



The Messenger

Homeless at Christmastime?

IHN Coming to Trinity December 11 to 17, 2023

Let's help IHN families feel the warmth, love, and Christmas spirit here at Trinity during the week of December 11 to 17.

Please sign up today to keep these families from sleeping in their cars or on the streets during the Christmas season.

May the joy of the holiday season be with all of us. Thank you for volunteering!

Kathy Bush, Trinity's IHN Coordinator

To donate groceries: <https://tinyurl.com/nxpetcuc> To volunteer onsite: <https://tinyurl.com/2p98a9mc>



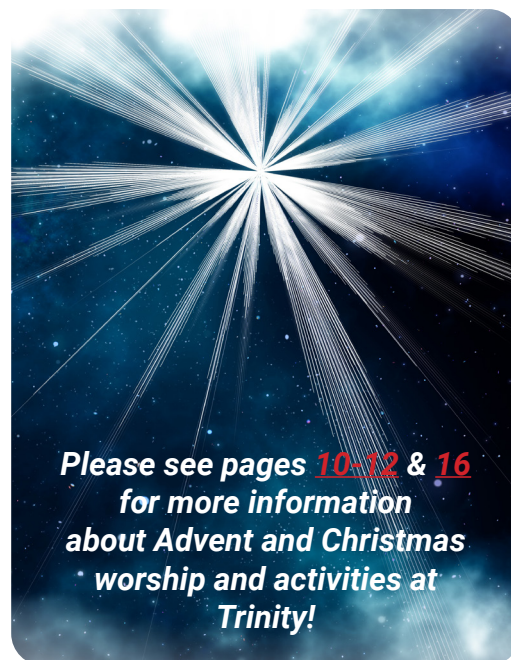
Advent Begins!

Wednesday Evening Midweek Vespers

Join Us for Supper & Holden Evening Prayer!

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. **Wednesday Midweek Vespers will be offered on December 6, 13, and 20 at 6:30 p.m. following a simple 5:30 p.m. supper in the Courtyard (see [page 10](#) for supper details).**

Pastor Dan Schewe will provide the homily weekly and will join cantors in leading a liturgy offering the well-loved vespers service of Holden Evening Prayer with support from Dr. Darlene Kuperus at the piano. Add a discipline of midweek worship to your journey to the manger in Bethlehem in December 2023!



Please see pages [10-12](#) & [16](#) for more information about Advent and Christmas worship and activities at Trinity!

Upcoming Fellowship Events

Mark your calendar and don't miss these fellowship opportunities!

Jan. 13, 2024 • 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Bunco Game Night & Potluck Dinner

Jan. 21, 2024 • 11:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Annual All Congregation Potluck & Meeting

Jan. 28, 2024 • 10:15 a.m. to 1 p.m.
KCAH Meal Pack & Brunch

Feb. 21 to Mar. 20, 2024 • 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Lent Soup Suppers & Midweek Services

What's Happening at Trinity in December?

Weekly at a Glance

Sundays

Traditional Worship, 8 a.m.*
Rejoice Worship, 9:15 a.m.
Livestreaming of Worship, 9:15 a.m.
Sunday School/Christmas Prgm Practice, 9:30 a.m.
(No Sunday School Dec. 24 & 31)
Traditional Worship, 10:45 a.m.*
Livestreaming of Worship, 10:45 a.m.*

* 8 and 10:45 a.m. worship will NOT be offered on Dec. 24. Please join us in the evening for Christmas Eve worship at 3, 5, 7, or 9 p.m.

Mondays

Stroller Barre, 9 a.m.
Band Rehearsal, 6 p.m.
(No activities Dec. 25)

Tuesdays

TLC Quilters*
Fit4Baby, 7 p.m.

Wednesdays

Power Bend & Stretch Fitness, 9 a.m.
(Not meeting Dec. 27)
Midweek Advent Supper, 5:30 p.m.
Midweek Advent Vespers, 6:30 p.m.
(Dec. 6, 13, and 20)

Thursdays

Resound Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6 p.m.
(No rehearsal Dec. 28)
Choosing Peace & Serenity AFG, 7 p.m.
Trinity Choir Rehearsal, 7:15 p.m.
(No rehearsal Dec. 28)

* Contact Carol Hendricks at cahendricks14@gmail.com for exact dates and times.



Daily Calendar

Friday, December 1

Art Makers Set-Up
Women's Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, December 2

Art Makers Art Show, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Medicaid/Medicare Help, 10 a.m.
Youth Cookie Decorating/Delivery, 2 p.m.

Sunday, December 3

High School Bible Study, 9:15 a.m.
Advent by Candlelight, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, December 4

Blood Drive, 12:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
In The Image Volunteering, 1 p.m.
Stephen Leaders Meeting, 1:30 p.m.
Beyond Belief Rehearsal, 6 p.m.
Property Committee Mtg, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, December 5

LWR Quilters, 9:30 a.m.
Women's Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.
Medicaid/Medicare Help, 10 a.m.
Tai Chi for Arthritis, 10:15 a.m.
Executive Comm Mtg, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, December 6

Outreach Comm Mtg, noon
Odyssey of the Mind, 6 p.m.

Thursday, December 7

Tai Chi for Arthritis, 10:15 a.m.
Oasis, 4:30 p.m.

Friday, December 8

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

Saturday, December 9

Rehearsal: Children's Christmas Prgm, 10 a.m.
Medicaid/Medicare Help, 10 a.m.

Sunday, December 10

IHN Week Begins
Children Arrive - Program Prep, 10:15 a.m.
Children's Christmas Program, 10:45 a.m.
Christmas Cookie Reception, noon
Congregation Council Budget Mtg, noon
Stephen Ministry Continuing Ed, 12:30 p.m.
High School Youth Grp Service Day, 1 p.m.
Stephen Ministry Peer Sup. Grp 1, 1:30 p.m.
Stephen Ministry Peer Sup. Grp 2, 1:30 p.m.

Monday, December 11

IHN Onsite
The Messenger Deadline
Schubert Male Chorus Bd Mtg, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 12

IHN Onsite
LWR Quilters, 9:30 a.m.
Women's Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.
Tai Chi for Arthritis, 10:15 a.m.
Care & Share, 10:30 a.m.
Communications Comm Mtg, noon
Worship & Music Comm Mtg, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, December 13

IHN Onsite
JOYful Days Holiday Lunch at Red's, 11:30 a.m.
Odyssey of the Mind, 6 p.m.

Thursday, December 14

IHN Onsite
Tai Chi for Arthritis, 10:15 a.m.
(Last Tai Chi of the year)

Friday, December 15

IHN Onsite
Women's Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.
Food Prep for Smörgåsbord, 3 p.m.

Saturday, December 16

IHN Onsite
Celebration of Music Rehearsal, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Choir Room
Christmas Eve Music Rehearsal, 9 a.m.-noon
Sanctuary
Celebration of Life, Roy Lamprich, 3 p.m.
Scandinavian Smörgåsbord, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 17

IHN Week Ends
High School Youth Group, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 19

Odyssey of the Mind, 6 p.m.
Book Club, 7 p.m.
Celebration of Music: VOXmas, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 20

Pack 3015 Comm Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 23

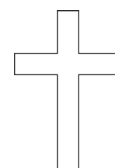
Christmas Eve Music Rehearsal, 9-11 a.m.

Sunday, December 24

Christmas Eve
Rejoice Christmas Eve Worship, 9:15 a.m.
Candlelight Service, 3 p.m. (with livestream)
Candlelight Service, 5 p.m.
Candlelight Service, 7 p.m.
Candlelight Service, 9 p.m.

Monday, December 25

Merry Christmas!



A Message from Pastor Smith

Rev. Dr. Dennis Smith — A Brief History

Some people know from an early age where life and the Holy Spirit are leading them. Like his mother, our older son, Timothy, is one of them. From his second year of high school, he knew he wanted to be a U.S. Foreign Service Officer. He pursued that goal like a rocket to Mars. Yes, I know we have no embassies there, so he and his wife Kelley are currently serving our country in Abuja, Nigeria.

My vocational path was a bit more meandering. Born in Grand Rapids and raised in the neighboring suburb of Wyoming, I am the oldest of four siblings. Until my mid-teens, my parents owned and operated a small “Mom and Pop” restaurant across from a General Motors fabrication plant. Our lifestyle rose and fell with the vicissitudes of strikes and layoffs across the street from the restaurant. Though I never thought of us as poor, we ate a lot of chicken necks and leftover soup when the factory was on strike.

My dad wasn’t much interested in “church” life and spent most Sundays cleaning the restaurant. Mom, on the other hand, was the choir director of Southlawn Church of God, a spin-off denomination from the Great Awakening. Though a very nurturing group within the ranks, they did not harbor kind thoughts toward non-Christians, atheists, or Catholics. They also didn’t have many good things to say about Lutherans.

As a matter of doctrine, they despised much of science and heretical notions such as the Holy Trinity. For these reasons and some others, I drifted away from the faith of my childhood and never really considered a vocation that had the word “church” in it for a long time.

When the restaurant business no longer provided enough income to make house payments and afford chicken necks, my father joined the ranks of the GM workers across the street. There he learned about General Motors Institute, an engineering school that allowed students to pay for their college education by working half the time for a GM facility. I jumped at the chance and dove head first into the world of physics, math, and material science. During my freshman year at GMI I met Paula, a UofM student dedicated to nurturing young minds as a teacher, focusing especially on those caught up in endemic poverty.

It was 1967–1968, a tumultuous time in our history, a time when a number of my friends and classmates were drafted into the conflict in Southeast Asia, some never to return. At home, cities burned with racial and political unrest. I was safe with a college deferment, but Paula’s idealism caught up with me. We married in August of 1969, at Trinity Lutheran Church (LCA) in Flint. The first Lutheran sermon I heard connected the gospel with M.L. King’s freedom march on Selma. I was hooked. Thank you, Holy Spirit, and your proxy, Pastor Dave Markowich.

I dropped out of GMI in December and was immediately drafted.

1970 was the first year of the so-called draft lottery – a system whereby draftees were called up based on their birthdates drawn from a hat. I got 306 and have never played any lottery since. I did, however, enroll at University of Michigan and complete my undergraduate degree in physics with an emphasis in teaching. My supervising student teacher and I hit it off right away. Together we began writing a physics curriculum designed to attract more minority students and women, both considered to be non-traditional students in those days.



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A Message from Pastor Smith (cont.)

Timothy was born in 1975 and near the end of his second year it became obvious that he did not fare well during Michigan winters. We moved to Dallas, Texas upon my completion of a master's program. Though both Paula and I continued teaching in Dallas, it became clear that only one of us could give birth to another child. The other had to find a job that paid better than one teacher's salary. While I was employed as an engineer/manager at Texas Instruments in Dallas, Joshua became the latest addition to our household. During those years, we became members of Ascension, a small Lutheran congregation with a large commitment to mission. As we became more involved with the congregation, the Holy Spirit continued to nudge. I continued to resist, until Paula finally spelled it out: "You know what you are being called to do and you cannot use me or our children as an excuse not to pursue it."

I applied to Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, half figuring that a degree in physics was the least likely preparation for a vocation in public ministry. I was wrong. As my older son Timothy once put it, "That's when we began our descent into downward mobility..." I would add, "...while basking in the riches of God's grace and buoyed up by the Holy Spirit working through the community of this church."

Ordained in 1986, I have served several congregations in Texas and Michigan. I have been richly blessed by this Lutheran limb of the Body of Christ and pray that it has experienced some of the largess of the Holy Spirit through my ministry. Paula continued her passion for shaping young minds as a consultant, teacher, and elementary principal. I believe the Holy Spirit has insinuated itself into the lives of our children and grandchildren as well. Joshua, our younger son, and his wife Rita teach English in Shanghai, China. Our two granddaughters are students at Kalamazoo College. Our grandson, Owen, is a residential student at Cranbrook Academy.

This meandering vocational path has finally led me to Trinity Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, my hometown. Though only part-time and for a limited tenure, I look forward to being a part of this community of faith and pray that we will be mutually blessed by our time together. I still harbor a passion for teaching and believe that the riches of our faith tradition are a blessing the world desperately needs.

As we enter this season of anticipation and celebration, may the peace of Christ be with you always.

Rev. Dr. Dennis B. Smith

Guest Preacher at Trinity on Sunday, December 17

Megan Floyd, one of Trinity's recipients of the "Pastor Karen Niemeyer Scholarship Fund," will be Trinity's guest preacher at all three worship services on Sunday, December 17. Megan is a student at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN and is currently fulfilling an internship at Trinity Lutheran Church in Kalamazoo.



Trinity Congregation Council Members 2023-2024

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 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 church office.

Congregational Council Executive Committee

President: Karen Unruh
Vice President: Steve Heacock
Secretary: John Fox
Treasurer: Chris Engle

Congregational Council Members

Children's Ministry: Sarah Huckstep; **Communications:** David Marquardt; **Endowment Fund:** Brad Kessel; **Fellowship & Hospitality:** Jamie Kuntzman; **Finance:** Chris Norton; **Health Ministries:** Michelle Morin; **Helping Hands:** Susan Knoll; **Human Resources:** Steve Heacock; **Outreach:** Dan Butler; **Property:** Erick Kind and Lauren Wright; **Publicly Engaged Church:** Michelle Feutz; **Spiritual Growth:** Bill Bush; **Stewardship:** Jacquie Murray; **Worship & Music:** John Fox; **Youth & Family Ministry:** Chris Becker and Dakota Morin (Youth Representative)



A Message from Council President Karen Unruh

The season of Advent is upon us, a new year of the church calendar and a time of anticipation and preparation. This season takes on an additional meaning for Trinity this year, as we enter a new time of transition, anticipating and preparing for our **next senior pastor**.

Over the past few months the Council has begun some of these preparations, most significantly gathering information needed for our Ministry Site Profile (MSP). Thank you to those members who completed our survey and attended the listening sessions; your feedback is so important and appreciated! We anticipate compiling responses over the next couple of months and approving the completed MSP at our January Council meeting. In addition, a **call committee** has been formed and approved by the Council. Once the MSP is approved by the Council and synod, we can begin to receive applicants through the bishop's office, and the work of the Trinity Call Committee will begin.

While the call committee does their work of selecting a pastoral candidate, we will continue the mission and ministry of this church, work to which we are all called and for which we are all equipped. Paul writes, "He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12). "For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness" (Romans 12:4-8).

Pastors Dan and Kari, along with our interim Pastor Dennis Smith, will continue their calling to minister and teach. The Council, staff, Sunday school teachers, youth and Bible study leaders, and committee members continue to lead diligently. We can all share our gifts of encouragement, giving, sincerity, compassion, and cheerfulness.

We will also continue to pray for the church and for one another. Below is a prayer from our synod specifically for times of pastoral transition. I hope that it will become part of our communal prayers each Sunday, our Council and committee meetings, and even your own prayers at home:

Loving God, be with us and give us confidence in your presence and love in Jesus Christ. Guide us during this time of discernment. Fill our leaders with your wisdom. Keep us mindful of the work you would have us do. Lead us and guide us O Lord to be about the work of your kingdom even as the search for our new senior pastor continues. Bless all who have taken on extra responsibility, and fill them with a sense of your love and presence. We pray in your Son's name, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Financials

Trinity Lutheran Church Budget vs. Actuals

Month of October 2023

	Budget	Actual	Variance Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	
Total Income	107,326	120,242	12,916	12.0%
Total Expenses	96,741	102,236	(5,494)	-5.7%
Net Income (Loss)	10,585	18,006	7,421	

2023 Fiscal Year-to-Date Thru October 2023

	Budget	Actual	Variance Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	
Total Income	909,169	993,109	83,940	9.2%
Total Expenses	900,691	861,501	39,190	4.4%
Net Income (Loss)	8,477	131,608	123,130	

TITHE.LY
Innovative church giving



Online Giving Through Tithe.ly

At Trinity, we use "Tithe.ly" for our online giving.

Online giving is so easy and convenient. Never miss a week even when you are out of town! To get started simply click on the 'Donate' button at the top of the

Trinity Website, scan the QR code to the left, or go to:

<https://get.tithe.ly>.

Please contact Trinity's Finance Administrator [Joanna Waite](#) in the main office if you need assistance.

Offer Your "Estimate of Giving" for 2024

November 19 was "Consecration Sunday" at Trinity. At all worship services there was an invitation for members and friends of Trinity to make their Estimates of Giving for 2024 as an act of worship that morning. **If you were unable to fill out your Estimate of Giving form, an additional one 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 return your completed form to the church office soon, as our Finance Committee and Congregation Council use these estimates to plan the 2024 budget for our shared mission and ministry.

Year-End Giving of Stocks & Securities

As you are planning year-end giving to Trinity, gifts of stocks and securities are made through Norris Perné & French. 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

For assistance, please contact Elizabeth Poole at 616.459.3421.

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.

A Message from Retired Pastor Bob Linstrom

With Deep Appreciation

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable,
if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things.*

*Keep on doing the things that you have
learned and received and heard and seen in me,
and the God of peace will be with you.*

Philippians 4:4-9

Beloved community,

The words above from Paul's letter to the Philippians were read when Rebecca and I were married on the shore of Lake Superior in the fall of 1984. They have been directive for me through all the years of my marriage, life, and ministry – I commend these words to you, from the Apostle Paul to the church he loved.

To the church I love, I remain deeply grateful for the kind sending that I have been experiencing among the people of this congregation. The November 5 luncheon, speakers, gifts, and kind words were significant, and your ongoing blessing in good words and wishes has been humbling. Thank you for your gracious sending.

For all who gave to the travel fund gift to send me off into retirement, I am sincerely grateful. As Rebecca and I embrace our getaways in the next couple of years, you will all be at the heart of resourcing those travels. I will send a report or two of our adventures. Your generosity has been amazing – thank you.

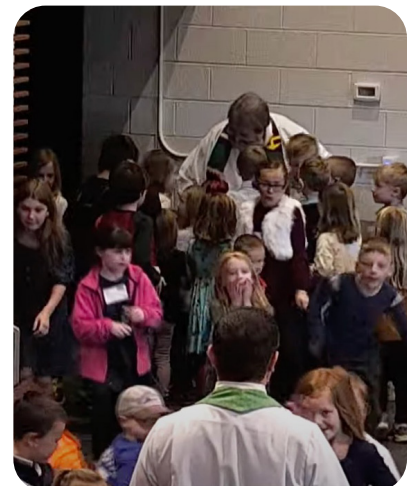
My pastoral relationship with Trinity Lutheran Church now concludes and I will refrain from involvement in the life of this congregation going forward. I will step away from any leadership or advisory role and from pastoral services, including baptisms, weddings, funerals, and ministries of visitation, and commend those acts to the called pastors at Trinity. All of that is the right thing to do as I pray for the ongoing mission of Trinity and your future new pastor. Going forward, I hope that you will remember my years among you and know me as a friend of the mission and ministry you share.

"A new thing springs forth – do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19) Let us be those who are attentive always to the new thing that our God is doing in the world, in our communities, and in our individual lives. I will be seeking such discernment in the weeks and months ahead.

It has been my distinct privilege to serve as one of your pastors at Trinity.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Bob Linstrom, Senior Pastor (retired)



A Message from Associate Pastor Dan Schewe

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you O Israel*

—O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, ELW 257

I love how this hymn encapsulates our Advent journey. I find the melody hauntingly beautiful. I feel that it holds the tension of the sadness and hope that we feel in this season perfectly, particularly when accompanied by strings.

In Advent we are reminded of the brokenness that surrounds us, and, these days, it is easy to see and feel. I can't go a day without being reminded how torn apart our world is between the political strife here in America and the wars abroad. We live knowing that things should not be as they are but find ourselves living in the middle of them. In this struggle we are encouraged to cry out to God.

We also live knowing the promises of God to come and be with us, to dry our tears and mend our hearts and the world. God has promised to be with us, in the middle of our pain and sadness. God will not abandon us, no matter what, even in times like ours.

We live constantly stretched, juggling these competing emotions.

This Advent and Christmas season, I want to remind you that God did not come to condemn us, to point out our flaws, or make us feel "less than" in any way. God was born among us to show us the love that He has for us and to give us a way to live full of love for each other. On Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus and this hope in our hearts.

In the darkness, light shines a way for us. In the middle of the pain and strife we experience, God is with us and calls us to be with each other.

Emmanuel, God with us. May we meditate on that this season, my friends.

Shalom,
Pastor Dan Schewe



Trinity's Inclement Weather Policy

When the Forest Hills Public Schools close during the day, all Trinity daytime activities are canceled and the church office is closed. When Forest Hills Schools announce a two-hour morning delay, morning programming at Trinity will be canceled. After 3 p.m. and on weekends, check WOOD TV8, WZZM TV13, or FOX17 about the status of our evening or weekend activities. Please be as certain as possible that it will be safe for you to be out on the road. We will miss you if you are unable to join us for worship or a church event, but we count on you to use your best judgment when it comes to your personal safety this winter!



A Message from Associate Pastor Kari Fast

Advent to Christmas: Celebrating & Participating in God's Work of Hope



Dear Trinity Family and Friends,

We soon enter the season of Advent, a season of *hope and expectation*, the season we anticipate the celebration of the birth of Christ and also acknowledge the hope and expectation that Christ will return to make all things new.

"...he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away. And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'" (Revelation 21:4-5)

An ELCA Bible study about Advent says, "Let Advent be a season [of] ...seeking out those places where *God is already at work undoing systems of suffering* and living in the *daring confidence* founded on faith..." As we celebrate Christ's birth with hopeful expectation, let us live this daring confidence founded on faith through lives of purpose, meaning, and joy.

Advent is a season of celebration, but also a season of introspection as we contemplate what must still be made new. We celebrate much, but also grieve, with tears on our cheeks, what is not right. We experience grief over those we have lost to death, broken relationships, and more as we await reparation or reunion in heaven. We can celebrate the Advent season, even with tears on our cheeks for those living in the anguish of war. These celebrations and sufferings happen even as we await Christ making all things new.

"...On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations..." (Revelation 21:2).

As a faith community, we celebrate with tears on our cheeks, having said goodbye to Pastor Bob. We await the call committee's search for a new senior pastor. Even as we mourn, we celebrate with confidence over the new things God will do in and through Trinity.

We celebrate, with tears on our cheeks, the joy of Christ's birth, God's love, and the Spirit's indwelling; as we live in *daring confidence* with purpose, meaning, and joy.

We celebrate, as we seek out God's work of *undoing systems of suffering*. We celebrate as we participate with God's work of hosting families in December who are unhoused. We celebrate as we participate with God's work of supporting the orphans of Christophe's Children. We celebrate as we participate in God's work – kindness, support, and generous sacrifice lightening others' suffering and pain.

The Trinity website says in bold lettering: ALL ARE WELCOME. It then continues with a prayer: "Living God, grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen."

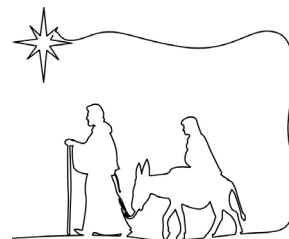
May we celebrate the birth of Christ even as we await Christ's return when all things will be made new; as we live in *daring confidence* with purpose, meaning, and joy.

Pastor Kari
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care

Advent Worship, Activities & Information

Advent Sundays: Journey to the Manger in Bethlehem

For four Sundays we gather during the season of Advent to make ready for the birth of the Christ child on Christmas Day. Each week we light another candle on the Advent wreath and our songs of anticipation are offered as the worship spaces begin to be adorned for Christmas. Join us as we begin the church year in Advent worship on Sunday mornings at 8, 9:15, and 10:45 a.m. (Please note: on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, which is also Christmas Eve, morning worship will be offered at 9:15 a.m. only, with Christmas Eve Worship services offered that evening (see [page 12](#) for more details).



Advent Potluck Suppers

Please join us for potluck suppers in the Courtyard on Wednesdays during Advent (December 6, 13, and 20). Supper will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by vesper service in the Sanctuary. Trinity will provide the entrée; attendees are asked to bring a dish to share. Look for the SignUp Genius in upcoming eBlasts. **We also need people to help set up for supper and to help clean up after supper.** The more helpers we get each week the faster we can all get

upstairs for the vespers service. Please contact [Tess Lundgren](#) if you have any questions.

Advent by Candlelight - Sunday, December 3

After a hiatus, Advent by Candlelight is returning this year on **Sunday, December 3 at 6:30 p.m.** Advent by Candlelight is an opportunity for women 10 and older to set aside the tasks of holiday preparations, step away from busy, crammed schedules, and focus on the wonder and beauty of the birth of Christ. We will share an evening of fellowship, reflection, and wonderful desserts as we prepare our hearts for the Christmas season.



We are looking for table hostesses who will decorate their tables in holiday flair. Different this year: we are asking participants to sign up for general seating as we come back together to reacquaint ourselves with each other and to make new friends. Also different this year: we are asking hostesses (and participants if they so choose) to make desserts for our buffet table rather than for their own table. We would like to offer an abundant table full of desserts that everyone may choose from.

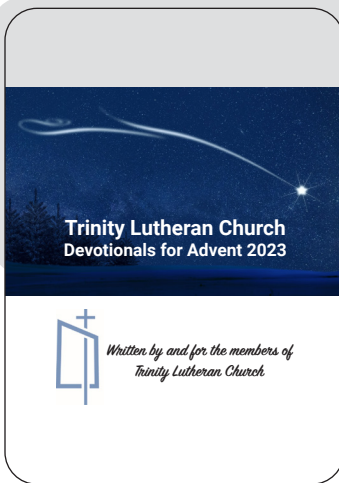
We will also be serving our traditional Christmas Tea. Tess has picked out 14 antique teapots and is looking for 6 more teapots that serve 8-10 cups each. Please let us know if you have a teapot to share for this event!

If you would like to host a table or would like to sign up to attend, please look for the signup in the weekly eBlast. If you have questions regarding this event, please contact [Tess Lundgren](#).

Christmas Eve Dinner for Our Worship Leaders

Our pastors, organist, and holiday musicians spend their entire day at Trinity on Christmas Eve as they prepare and lead all of our services. **We would like to provide a potluck meal for them to enjoy between the 5 and 7 p.m. Christmas Eve services.** If you would like to contribute to this meal please sign up in the eBlast link. If you have any questions please contact [Tess Lundgren](#).

Advent Worship, Activities & Information



Advent Devotional Booklet

Written By and For the People of Trinity Lutheran Church

Starting on December 3, each day's Advent devotion will be emailed directly to your inbox using the email address Trinity has on file. It will also be posted daily to Trinity's Facebook and Instagram.

JOYful Days Holiday Lunch: Wednesday, December 13

Come celebrate the holidays with friends as we enjoy lunch at Reds at Thousand Oaks in their Oak Leaf Lounge on **Wednesday, December 13 at 11:30 a.m.**



Find the link in the weekly eBlast to make your reservation. Space is limited to the first 50 guests signed up/on the attendance list. Guests are asked to pay \$10 which is just a portion of the meal. Trinity members and friends – men, women, singles, and couples – are all invited! For more information, contact [Tess Lundgren](#).

Scandinavian Smörgåsbord: Saturday, December 16

Join us on December 16 for Trinity's Scandinavian Smörgåsbord which provides an abundance of great food, a musical program, and a visit from Santa Lucia! Doors open at 5 p.m. and the meal begins at 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$15 per person. Payment can be made by cash or check sent to or dropped off at the church, or at the door. Please indicate that this payment is for the Scandinavian Smörgåsbord.

This event is a big undertaking and we especially welcome volunteers for the following:

- Make a Scandinavian side dish or dessert at home and bring to the event (recipes available if needed)
- Help with advance food prep at Trinity on **Friday, December 15** (laugh and talk while peeling potatoes, boiling and peeling eggs, etc.)
- Help set up the Courtyard for our event
- Help cook the food on Saturday
- Help serve during the meal by replenishing food items at the buffet
- Help clean up after the event and reset the space for our Sunday services

Please help us plan effectively for this special evening by RSVPing early to make this beloved program a wonderful success. Look for the signup in the eBlasts and/or contact [Kris Shannon](#) or [Tess Lundgren](#) with any questions.



Christmas Eve Worship at Trinity

Worship on Christmas Eve

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus's birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.



Join us on Christmas Eve, December 24, for one of four Candlelight Services of Holy Communion. All are welcome on this holy night as we gather for the proclamation of the birth of the Christ child and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and as we welcome the light that conquers darkness in our festival worship.

- 3 p.m. – Candlelight Service of Holy Communion, led by brass and organ
- 5 p.m. – Candlelight Service of Holy Communion, led by the Resound Bell Choir, brass, and organ
- 7 p.m. – Candlelight Service of Holy Communion, led by the Trinity Choir, brass, and organ
- 9 p.m. – Candlelight Service of Holy Communion, led by strings and organ

Director of Music and Organist Dr. Darlene Kuperus will be on the bench for all four Christmas Eve services and Trinity's pastors will all be taking part in our celebration of the Nativity of our Lord.

Join us in an evening of joyful proclamation!

Christmas Eve Livestreaming & Nursery Care

For those who are unable to join us in the church sanctuary for one of the four Candlelight Services of Holy Communion on Christmas Eve, **the 3 p.m. Christmas Eve service will be livestreamed and should be available on our YouTube channel early in the evening on Christmas Eve.**

For those who are in attendance and could use a bit of support with infants and very young children during Christmas Eve worship, **Trinity's nursery will be staffed from 2:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve.**

“I am bringing you
good news of great joy
for all the people.”




Mark Your Calendar!

ArtMakers Sale

A Holiday Sale Featuring the Work of 16 Professional Artists

**December 2
Saturday
9am- 4pm**

**Location:
2700 E. Fulton
Grand Rapids
Trinity Lutheran Church**



**Medicare and Medicaid
Open Enrollment Assistance:
Sign Up NOW!**

Trinity member Jo Murphy, Executive Director of Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program, is once again providing assistance to Trinity members. She will be available to assist both with Medicare benefits and with selection of a 2024 Prescription Drug Program. To sign up for a session in November or December, register at <https://tinyurl.com/mwnkyja2> or contact Helping Hands Coordinator [Jeanne Becker](#).

NORTH/WEST LOWER MICHIGAN SYNOD ELCA

**ADULT THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION**

**SIX WOMEN FROM CHURCH HISTORY THAT
YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT**



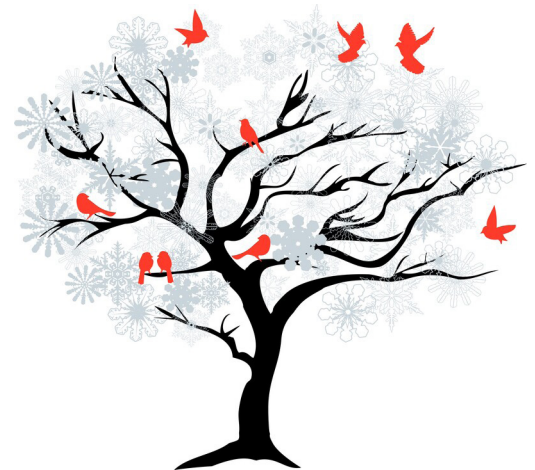
**JOIN THE REV. DR. JOY
SCHROEDER, PROFESSOR OF
CHURCH HISTORY AT CAPITAL
UNIVERSITY, FOR A SIX-WEEK
STUDY OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN
THROUGH THE AGES!**

**TUESDAYS STARTING JANUARY 16
ZOOM**

Register now:

<https://tinyurl.com/s9tdmkmh>

Registration is required and closes on January 5, 2024.



Music Ministries

Music & The Arts at Trinity

Come and find your place in music and liturgical arts at Trinity. We celebrate Christmas with glorious and heartfelt sacred music at all four Christmas Eve services. Brass, Resound Handbells, Trinity Choir, cello, and violin contribute to the celebratory worship. We also look forward to a new opportunity to explore liturgical drama in a January workshop (see [next page](#)). You are invited to join others who enjoy theatre, drama, and leading in worship in this creative manner.

Dr. Darlene Kuperus

Director of Music & Organist

Artistic Director of the Celebration of Music Concert Series

CELEBRATION OF MUSIC CONCERT SERIES

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

7:30 p.m.

**VOXMAS: CHRISTMAS CHOIR
MUSIC SUNG BY VOX GR**

Vox GR has quickly gained an enormous following as one of Grand Rapids' finest auditioned chamber choirs. They are conducted by Dr. Christopher Mason. Enjoy Vox GR in a sparkling concert of Christmas music. The audience will also have an opportunity to sing Christmas carols with this stellar vocal ensemble, accompanied by the pipe organ in the sanctuary.



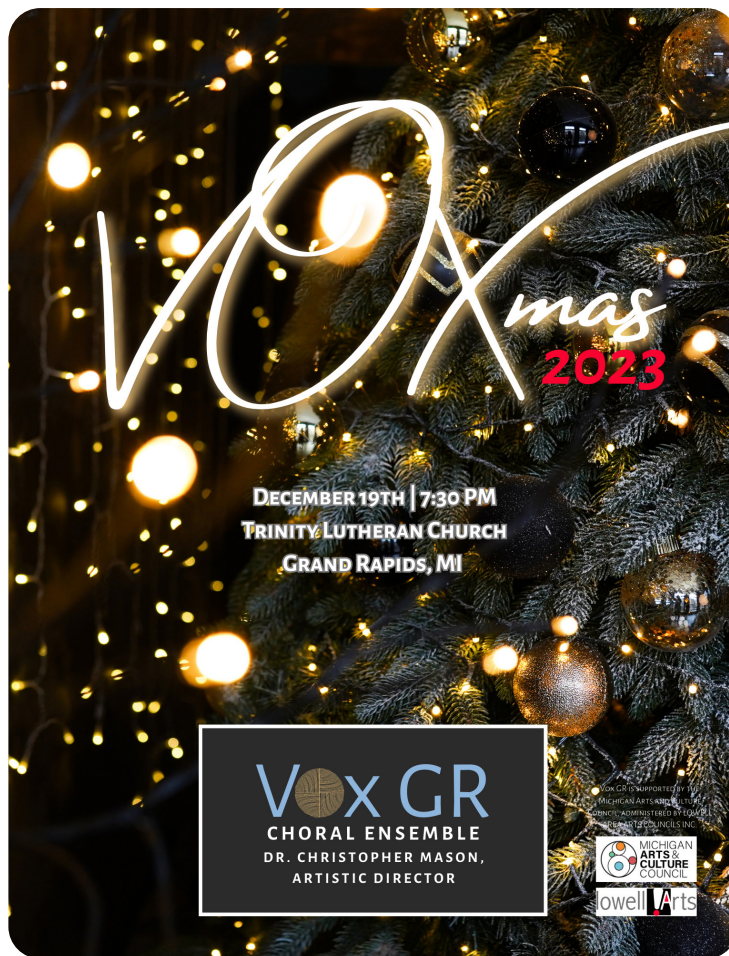
**Concert Series at Trinity is
Supported by Many Faithful
Congregation Members**

THANK YOU.

At the heart of the Celebration of Music Concert Series are people who appreciate live music and who connect with others in moving concert experiences. The series is built upon generous and faithful donors who support this gift to the church and the wider community. Many people

who attend the concerts are first time visitors to Trinity and become frequent concert attendees.

Please consider giving a gift and becoming a named donor in future printed concert programs. Donation cards are available in the church or [online](#).





Trinity Choir Invites Singers for Christmas Eve

Would you like to sing with the Trinity Choir at the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service?

Our rehearsal on **Thursday, December 21** will be dedicated to preparing music for Christmas Eve. We will begin at 7:15 p.m. in the music room and would love to have you join us! If you have any questions, please contact Trinity Choir director [Sid Hoeksema](#).

Liturgical Drama Workshop Discovery Session

Embodied Scripture Workshop: *Experiencing Scripture Holistically*

Leader: Trinity member Debra L. Freeberg, Theatre Professor Emerita, Calvin University

Saturday, January 20, 2024 • 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. • Choir Room

How exciting to delve into scripture in community! To speak, to move, and to respond to a Biblical text directly and personally with others. This is the substance of this guided workshop which is for people of all levels of interest and experience. In pairs or small groups, to stand, to read scripture aloud and on your feet. Find out how the particular text speaks to you and your partners in the moment. How can it speak to our community today? "Read it and Play it" and get the passage "in your bones."

The goal of each group will be to discover something true and meaningful to share with the larger group. Thus, our imaginative range is enlarged, and the Scripture comes more fully alive to the community of faith gathered. This isn't a theatre workshop demanding specific expertise and experience. It's an exploration for anyone and everyone: middle school and up! It's a chance to learn from each other and grow in our knowledge of interpreting and understanding Scripture.

One goal and hope is to lead in worship on one of the Sundays after Easter. The "Road to Emmaus" will be a liturgical drama reading which will shape worship services in a powerful way.

You are welcome to join us for this exploratory session and see if this is for you! Please contact Debra Freeberg at dkfreeberg55@comcast.net with questions.



Children's Ministry

Children's Ministry: Keeping the Focus on Jesus During Advent

Celebrating the tradition of Advent as a family in your home is a fun, faith-filled way to keep your kids focused on Jesus leading up to Christmas.

- In the weeks before Christmas, read the Nativity story together from your favorite children's picture Bible.
- Advent calendars provide a simple way to walk through key scriptures in the days leading up to Christmas.
- Talk about Mary and Joseph's trip to Bethlehem as kids play with figurines from a Nativity scene. Pictured below is one from Fisher Price Little People, but there are lots of options!
- Advent blocks are a tangible, meaningful practice to help kids anticipate the birth of Jesus. Various versions are available online. The one pictured below is from GoodKind.
- Set aside time each day for family devotions. Copies of *Light Shines in the Darkness: Family Devotions for Advent* by Karla Manternach are available at the Welcome Center and at Sunday School check-in.



Children's Christmas Program

All are invited to see the story of Jesus' birth brought to life by Trinity's Sunday schoolers! Please join us on **December 10 in the Sanctuary at the 10:45 a.m.** service. The program will feature our 4th and 5th graders telling the Nativity story, while children of all ages wear costumes and sing favorite Christmas songs. New this year will be a special song from our recently developed Children's Ensemble. **Please stay after the service and enjoy a Christmas Cookie Reception in the Courtyard!**



SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

December 3: Children will practice for Christmas program

December 10: All kids arrive in classrooms at **10:15 a.m.** to prepare for the program!

December 17: Regular class with a **Christmas craft**

December 24 and 31: No class

January 7: First class of 2024!

Middle School

January and February Confirmation Schedule:

January 7 & 14 – Youth Group, 2 to 3 p.m./Confirmation Class, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

January 21 – Tubing at Cannonsburg, 3 to 5 p.m.

January 28 – No Class – Kids Coalition Against Hunger food packing!

February 4 & 11 – Youth Group, 2 to 3 p.m./Confirmation Class, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

February 18 – No Class due to Mid-Winter Break

February 25 – Service Projects, 3 to 5 p.m.



Stay connected with our middle school ministries via Remind: Text @a4ha6a to the number 81010

High School

Youth Group – Sunday Nights from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

All high schoolers and their friends are invited to join us for youth group in the Youth Room. Come for some fun and conversation around how God is leading us in our lives. In December, we will be decorating cookies on Saturday, December 2 at 2 p.m., helping build a ramp on Sunday, December 10 at 1 p.m., and meeting for a youth group Christmas gathering on Sunday, December 17 at 6:30 p.m. There will be no youth group on December 3 or 31.

High School Bible Study with Pastor Dan – December 3 at 9:15 a.m.

All high schoolers and their friends are invited to join Pastor Dan during the 9:15 a.m. service for Bible Study in the Youth Room. Come for donuts, juice, and conversation.

Plan for This Summer!

There are three great events to plug into! Please put these dates on your calendars now and contact [Pastor Dan](#) with any questions.

Mission Trip to Lincoln, Illinois: June 15 to 22

ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans: July 15 to 20

Stony Lake Camp: July 22 to 27

Stay connected with High School Ministries via Remind!

For information on our summer trips
text @k8dk9d7 to 81010.

For general High School Ministry information
text @42gefgh to 81010.

Middle & High School Youth News & Upcoming Events

Family Advent Devotional

As we journey toward the celebration of the birth of Christ, we have a resource to share with your family: *Light Shines in the Darkness: Family Devotions* for Advent by Karla Manternach is a great resource for families to learn about this season. Pick up your family's copy today at the Trinity Welcome Center. We hope this can enrich your Advent journey!



Middle and High School Youth News & Upcoming Events

Charge Recap

Nineteen of our young people and four adults had an amazing weekend at the Great Wolf Lodge in Traverse City for Charge! It was a weekend full of fun, community, and faith formation.



Middle and High School Youth News & Upcoming Events

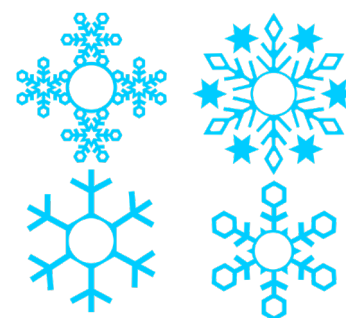
Christmas Cookie Decoration & Delivery: Saturday, December 2 from 2 to 6 p.m.

All middle school and high school families (and their friends) are invited to help us spread some Christmas cheer on Saturday, December 2. We will meet in the youth rooms at 2 p.m. to decorate Christmas cookies. We will then split into groups and deliver them to members of our community! Come help us brighten someone's Christmas season. Contact [Pastor Dan](#) if you would like to participate.



Tubing at Cannonsburg: January 21, 2024 at 3 p.m.

We are going tubing at Cannonsburg on Sunday, January 21 from 3 to 5 p.m. **Please arrive at 2:45 p.m. to check-in with Amy Stephan.** Watch your email for an RSVP form. The cost is \$20 for each person who is tubing. We will bring snacks and hot chocolate for everyone to share and enjoy around the campfire. Come and join the fun!



Camp is Coming July 22 to 27, 2024 – Registration Open Now!

Youth going into first grade through current seniors in high school and their friends are invited to join us for an amazing week of community and faith formation! Trinity makes camp extremely affordable for families. Each camper is asked to pay a \$100 deposit and Trinity will cover the rest of the cost. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Dan.

Register today at:
www.elcalivingwater.com

Let's fill up this week with Trinity kids!



Living Water Ministries
Faith Formation, Service, Leadership, and Community

Mitten Synod ELCA Youth Gathering Scholarship Fund

The ELCA Youth Gathering is an amazing experience of Christian community in the lives of all those who attend. Unfortunately, the cost of the event can limit/prohibit the ability for families and congregations to participate. To help with this financial burden, our synod has created the ELCA Youth Gathering Fund. The goal of this fund is to distribute 100 \$250 scholarships this Gathering cycle, and grow during non-Gathering years to further help families and congregations. As the fund grows the hope is to be able to cover the registration cost for the event and beyond for all participants from our synod. When our youth heard about this fund, they decided to give \$5,000 of their fundraising dollars to it. If you would like to give a gift as well you can send a check to the synod office with ELCA Youth Gathering Fund in the memo line or donate via Tithe.ly at <https://www.mittensynod.org/donate/> (select NWLMI Synod ELCA Gathering Fund from the pull down menu). We are already \$11,000 into our \$25,000 goal! We hope many will join us in being the church together and providing for the youth of our synod.

Health Ministries

Fitness at Trinity

Get in on the last fitness classes of 2023!

Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m. - Tai Chi for Arthritis
Wednesdays at 9 a.m. - Power Bend & Stretch
Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. - Tai Chi for Arthritis

Tai Chi goes through December 14
Power Bend & Stretch goes through December 20

Trinity member Debra Freeberg leads the **Power Bend & Stretch** class. The class is geared for anyone who wants to strengthen their core and increase flexibility.

Tai Chi classes are brought to you in partnership with [Senior Neighbors](#) through the Engaging Wellness program. This class focuses on slow and methodical movements to improve flexibility, balance, and overall health.

Suggested donation: \$3/class. Contact [Kristin Bradley](#) with any questions or suggestions.



December Blood Drive

We have risen to meet the needs of our community and plan to keep meeting and exceeding our goals. This holiday season many people will need life-saving transfusions; others will need donated blood of all types as they continue to fight disease, undergo surgery, or recover from trauma. **One donation can help save the lives of up to three people!**

Versiti Blood will be onsite **Monday, December 4 from 12:30 to 6 p.m.** Appointments are highly recommended. Contact [Kristin Bradley](#) to secure your spot or register here: <https://tinyurl.com/muwd5er9>. Plan your giving today!

Not able to donate? Check here for other ways you can help: <https://tinyurl.com/5h9v6bz7>



Care & Share

Join us on **Tuesday, December 12 at 10:30 a.m.** for the last session in Henri Nouwen's *Courage for Caregivers* series. We're exploring **self-care** and **spiritual practices** as sustenance for care-giving. If you've ever been a primary caregiver for another adult, you'll appreciate this opportunity to tend to your needs as well.

Connect Faith Community Nurse [Kristin Bradley](#) with any questions.



Save the Date!

Trinity's Health Ministries team is excited for our next **FOOD FOR THOUGHT** event and you're invited! Join us for dinner and a speaker on **intuitive eating** on **Wednesday, January 31 at 5:30 p.m.** This event is provided at no cost to you! More details and a sign up will be available in upcoming eBlasts. Contact [Kristin Bradley](#) with any questions.



Stephen Ministry

Gift of Care

Trinity's Stephen Ministers are available to provide support if you're going through a challenging season. Consider allowing this gift of presence and care on your journey.

Contact Faith Community Nurse [Kristin Bradley](#) to learn more.



Ongoing Biblical Learning Opportunities & Book Clubs

Friday Morning Women's Bible Study

This group meets at Trinity the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Friday of every month from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

New participants are always welcome!

Sometimes hope becomes so real that it's almost tangible. But at other times – especially when tragedy or hardship intrudes – you wonder whether your hope will fail, leaving you exposed, vulnerable and overwhelmed. In this eight-session LifeGuide® Bible Study, Jack Kuhatschek leads you to explore both sides of hope. You'll confront doubts and fears, and you'll anticipate the great joy that awaits you in Jesus Christ. Contact Kris Fox at jklsafox@comcast.net.

Tuesday Evening Book Club

Meets the 3rd Tuesday of the Month at 7 p.m.

Do you enjoy reading? Please join us for Tuesday evening book club! This group is open to adults of any age and any gender. We love having new people, so bring a friend! This year we will be meeting at Trinity on the third Tuesday of every month starting at 7 p.m. Reach out to Corina Dulecki at cdulecki@gmail.com for more information.

Friday Morning Women's Book Club

Meets the 2nd Friday of the month at 9:30 a.m.

This book club typically meets through May in a member's home. Contact Carol Hendricks at cahendricks14@gmail.com with questions or for more information.

News Briefs

Congratulations to Trinity's Bunco Night Winners!

In October, Trinity held a Bunco game night fundraiser to raise money for Christophe's Children. A big congratulations to the lucky winners pictured below and thank you to Tess Lundgren for organizing such a fun and important evening.

Please join Trinity for the next Bunco Game Night & Potluck Dinner on January 13, 2024!



Bunco winners Alaina Lundgren, Ruth Ann Evans, Mary Minich-Carwell, and Robert Williams

Flowers for Traditional & Rejoice Worship



Flowers are a wonderful way to honor family members or friends who are celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, or other special occasions; give recognition in memory of a loved one who has passed away; or to beautify our worship space.

Our procedure for ordering flowers will simply invite those who are purchasing arrangements to make that purchase directly with a florist of their choosing. Members of the Worship and Music Committee and church staff have additionally suggested the following four florists for those without a favorite option:

- Alpine Floral & Gifts, Inc., 5290 Alpine Ave NW, CP, MI 49321, 616.784.0626 - alpinefloralandgifts.com
- Ball Park Floral & Gifts, 8 Valley Ave NW, GR, MI 49504, 616.459.3409 - ballparkfloral.com
- Kennedy's Flower Shop, 4665 Cascade Rd SE, GR, MI 49546, 616.956.6747 - kennedyfloral.com
- Ludema's Floral, 3408 Eastern Ave SE, GR, MI 49508, 616.452.2961- ludemas.com

We request delivery by the florist during office hours on **Friday between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.** We will seek to put arrangements in the refrigerator when there is room. Otherwise, the arrangement will be placed directly in the worship space. Our Office Coordinator Kris Baker will continue to gather information from your sign-up to properly note your memorial or honorary designation of the floral gift in the Weekly Connection.

Eternal Light

You are invited to remember a loved one who has passed away by sponsoring the Eternal Light for a week. The Eternal Light, which burns 24 hours a day throughout the year, hangs in the sanctuary near the sacristy and close to the altar. A bulletin announcement in Trinity's Weekly Connection will read: *The Eternal Light for today has been given by _____ in memory of _____.* A suggested donation of \$10 to the Eternal Light Sustaining Fund will cover our costs for the wax candle. Others may also choose the same week to remember their loved ones. Their names will also be listed for that week. If you have any questions, please contact Office Coordinator Kris Baker.



Trinity Overlook Gallery: Now Featuring the Works of P. J. Ruschmann

Visit the Overlook Gallery to see the collage and mixed media works of artist P. J. Ruschmann. P.J.'s goal as an artist is to create and reproduce lovingly hand-crafted works of art for working-class people. He intentionally creates art that is emotional, entertaining, and edifying.

News Briefs (cont.)



Mark Your Calendar for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation!

Mark your calendar for the All-Congregation Potluck and the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on **Sunday, January 21, 2024**, when we will receive reports, elect leaders, and adopt a budget for 2024.

Apply to Be a Trinity Youth Ministry Coordinator

Trinity Lutheran Church is looking for an individual to work alongside our Associate Pastor as our **Youth Ministry Coordinator**. This position works with our middle and high school youth to help them delve into their faith and find ways to put it into action in their lives. Resumes with cover letters can be sent to dan.schewe@tlcgr.org. The full job description can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/3ru9k6se>.



New Members Celebration Being Planned for Spring

Are you finding a home at Trinity? Are you back among the people of Trinity after a time away? Are you curious about these Lutheran-flavored folks and hoping to learn more, even if you are not sure that you are ready to become a member of Trinity Lutheran Church?

Pastor's classes for prospective members will be offered next spring for those who are ready to dig into this tradition of ours more deeply. Others may wish to affiliate as members of Trinity by a simple letter of transfer or by Affirmation of Faith. **A New Members Sunday will be celebrated on a Sunday in the spring of 2024.** Even if you are not a "joiner," or if you are unsure that membership with Trinity is the right thing for you, please know that you are welcome to explore what it would mean to affirm membership with the people of Trinity in mission and ministry. All are welcome – contact Office Coordinator [Kris Baker](#) or one of the pastors for more information.



Thank you to everyone who signed up to be a Christmas Angel this year to one or more of our 104 kids in the Samaritas Affordable Living Community. Trinity has had a rich history of adopting kids at this time of year; so much so that it has become part of Trinity families' traditions. In fact, one of our recent high school graduates phoned her mom from her out-of-state college dorm asking, "When is Trinity doing the Christmas for kids program because I don't want to miss it." How absolutely awesome is that? Trinity kids embrace our traditions and take them out into the world, making it a little better by continuing to focus on others which is what it truly means to celebrate Christmas. These types of stories really touch my heart and make me so very glad my family and I found Trinity 10+ years ago.

Please remember to return your Christmas Angel gifts to Trinity by Sunday, December 10. Gifts should be new, unwrapped, and in seasonal gift bags. Wish lists and Gift in Kind forms should be in the bag/stapled to the bag when dropped off. On behalf of Samaritas, myself, and the kids, thank you for your generous hearts.

Tess Lundgren, Fellowship & Hospitality Coordinator

Thank You, Pastor Bob!

During recent weeks, Trinity came together in many ways to celebrate Pastor Bob Linstrom's retirement and thank him for his wonderful leadership and inspiring presence at Trinity. We wish Pastor Bob Godspeed as he enters this new and exciting phase of his life!



Thank you

News Briefs (cont.)

Adding and Removing Trees at Trinity

Did you know that Trinity owns over 17 acres of land filled with creeks, marshland, and woodlands? Trinity's property is quite lovely, and a dedicated group of folks have been working hard to keep it that way. After engaging with a professional forester, Trinity has been deliberately removing many of the invasive trees/shrubs such as buckthorn, honeysuckle, and Canadian thistle. These invasive species can eventually crowd out native trees and can be harmful to birds and wildlife. By deliberately removing these invasive trees, we're making room for a more native landscape.

Over the past year, many new trees could be spotted around the west parking lot area. The new trees are a variety of species, such as oak, maple, buckeye, and walnut. A busy team of volunteers kept these new trees watered during the summer to make sure they got off to a good start. Eventually, these trees will provide lovely shade for outdoor worship services in the coming summers. It's really going to be beautiful.

By deliberately managing the trees on the Trinity's property, the landscape will be better for the wildlife while also improving our outdoor worship experience. If you'd like to know more or get involved with any of our gardening or landscaping efforts, please contact John Fox at drscout1961@gmail.com, Rebecca Marquardt at rebecca@reverystudio.com, or Lisa Mead at lmead340@gmail.com.



Dear Trinity Members,

1 Corinthians 16:14

"Let all that you do be done in love."

That is exactly what the Trinity Family has done. By enjoying Bunco game night or making donations to Christophe's Children's Underwear Fundraiser we raised a total of \$4,863.

A heartfelt thank you for making it possible to give these children some much needed supplies of underwear. Also, a big thank you goes to these ladies:

—Tess Lundgren for helping organize this event
—LWR Quilters for donating the snacks for Bunco Night

Blessings,

Ruth Ann Evans
Chairperson of Bunco Fundraiser
Leader of LWR Quilters

Thanks!



Timeless Christmas

presented by

The Schubert Male Chorus

since 1883 - 140th Anniversary -
The Grand Glee Club Sound

performed at
**Calvin Fine Arts Center
Recital Hall**
1795 Knollcrest
Circle Southeast

**SATURDAY,
December 16, 2023
7:30 PM**

**Tickets: \$20/advance
\$22 at door**

Visit:
www.schubertmalechorus.org
to order tickets
or mail check to:
P.O. Box 3211 Grand Rapids, MI 49501-3211



Opportunities to Support Church & Community

A graphic for the Family Promise of West Michigan Christmas Store. It features a background of white wood grain with evergreen branches and red ornaments at the top. The Family Promise of West Michigan logo is centered, followed by the title "Christmas Store" in a large, red, serif font. Below the title, text describes the event on Friday, December 8th at Cornerstone Church Heritage Hill Campus. A quote in a red box says, "I can't believe all I am leaving here with. You are all such a blessing to us." A section titled "How you can help:" lists needed items for all age ranges. A note in a red box states that all donations must be dropped off at the church campus on Thursday, December 7th between 4pm-8pm. Contact information for Rachel Kowalk is provided at the bottom.

Family Promise
of West Michigan

Christmas Store

Family Promise of West Michigan is hosting their 12th Annual Christmas Store on **Friday, December 8th** at Cornerstone Church Heritage Hill Campus.

Inviting families to shop at a store allows parents to pick out their own gifts for their kids, be the hero in their children's lives, and have pride and dignity about the fact that they purchased gifts for their kids on their own.

"I can't believe all I am leaving here with. You are all such a blessing to us."

How you can help:

Items for all age ranges are needed including:

- Household Goods: pots/pans, dishes, toasters, coffee makers, microwaves, vacuum cleaners, dish towels etc.
- Stockings & Stocking Stuffers: play dough, pencils, small stuffed animals, coloring books, nail polish, hair ties, craft kits, cards, hairbrush, candy, action figure, yoyo, hacky sack etc.
- Gifts for Parents/Teens: candles, headphones, matching pajama sets, body lotion, basketballs, soccer balls etc.
- Wrapping Supplies: we send families home with their own paper and tape so they can wrap at home!

*All donations will need to be dropped off at Cornerstone Church Heritage Hill campus on Thursday, December 7th between 4pm-8pm!

For more information on donating, please contact Rachel Kowalk at (616) 608-8917, or rachelk@familypromisegr.org

ELCA Good Gifts

Finding meaningful gifts for loved ones at Christmastime can sometimes be a challenge, especially for those people who seem to have everything imaginable. Have you ever thought about purchasing a "good gift?"

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a multitude of life-giving items that you may buy in someone's name that are actually delivered to someone in need around the world.

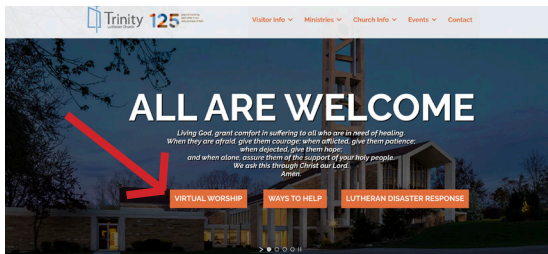
Go to [ELCA.org/goodgifts](https://www.elca.org/goodgifts) to view the Good Gifts catalog.



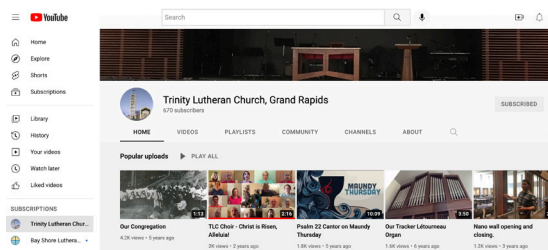
Trinity is Livestreaming Services!

We are streaming our **9:15 and 10:45 a.m.** Sunday services on YouTube. The 10:45 a.m. service is streamed for **indoor** services only. To find virtual services:

(1) Go to the Trinity website (www.tlcgr.org) and click on **Virtual Worship**.

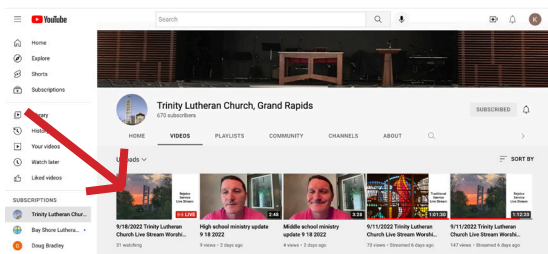


(2) Clicking the Virtual Worship button will take you to our YouTube page:



(3) If the service is currently streaming live (from about 9:10 to 10:20 a.m. and 10:40 to 11:50 a.m. on Sunday mornings), **you will see a video with a red box with the word "LIVE" in it. Click on that video.**

Note: If you go to YouTube early, you may have to wait a few minutes or refresh the page to get this "LIVE" option.



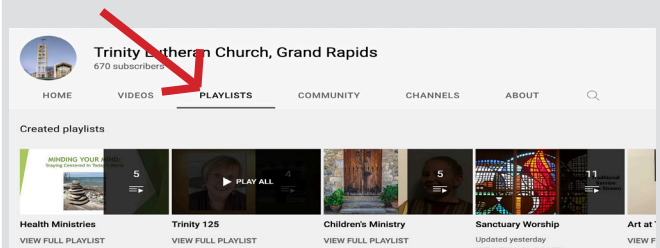
You can also go directly to www.youtube.com and search **Trinity Lutheran Church Grand Rapids** to find our YouTube page.

***If you click the **subscribe** button on Trinity's YouTube page, videos should automatically show up on your feed.



Miss a Livestreamed Service?

We record our services, so you can always watch a past service. These are referred to as **"Rejoice Worship"**, and **"Sanctuary Worship"**. (On Sundays, it may be a few hours before videos are available.) These are available under the **PLAYLISTS** tab on our YouTube page.



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!

Please Note:

If live services are unavailable due to internet issues at Trinity, please check YouTube later in the day to watch a recorded version of that day's service. Most Sundays, services will be available by 2 p.m.

Poinsettia Contribution Form

Poinsettias help create a beautiful worship setting during the Christmas season! Please use this form to make a poinsettia plant gift in honor or in memory of a loved one. **Forms are due by Friday, December 8.** Place the form in the offering plate/basket, drop it off in the church office, or mail to:

Trinity Lutheran Church, 2700 Fulton St. E, Grand Rapids 49506.

Please don't forget to pick up your poinsettias after Christmas! See below for details.

First Name

Last Name

Address

City, State, ZIP

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Email

_____ 6" single red plant (\$10 ea.) \$_____

_____ 8" double red plant (\$18 ea.) \$_____

_____ 10" triple red plant (\$25 ea.) \$_____

TOTAL DUE: \$_____

My contribution is given by (list how you would like your name to appear in the bulletin):

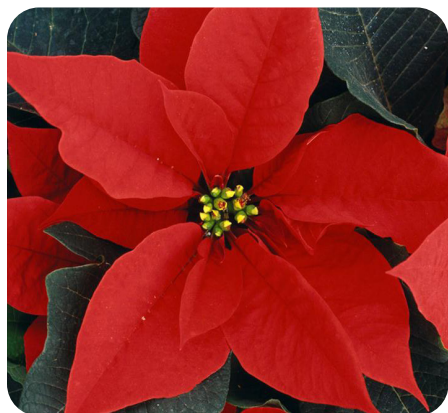
☐

In honor of: _____

☐

In memory of: _____

Please make checks payable to Trinity Lutheran Church and write *Poinsettia* in the memo line.



Pick Up Your Poinsettias!

Poinsettias can be picked up any time after Christmas Day through Sunday, January 7. Please note that church office hours may vary slightly around the Christmas/New Year holidays.

All unclaimed poinsettias will be discarded after January 7.

Poinsettias Get Thirsty Too!

We are seeking helpers to come in once or twice in mid-December to check and water the poinsettias throughout the church. Please contact [Jeanne Becker](mailto:Jeanne.Becker@tlcgr.org) if you would like to help.

December Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations

December 1

Grace Gooch

December 2

Maya Anderson
Nancy Anderson
Brenda Baker
Jane Legault
Nyki Lundgren
Harper Posthumus
Maddie Scurfield
Helen Slider

December 3

John Bradley
Linda Redman
Jack Reichert
Frank Remsburg
Lucas Smokovich
Lindsey & Nathan Peters

December 4

Katelyn Basher
Melissa Ferens
Linda Hicks
Debbie Kulas
Louise Pfau
Kristen & Michael Sytsma

December 5

Connor Price
Karen Betz-Griewahn & Elwyn Griewahn
Amy & Glen Myers

December 6

Sarah Ashby
Emerson Gohlke
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
Chris Duyser
Kori Grooters
David Marquardt
Kati Missman
Gary Stevens
Jason Stevenson
Sarah & T.J. Turnage

December 10

Cynthia Gardiner
Shirley Kleiman
Taylor Knoll
Terry Knoll
Jonah Schneider
Breslin Waite

December 11

Amy Fox
Petra Rotzell
Jim VanderWall
Nancy & Larry Lindquist

December 12

Terry Brace
Kathy Bush
Kim Engle
Jack Frick
Brenda Heacock
Marcy & Eric Larson
Sam & Travis McMillan

December 13

Riley Day
Jim deJonge
Joesy Johnson
Nicky Kearney
Luke Robach
Melody & Leo Ditchcreek
Christine & Tom Malvitz

December 14

Kate Bredwell
Michelle Morin

December 15

Lauren Gallagher
Jodi Nikolajuk
Jim VanDeusen
Nancy & Dave Krupp

December 16

Annie Lang
Meri Leidel
Stephanie McLeod
Mark Mochel
Abigail Siminski

December 17

Kari Fast
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

Albert Asfour
Evan Krummel
Bob Linstrom
Kyle McKee
Tyler McPherson
Scott Stoll
Susan Vanden Bout

December 20

Lolly Hatkowski
Randy Kuntzman
Amy Myers
Sue Perry

December 21

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

December 22

Henry Bouwman
David Kuecherer
Nathan Legault
Sam Mielock
Tom Price
Bill Westveld

December 23

Mike Horn
London Laakko

December 24

Julia Cole
Marge Willman
Jaclyn & Justin Ulrich

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
Mimi Cairns
Hannah Kuhlmann
Craig Mester
Tammy Parat
Nick Rodammer
Nicholas Soczek
Shawn Ulreich
Sara Vander Baan
Eric Wollen

December 28

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

Derek Fredericks
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 2024! Additional copies will be available in worship on Sundays.

My/Our Estimate of Giving for 2024

So that others may know God's grace and engage in God's work, I/we plan to offer \$_____ per week/month/year 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

Telephone

Email



2700 Fulton Street East
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
616.949.2510 tlcgr.org



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (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.*

Staff

Direct Dial:

616.949.2510

(then dial extension #)



Contact Trinity



Instagram: [tlc.gr](https://www.instagram.com/tlc.gr)
[facebook.com/tlcgr](https://www.facebook.com/tlcgr)



[YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Search: Trinity Lutheran
Church Grand Rapids

Rev. Dr. Dennis B. Smith, Contracted Consultant Pastor
(ext.115), dennis.smith@tlcgr.org

Rev. Dan Schewe, Associate Pastor (ext.124)
dan.schewe@tlcgr.org

Rev. Kari Fast, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care
(ext.112), kari.fast@tlcgr.org

Brooks Alder, Sound Board Operator, 616.949.2510
Kris Baker, Office Coordinator (ext.110)

kris.baker@tlcgr.org

Rachele Battreall, Director of Family Ministry
rachele.battreall@tlcgr.org

Jeanne Becker, Helping Hands Coordinator and
Co-Wedding Coordinator
(ext. 129), jeanne.becker@tlcgr.org

Kristin Bradley, Faith Community Nurse (ext.119)
kristin.bradley@tlcgr.org

Kathy Bush, IHN Coordinator
616.485.0031, kathy.bush@tlcgr.org

Dr. Debora DeWitt, Rejoice Music Coordinator/
Accompanist, 616.949.2510
debora.dewitt@tlcgr.org

Awilda Diaz, Nursery Coordinator

616.427.2261, awilda.diaz@tlcgr.org

Grace Gohl, Sexton (ext.117), grace.gohl@tlcgr.org

Sidney Hoeksema, Trinity Choir Director (ext.118)
616.540.7190, sidney.hoeksema@tlcgr.org

Dr. Darlene Kuperus, Director of Music & Organist
(ext. 118), darlene.kuperus@tlcgr.org

Carrie Lamb, Communications Coordinator
(ext.121), carrie.lamb@tlcgr.org

Tess Lundgren, Fellowship & Hospitality Coordinator
(ext.121), tess.lundgren@tlcgr.org

Sheri Mason, Sunday School Coordinator
kids@tlcgr.org

Peter McKinney, IT Coordinator (ext.200)
peter.mckinney@tlcgr.org

James Morin, Family Activity Coordinator
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laura.norton@tlcgr.org

Andrea Severns, Sunday School Coordinator
kids@tlcgr.org

Amy Stephan, Interim Sunday School Coordinator
kids@tlcgr.org

Joanna Waite, Finance Administrator (ext. 111)
joanna.waite@tlcgr.org