stepped out, with children everywhere. Some children were crying and hungry. Families asked where their rooms were located. Kids began messing up the toys. One little girl slid across the floor and fell, crying that she had hurt her arm. Her mom was upset and wanted to take her to the emergency room. Families had just arrived and I had no control! What am I doing, I wondered. *Why did I sign up for this? Why did people think I would be good at this?*

After my hubby came to check the little girl's arm (with no signs of fracture), parents settled in their rooms, a great meal was served, all were happy, and I was beginning to feel a little better about this. After the children were put to bed, the parents and I sat and talked. They loved their rooms that we had fixed for them. The kids loved the toys. The parents shared that it was the best meal they had eaten in a long time, and they thanked me for all that our church did to make them feel so safe and for how we greeted them with the love that our Lord would have shown to them. Driving home that night, I knew this is what I needed to be doing.”

And now, ten years later, Kathy shares, “I love the IHN program. My hubby and I are still dedicated to this program. I am thankful someone asked me years ago to give it a try. Bill and I know there is a role for all of us. I hope each person will find their role in one of Trinity's ministries.”

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.

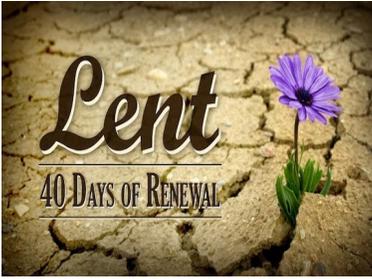
If you'd like to suggest people to feature in future articles, please contact Cathy Olson (cawolson@gmail.com) or Pastor Karen.

# Greetings!



**NEW YEAR'S BLESSINGS  
FROM OUR HEARTS TO YOURS!**  
Trinity Pastors & Staff

## Lent Begins in Worship on Ash Wednesday - February 17



### Mark Your Calendars for the Journey from Ashes to Easter

Lent arrives on February 17 in 2021, with our observance of Ash Wednesday. Mark your calendar now for the journey through Lent to Easter at Trinity in 2021:

- **Ash Wednesday**, February 17
- **Wednesdays in Lent** (February 24, March 3, 10, 17 and 24)
- **Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday**, March 28
- **Maundy Thursday**, April 1
- **Good Friday**, April 2
- **Easter Sunday, the Resurrection of Our Lord** – April 4

Plan now to be with us as we get “to the heart of the story” during Lent and Easter in 2021!

## Grace Groups Return for Lent 2021



Grace Groups are Trinity’s short term small group Bible Studies that take place during the five weeks of Lent, between Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, for weekly study and conversation. Trinity members volunteer to serve as small group facilitators and each Grace Group typically studies the same topic and uses the same materials. The small groups are scheduled on a variety of days of the week, times and locations. Grace Groups are especially appealing for people who are unable to make the time commitment for long term Bible Studies.

Because of the restrictions to meet together in person, Fall Grace Groups took place for the first time in 2020. Participants were pleased to be able to study and enjoy conversations via Zoom using a very thought provoking book by N.T. Wright entitled [God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and Its Aftermath.](#)

The members of Trinity’s Spiritual Growth Committee are currently working to form 2021 Lenten Grace Groups. Look for more information in the weeks to come about how to join a Grace Group!

# Health Ministries—Walk & Talk



## January Focus: New Beginnings

*In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. Genesis 1: 1-3*

This month we will spend time considering the importance of new beginnings. In this creation story from Genesis, God created structure out of chaos, marking the beginning of our world. As people of faith, we can also come together to create structure out of chaos.

The beginning of a new year is a perfect time to join in! Combining scripture, devotion and physical activity, in whatever ways work best for you, we are caring well for our minds, bodies and spirits. Each week you'll receive an email with a brief message, weekly devotion and monthly zoom link.

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

## Elder Safety - Important Advice from a Trinity Member



On November 20, I suffered a serious fall that left my face looking like an Oreo, half white, half black. It was then that I determined that action was needed to prevent any further episodes. Everyone's situation is unique, but here is how I approached it.

I took a visual and behavioral survey of every room, especially the ones I spent my time in looking for dangers and modifications that I could make to enhance my safety. Everyone's list will reflect this for their own circumstances. My discoveries included:

- I tend to go at warp speed. I am not in a race. I need to slow down.
- It is OK to let things go.
- Clear any entrance to room of obstruction.
- Turn on light first instead of trying to navigate in the dark. Use of night lights.
- Looked at each room where floor cords were lying.
- Safety assists - not all equipment is created equal. Installed bathtub grab bar, and highly rated grab bar across from commode.
- I have problems with stooping, bending and reaching. I arranged kitchen counters to hold equipment that I use daily to avoid that issue. I also arranged the refrigerator so that the products I use are on the top shelves.
- Removed hall rug that the beagle would mess up. Make sure rugs are no slip.

While my list is not complete, I feel more comfortable that the process has begun. I hope you will take the time to reflect on your own situation.

Please go to the following link for an article that I thought was relevant to our safety. It's entitled "A Sedentary COVID-19 Lockdown can impact Health in just 2 Weeks."

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/02/health/sedentary-lockdown-health-impact-wellness-partner/index.html>

I hope each of you have a safe new year filled with God's love.

Janet Chobanian, Health Advisory Committee, retired nurse

## On life in general...

I think it's fair to say we are ALL weary of this pandemic. It's been such a trying time on so many levels. Staying apart, wearing masks, not gathering for holidays, missing out on milestones, having virtual weddings and funerals -- these are not things we've had to deal with in our lifetimes.

God breathed life into us. We need to breathe Him into our lives too. Whether you take deep cleansing breaths, read a devotion, light a candle, set aside time for prayer, marvel in nature, or reflect on any number of other God given gifts, you will surely find a few moments of peace in the middle of all the chaos if you allow God in to help.

## On the vaccine...

Amazing work is being done by our scientists, engineers and researchers. Creating a vaccine for a novel virus is no small feat. They have risen above, worked tirelessly, and are now providing protection for us!

The first COVID-19 vaccines being distributed use messenger RNA (mRNA) technology that gives our cells codes for the gene of the coronavirus spike protein. That spike protein is what this coronavirus needs to attach to and infect cells. Our immune system will make antibodies to that spike protein after we are vaccinated. When exposed to SARS-CoV-2 in the future, our bodies will recognize that the spike protein shouldn't be there and will send lymphocytes to attack it.

The COVID-19 vaccine can NOT give you COVID-19. Since the vaccine is activating your immune system, you may have a sore arm, body aches, headache, fatigue and/or low grade fever after you receive it. These are not bad signs. This is your immune system responding in an appropriate way. Rest, drink lots of fluids and revel in the amazingness of our bodies!

Persons serving in health care settings who have patient exposure and residents of long-term care facilities will be the first to receive the vaccinations here in Michigan. Two doses of the current vaccine is needed. The second dose is administered three to four weeks after the first. Immunity (antibodies) are shown to be protective two weeks after the second dose.

Stopping a pandemic requires use of all the tools available. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Other steps, like masks and physical distancing, help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. Implemented together, we can move forward to post-pandemic life in a more timely fashion.

*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. - Romans 12:12*

In His Peace,  
Kristin Bradley, Faith Community Nurse



# Stephen Ministry

## Pandemic Fatigue

Are you experiencing pandemic fatigue—that feeling of being mentally and emotionally exhausted by everything that’s going on right now? We’re all facing different kinds of life challenges during this time:

- Isolation and loneliness
- Anxiety over health
- Grief
- Juggling work, childcare, and schooling responsibilities
- Financial strain or job loss
- Uncertainty about the future...

The list goes on. It’s no wonder we may be hit by pandemic fatigue!

But you don’t have to go through it alone. If you or someone you care about is experiencing difficulties like these, our Stephen Ministers are ready to listen, care, encourage, and be there to offer support.

A Stephen Minister will meet with you privately—by phone, by video chat, or possibly in person when it’s safe to do so—to focus on you and your needs. It’s free and completely confidential, and it offers real care, comfort, and hope.

You can find out more by calling Trinity’s Faith Community Nurse, Kristin Bradley.



## December Blood Drive a Great Success!

With a goal of 33 units, the donors of Trinity stepped up to raise 34 units of whole blood, 6 double red cell units and 1 unit of plasma, for a total of 41 units. These precious gifts will potentially saving 123 lives in our community.

First time Versiti donors were W. Baxter, L. Fox, M. Heldt and T. Reibschleger.

Milestone achievers were T. Parat and L. Postlewaite at 1 gallon, F. Ulreich at 2 gallons and S. Babin at 3 gallons.

It appears that our blood drive ministry is growing! Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us for our 2021 blood drives on Mondays March 1, June 7, September 27 and December 6.

Remember, the need is constant!



## Pandemic Prayer Group



Please consider joining fellow Trinity members for focused prayer time on the Third Thursdays of the month at 11 a.m. through Zoom. Together we will seek God's strength, hope, understanding and peace during this pandemic season.

Contact Faith Community Nurse Kristin Bradley with any questions and/or specific prayer requests.

<https://zoom.us/j/93322681488>

Meeting ID: 933 2268 1488

Passcode: 091483

## Are You Expecting or Adopting?



The Trinity staff would like to celebrate and share in your happy news of being pregnant or welcoming a new child through adoption. We like to know about it, so we can pray for and support your family. Our ministry to your baby/child begins before they are even arrive! Contact Director of Congregational Life Angela Davis with details.

### Are you interested in having your child(ren) or yourself baptized?

Contact Pastor Bob with the potential date(s) and worship service that will best work for you and your family.

## Zoom Fellowship Time after Worship



Join us on Zoom after the 9:15 a.m. live streaming of worship on Sundays. Typically, our Zoom Fellowship Time room opens at 10:30 a.m. or whenever the postlude during the worship service concludes.

Meeting ID: 750 8118 5763

Password: TN2RZe

Call your friends to let them know you would like to Zoom with them over coffee on Sundays. You never know who might "pop in" to say hello to the group!

# New! Trinity Partners in Prayer with Exalta Health

Trinity members have been invited to lift up the work that takes place at Exalta Health through quarterly prayer requests. Exalta Health provides quality medical, vision, dental, behavioral and spiritual care services. Unemployment, lack of insurance or other financial factors are not barriers for service. Their chaplain, Rev. Kristen Meyer, will be sending quarterly summaries of specific praises and needs so that we can be more intentional in our prayers. Please consider including some or all of the requests below in your personal prayer life. We all know the power of prayer!

## Exalta Health Prayer Update - December 2020

**Praise God with us** for providing financially for our work and pray for continued provision. In this season of economic strain we have been astounded by the generosity of organizations, foundations, and individual donors. We are grateful for gifts, small and large, some that came as a result of the hard work of grant writing and some that came as complete surprises. **Please pray** that our financial needs will continue to be met. The barriers to healthcare are high for so many; pray that we will have what we need to keep our doors open to our patients.

**Praise God** for our new billing/coding specialist. She fills a huge and urgent need here at the clinic. We continue to have an urgent need for a paid dental hygienist and for a volunteer optometrist to serve once a month.

**Pray** for our patients who are grieving the recent loss of loved ones. COVID-19 has claimed many lives, but our patients have also lost family members to suicide, long-term health conditions, and sudden, unexpected illness. Many of our patients will be facing the holidays this year with fresh losses. Pray especially for Fred, whose wife died just days after being approved to receive a liver transplant.

**Pray** for our patients whose anxiety is high because of the pandemic. Family, financial, and health issues have all intensified due to the changes COVID has brought, and we are seeing the results as we screen each patient for anxiety. While we pray for a vaccine and an end to the pandemic, we also dare to pray for an end to the underlying systemic factors that make our patients vulnerable in so many ways.

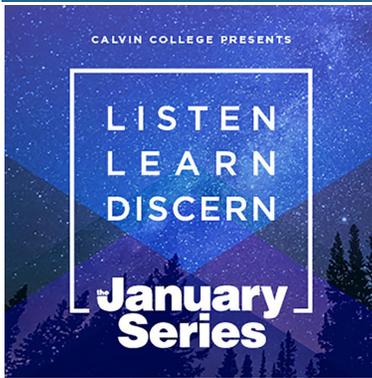
**Please pray with us** for our patients who struggle with life-limiting chronic pain. Because many of our patients are vulnerable financially, work days missed due to pain can cause significant hardship. Pray especially for Mary, who lost her job recently when she asked to be moved to a work task that would not trigger her pain. Pray that God will be at work as Mary and her care team – doctors, behavioral health specialists, and chaplain – seek healing for her.

**Please pray** for wisdom for our leaders as they navigate difficult decisions and try to balance necessary COVID precautions with providing the best care possible for our patients. **Pray also** for continued provision of the PPE (personal protective equipment) we need in order to stay safe and able to serve.

**Pray** for daily encouragement, renewal, and hope from God's Word and Spirit for our often weary staff.



## January Series at Calvin University



Celebrating their 34th year, the award-winning January Series is one of the leading lecture and cultural arts series in the country. Calvin University has a long tradition of providing a free liberal arts education for 15 weekdays in January. The speakers are well-versed and respected in their fields of expertise. There is an overall focus on issues of the day which cultivate conversations for further understanding.

This year, due to COVID-19, the audience will be completely virtual. All are welcome to listen, learn, and discern during the 2021 January Series. Some of the topics and speakers included in this year's lineup are:

- "Our Future with Pandemics" with William Garvelink, an American diplomat and former ambassador to The Democratic Republic of Congo. He will speak on the COVID crisis, lessons learned from Ebola, and share why he believes pandemics will continue to be a part of our future.
- "What is the Color of Compromise?" with Jemar Tisby in celebration of MLK Day. He is an award-winning author, speaker and president of *The Witness: A Black Christian Collective* where he writes about race, religion and culture, and he is a co-host of *Pass the Mic* a podcast amplifying voices for a diverse church.
- "Christians, Climate & Culture" with Katharine Hayhoe, an atmospheric scientist who studies climate change. She is passionate about bridging the broad, deep gap between scientists and Christians. She is the host of the PBS digital series, *Global Weirding: Climate, Politics and Religion*.

To receive the link for these and twelve additional presentations, simply visit [calvin.edu/January](http://calvin.edu/January) and register. Registration is required, but the January Series is completely free. All presentations begin at 12:30 p.m. and last approximately one hour.

## Help for Non-Profits During Uncertain Times

SMALL ACTIONS  
X LOTS OF PEOPLE  
= BIG CHANGE

For many months ahead, there will be a huge number of people with continued need for help with the basic necessities of living such as food and shelter. Please reach out, as you are able, directly to non-profits in the greater Grand Rapids area with financial support and gifts-in-kind. During the pandemic, every organization would welcome your help and most have ways to donate online.

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 would like suggestions for how to best be of help to others, please be in touch with Director of Discipleship Sylvia Stouten. She would be happy to assist you in exploring ways to help our neighbors in Grand Rapids during this incredibly difficult time.

## Mission Endowment Fund Distribution

From Trinity's Mission Endowment Fund, the 2020 distribution for benevolence totaled \$20,000.00. After careful consideration, the members of the Outreach Committee and the Congregation Council made the following decisions regarding the five organizations that would benefit financially from these one-time gifts:

- Living Water Ministries General Scholarship Fund—to help families across the state with limited financial resources send their children to camp.
- Blessed by Brookelyn—provides alternative activities and mentorship opportunities for area at-risk youth required to complete community service hours.
- Heartside Gleaning—empowers residents to become healthier through increased access to healthy food and nutrition education.
- Exalta Health—provides health and dental care to those who do not have access to much needed services. (Please see page 18 of this newsletter for details).
- Dégagé Ministries—specifically to help fund its new practice of paying select patrons to do the work otherwise done by volunteers prior to the pandemic.



## A Clean Start in the New Year

As you plan ahead, please be aware that we will once again be collecting cleaning supplies for distribution to area food pantries and social service agencies. Especially now, such things as laundry detergent and assorted household cleaning necessities are difficult for many people to afford.

So why not buy a laundry basket or cleaning bucket and fill it with cleaning supplies? Here are just a few suggested items:

- dish detergent, all purpose spray cleaner, powdered cleanser
- glass cleaner, disinfectant (bleach or other), disinfectant wipes
- toilet bowl cleaner, toilet bowl brush
- sponges, scrub brush, rubber gloves, paper towels
- laundry detergent, stain remover, fabric softener sheets

Please drop off your donations during the months of January and February in the labeled black bin located in the entryway of the main entrance on the west side of the church building.



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# Thank You Notes



Thank you to all who helped with donations and/or deliveries of the college care packages in November. With your help, 49 students received a care package before Thanksgiving, as they finished course work and prepared for final exams. The special care packages are always appreciated and loved by the students.

Jamie Kuntzman

Thank you Trinity Lutheran Church family for all of your kind words, cards and prayers during Bill's birthday, illness and passing. All were a comfort to us, and my family feels blessed by your care and concern.

Gratefully,  
Marcia McClimans

To my friends at Trinity, a big thank you for the beautiful poinsettia delivered by Norm Palm. What a reminder of the beauty and love in God's world.

Janet Chobanian

## **Thank you note excerpts from several non-profits among many gifted by Trinity:**

- Thank you so much for the donation that Trinity is making to Heartside Gleaning! I was really thrilled when I heard this news. You can be assured that these funds will be put to good use to provide healthy food to those in greatest need. We are very grateful to your congregation!

Sincerely,  
Lisa Sisson, Director  
Heartside Gleaning Initiative

- Thank you for walking alongside us as we walk alongside our community during these constantly changing and challenging days. We are thankful for your investment in our work.

Sonja Forte, Executive Director,  
Baxter Community Center

- Thank you so much for your recent donation in support of our work here at SECOM. As we continue through 2020 we remain committed to supporting our neighbors in the best possible ways while also taking all necessary precautions against COVID-19.

Joy Petroelje, Executive Director,  
SECOM Resource Center

- We are sincerely grateful for your recent donation. Gifts like yours allow Safe Haven Ministries to provide survivors of domestic violence not only a place of safety in crisis, but also the educational and emotional support needed for each individual to flourish in the community.

Megan E. Hopkins, Executive Director  
Safe Haven Ministries



## 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!

# January Birthday and Anniversary Celebrations!

## January 1

Cameron Brandstadt  
Spencer Kuipers  
Matt Mencarelli

## January 2

Annalisa Campbell  
Serafiina Ege  
Rob Mirque  
Bob Ortiz  
Liz Schmebling  
*Dolly & Mike Lowe*

## January 3

Lyman Harrison  
Margaret Hartline  
Russell Langenburg  
Lauren Williams

## January 4

Steven Cairns  
Rachel Zollman

## January 5

Tammy Engblade  
Bill Leidel  
Travis McMillan  
Neil Sender

## January 6

Maxwell Cothorn  
Shekinah Kawulu  
Brad Kessel

## January 7

Katherine Lown  
Allison Radke  
Amy Stephan  
Taylor Sytsma  
*Stacey & Brian Phillips*

## January 8

Kenden Hantle  
Mary Jo Peterson  
Michael Spalding  
Lisa Warren

## January 9

Rachele Battreall  
Anneliese Meeuwsen  
Adam Petrick  
*Niki & Rob Ferguson*

## January 10

Donald Barsema  
Caylyn Moglia

## January 11

Emily Ashby  
Brian Bakkila  
Jim Billings  
David Candela  
Cameron Czerew  
Julie Murray  
Paula Tibbe

## January 12

Richard Duyser  
Mari Franz  
Brian Phillips

## January 13

*Jane Ogilvie*  
*Annie & Jim Hudson*

## January 14

Brenda Donahue  
Andrea Dudley  
Matt Hantle  
Lisa Keller

## January 15

Jordan Fox  
Andrew Glenn  
Anna Hale  
Caitlyn Harrison  
Brian Meuser  
Laura Reges  
Lisa Reiersen  
Owen Tesch

## January 16

Chris Becker  
Andrew McLeod  
Amy Parshall-Peters  
Cheryl Reeve

## January 17

Bob Carlson  
Kyle Helzer  
Jan Jacobson  
Sheri Mason  
Deborah Rohde

## January 18

Mike King  
Mary Kuhlman  
Jan Palm  
*Lauren & Colton Wright*

## January 19

Bob Dever  
Lisa LaFleur  
Jackson Mester

## January 20

Krysta Billock  
Diane Biser  
Burke Hungerford  
Kris Racek

## January 21

John Derbin  
Michelle Feutz  
Michelle Lee  
Eliana Meeuwsen  
Evelyn Scalabrino

## January 22

Chad Bradbury  
Bill Day  
Ruth Helzer  
Dan Schewe

## January 23

Keith Gohlke  
Bill Keller  
Andrew Pupel

## January 24

Doug Bacon  
Kate Bishop  
Sam Cole  
Noah Kuhlmann  
Kathy Wilcox

## January 25

Kelli Basher  
Jennifer Brown  
Judy DeStefano  
Tess Lundgren  
Melissa Owens  
Brad Selleck  
Jeanette Sorensen  
Will Thorsen

## January 26

Avery Fox  
Brandon Kimble  
*Christy & John Kendall*

## January 27

Larry Lindquist  
Matt Ludeman  
Todd Osbeck  
Don Otten  
Jeff Postlewaite  
Veda Stevenson

## January 28

Gretchen Bieneman  
Sam Bishop  
Karl Crist  
Andrew Fox  
Jim Krug  
Melissa Mazurek  
Cora Sawhill  
Madeline Schmebling

## January 29

Jaclyn Abbate  
Katie Bowman  
Bill Brock  
Beth O'Connor  
Maya Rubenstahl  
Jeanie Wilkinson

## January 30

Garrett Havard  
Rick Kulas  
*Molly & C.J. Havard*

## January 31

Rachel Engle  
K.C. Fawcett  
Francesca Fuger  
Drew Hutchinson  
Giulia Mencarelli  
Jacob VanZalen

*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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Rev. Karen Niemeyer, Assisting Pastor (ext. 112)  
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Rachele Battreall, Director of Family Ministry  
[rachele.battreall@tlcgr.org](mailto:rachele.battreall@tlcgr.org)

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