

The JOURNEY — Walking Daily with Jesus

From the Pastor’s Desk:

A New Year’s Reflection

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. (Proverbs 16:9).

We are just days away from the Year of Our Lord, 2024. This upcoming year promises to be a year of changes for our congregation. 2023 has shown us that the Lord has some big plans for Trinity Lutheran. We have seen some growth with new members. We also continue to struggle with the aftermath of COVID, with a number of past members who have yet to return.

As we begin to look at some long-range planning for our community of faith, I am reminded of these words from Proverbs 16. You see, as humans, we can have a tendency to apply our human business principles to the church. We do studies of the community, we budget for programs, we look at growth charts, expenses, growth/loss charts, and set long range and short-range goals. None of these is a bad thing. God has gifted us with people who have the skills to do these things.

The challenge becomes when we do these things and leave the Lord God out of the mix. In our humanness, we can begin to see the church as “our” church, instead of seeing ourselves as stewards of God’s church. We can get so wrapped up in our growth charts and goals that we forget that it is the Lord who is responsible for growth. Changing hearts and growth is the Holy Spirit’s work. Our task is to be faithful to what it is that we are called to do, which is to be good stewards of what God has given to us, and to proclaim the lifesaving message of “Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

As we continue setting goals for the new year, let us keep in mind just who it is that we labor for: The Kingdom of God. Remember: *The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.*

May God richly bless you with a Happy New Year.

In Jesus name,

Pastor Dan

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Letter from Trinity President

Open Up Your Gifts.

Just a few days ago, we opened our Christmas gifts. Remember the excitement and anticipation of finding out what that gift was? We were hoping it was something we can use. The Holy Spirit has even better gifts for you and you have already received them. Did you know you have been given special spiritual gifts? We will be discovering ways to unwrap these special gifts.

"Now there are [distinctive] varieties of spiritual gifts [special abilities given by the grace and extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit operating in believers], but it is the same Spirit [who grants them and empowers believers]. And there are [distinctive] varieties of ministries and service, but it is the same Lord [who is served]. And there are [distinctive] ways of working [to accomplish things], but it is the same God who produces all things in all believers [inspiring, energizing, and empowering them]. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit [the spiritual illumination and the enabling of the Holy Spirit] for the common good."

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7 (AMP). Pretty exciting stuff.

Lifeway.com September 10, 2015 listed what else the New Testament says about spiritual gifts:

- Each believer is given at least one gift. (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- The Holy Spirit determines who receives which gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- Each gift is equally valuable. (1 Corinthians 12:21-26)
- We are to use our gifts to serve others for the benefit of the body. (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:12)
- We are commanded to use our gifts. (1 Peter 4:10)
- Exercising our gifts will help us develop spiritual maturity. (Ephesians 4:13)

So, what are these spiritual gifts and how do I identify the gifts the Holy Spirit has given me?

"Each Spiritual Gift Has a Special Place in the Body of Christ. Every gift that God has placed in the body of Christ, the church, is important. Some gifts such as preaching, teaching, and prophesying may seem more important than others such as hospitality or service. But God has given all of these gifts to build up his church. None of these gifts should be looked down upon or treated lightly. So, what are the spiritual gifts that God has given to his people? Here is a list:

- ✦ ADMINISTRATION: The ability to help steer the church, or a ministry, toward the successful completion of God-given goals, with skills in planning, organization, and supervision.
- ✦ APOSTLE: A person sent to new places with the gospel. You may have heard of missionaries going to different countries to help spread the Word; they could be described as apostles. An apostle can also provide leadership to other churches or ministries and offer advice on spiritual matters.
- ✦ DISCERNMENT: The wisdom to recognize truth from untruth by correctly evaluating whether a behavior or teaching is from God or another, ungodly

source.

- ✦ EVANGELISM: The ability to successfully communicate the message of the gospel, especially to nonbelievers.
- ✦ EXHORTATION: Competence in offering encouragement, comfort, and support to help someone be all that God wants them to be.
- ✦ FAITH: People with this gift have such great confidence in the power and promises of God that they can stand strong in their belief, no matter what may try to shake them. They can also stand up for the church and for their faith in such a way as to defend and move it forward.
- ✦ GIVING: Those who have this gift are particularly willing and able to share what resources they have with pleasure, and without the need to see them returned.
- ✦ HEALING: A capability used by God to restore others, be that physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually.
- ✦ HELPS: Someone with this gift is able to support or assist members of the body of Christ so that they may be free to minister to others.
- ✦ HOSPITALITY: A natural ability to make people—even strangers—feel welcome in one's own home or church as a means to disciple or serve them.
- ✦ KNOWLEDGE: This is the gift of someone who actively pursues knowledge of the Bible. This person may also enjoy analyzing biblical data.
- ✦ LEADERSHIP: This aptitude marks a person who is able to stand before a church, to direct the body with care and attention, and to motivate them toward achieving the church's goals.




- ✦ MERCY: This is the defining trait of a person with great sensitivity for those who are suffering. It manifests itself in offering compassion and encouragement, and in a love for giving practical help to someone in need.
- ✦ PROPHECY: The ability to speak the message of God to others. This sometimes involves foresight or visions of what is to come. This skill should be used only to offer encouragement or warning.
- ✦ SERVING: A talent for identifying tasks needed for the body of Christ and using available

resources to get the job done.

- ✦ SPEAKING IN TONGUES: The supernatural ability to speak in another language (one that has not been learned).
- ✦ TEACHING: The skill to teach from the Bible and communicate it effectively for the understanding and spiritual growth of others.
- ✦ WISDOM: The gift of being able to sort through facts and data to discover what needs to be done for the church.

* It should be noted that not every Christian believes all these spiritual gifts are still given by God. Some think that there were certain gifts, such as speaking in tongues, that were handed down only for a time when they were needed in biblical history and are no longer needed now." (Tyndale.com Your Spiritual Gifts – How to Identify and Effectively Use Them.)

(Continued on page 4)

 January WORSHIP ASSISTANTS				
	Jan 7 10:00a	Jan 14 10:00a	Jan 21 10:00a	Jan 28 10:00a
GREETERS	Sue Svitak	Terri Freeman	Brenda Mackey	Char Mohns
USHERS	Tom Svitak LeRoy Brensel	Rob Freeman Wally Thom	John & Janet Schieffer	Wes Mohns LeRoy Brensel
COMM. ASSTS	Dan Dahl	Ellen Ehrich	Pat Mackey	Joanne Schilling
READER	Karen Hayes	Kathy Thom	Eric Anderson	Gloria Widiker

Dessert and Coffee will be served!
SNACKS AND FACTS
Second Tuesday at 2pm
Join us for information on fraud
Birchwood Chief of Police Adam
Brunclik will present and answer
questions.
January 9th, 2023, at 2pm
Trinity Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall Birchwood,
Join in a short Devotion.
Everyone Welcome!
Coming up on February 13th, 2023
Attorney Brittany Stephans



Sue Capra 1/1
 Jill Pedersen 1/1
 Lilly Gottwald 1/2
 Colette Sandow 1/2
 Carol Raether 1/3
 Andy Hedman 1/3
 Adam Robotka 1/3
 Leo Diehl 1/9
 Andy Janetski 1/12
 Rolf Jostad 1/12
 Madyson Schultz 1/15

Gloria Sibley 1/17
 Steven Tracey 1/18
 Brad Bratvold 01/20
 Carly Pedersen 1/23
 Amy Roppe 1/24
 Maryann Cowans 1/25
 Connie Dahl 1/25
 Shay Sunderland 1/25
 Jeffery Arvesen 1/26
 Jerry Chasteen 1/27
 Bob Hayes 1/31

WHAT'S YOUR GIFT?

I'm excited to join the Trinity Council under Fellowship and Growth! God made us his social children and he is helping me with new ways to bring us together. If you have a crafting gift and enjoy fellowship with family and friends, read on...
 I'd like your thoughts on setting crafting ideas and dates as fellowship events. This would take place in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome. Projects need to be determined. All crafts will be sold during Christmas in Birchwood on the 1st Saturday of December. This will be in conjunction with the Women of Trinity's breakfast treats and chili feed lunch. All proceeds will be distributed by the Women of Trinity to organizations currently receiving our financial support. A few crafting ideas may include Christmas Tree Ornaments, Greeting cards & Home Décor. So, WHAT IS YOUR GIFT? Please call me with your interest and ideas. 715 651 3299.
 Your sister in Christ Jesus, Sue Svitak



NEXT MEETING OF . . .

Birchwood Food Pantry Open.Jan 1, 15-10:30-12:30pm
Worship & Music Team.Jan 8 10:00am
Women of TrinityJan 13, 10:00 am
Trinity Council MeetingNo Jan Meeting
Men's Ministry of TrinityJan 18, 6:30 pm

A Letter from our Associate Pastor, Barb

Each new year we often look at the past and base New Year's resolutions on things we want to improve.

In our walk with Jesus, we are called to know more about Him and grow in our faith so that we can be a "light" in this world. The apostle Paul is a good example for us to follow as he counted everything to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Jesus. Concerning His faith, He wrote: *"I focus on this one thing: forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philippians 3:13-14."* (Living Bible)

"Forgetting those things that are in the past," refers to not looking back at past relationships, memories, failures, temptations, or anything that might distract our focus on "the upward call of God in Christ." This can even mean not holding on to bitterness or unforgiveness that keeps us stuck in the past. Paul then mentioned pressing on like athletes running a race with great determination to reach the finish line and win the prize. "Forgetting" in Philippians 3:13 means to stop dwelling on something. To win a race, a runner must remove every distraction from their mind and not look back and dwell on the mistakes they have made.

It's like the apostle Paul is saying, "Don't let anything interfere with growing in your faith." He disciplined himself with this one purpose, "to keep moving forward to win the prize for which God had called him."

As we begin a new year, let us move forward, keeping our eyes on Jesus Christ. He is the greatest priority that makes our lives worth living. Our highest and greatest goal is to know Him better, as Paul said: "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" Philippians 3:10.

Grace and peace to you in this New year! - Pastor Barb

***Tidings of Joy: A Celtic Christmas Celebration* was presented by the TLC Cantata Choir at an afternoon concert, Dec. 17, followed by a delicious reception. Thank you to the choir members for their hard work and to those who organized and set up the reception. A new tradition was probably started this year!**

Tone chimes made their appearance several times this season. We hope to do more with them and invite anyone interested in participating to contact Joanne Schilling, @ 715-651-4875.

You don't need to even read music to play!



(Continued from page 2)

Do any of these spiritual gift descriptions hit home with you? More than likely, you will have more than one spiritual gift. Do your friends or family recognize some spiritual gifts in you?

Pastor Dan previously taught a Spiritual Gifts Class and gave each participant a Spiritual Gift Assessment. The assessment results opened the eyes of the participants and many of us were surprised at the results. Pastor Dan will be scheduling additional Spiritual Gifts classes in the future. Keep an eye out for the announcement for the classes and make sure you sign up for this important event.

Once gifts are discovered, the next step is to take action on that discovery. We will be able to match your interests, passions, and gifts with ministry opportunities. With planning for the future of TLC we need all TLC brothers and sisters to be open to the Holy Spirit's leading with a desire for ministry. I will be interested in seeing what gifts we all get to unwrap.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Jim McGraw

Mission and Outreach

Adopt-a-Family was a huge success. Thank you so much for your generous support. Together we were able to make Christmas happier for four families. We also placed a prayer shawl in each of the family basket to help spread God's love from Trinity.

Snacks and Facts will be held on Tuesday, January 9th at 2 pm. Birchwood Chief of Police Adam Brunclik will be speaking about fraud. Please join us for good information, fellowship plus pie and coffee.

Beginning in February during ILent we will be collecting for Lutheran World Relief personal care kits. If you see any good sales, we will be collecting the following items:

Bath towels
Bath size bars of soap
Comb
Metal nail clippers
Toothbrush

Thank you again for your support.

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done. Proverbs 19:17



Women of Trinity



Women of Trinity

Our December meeting was held December 9, in The Fellowship Hall at 10:00 a.m. We had 11 women in attendance. We participated in several events in the month of December:

We held a continental breakfast and chili luncheon on December 2, during Christmas Fest being held throughout the village. Our offering was a great success as we sold out of chili by 12:30.

We held our annual Christmas bake sale December 17, before and after church services. We had items left that were available for purchase at the Christmas Cantata, held Sunday afternoon.

We prepared containers of baked treats for local Meals on Wheels participants and some of our congregants that experience a little more difficulty getting out and about.

We designated the nonprofits that we would contribute to for the year of 2023. Our list included Embrace, The Pregnancy Help Center, Benjamin's House, Love Fund, Birchwood Food Pantry, and Lutheran Social Services.

Our next meeting will be January 13, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will be discussing participating in the Children's Shoebox project in 2024 among other topics.

To all the women of our congregation: please consider joining us for our monthly meetings! All are welcome and they are stress free, we've even been known to share a laugh, or silly story once in a while!

Cindy Rubin

WOT President





Oh Holy Night



Christmas Fest



January 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 7p TLC Choir Rehearsal	4 10a Women's Bible Study	5 OFFICE CLOSED	6
7 10:00 am Worship	8 9:00a Quilters 10a WMMT Mtg 10:30a-12:30p—Food Pantry Open 3:30 Women's Bible Study 7p—AA, Fellowship Hall	9	10 6:30a Men's Bible Study 7p TLC Choir Rehearsal 8p PT Rehearsal	11 10a Women's Bible Study	12 OFFICE CLOSED	13 10a WOT Mtg
14 10:00 am Worship	15 9:00a Quilters 3:30p Women's Bible Study 7p—AA, Fellowship Hall	16	17 6:30a Men's Bible Study 11:30a Mission & Outreach mtg 7p TLC Choir Rehearsal	18 10a Women's Bible Study 6:30p Men's Ministry Mtg	19 OFFICE CLOSED	20
21 10:00 am Worship Love Fund/Food Pantry Offering	22 9:00a Quilters 10:30a-12:30p—Food Pantry Open 3:30p Women's Bible Study 7p—AA, Fellowship Hall	23 Journey Deadline	24 6:30a Men's Bible Study 7p TLC Choir Rehearsal	25 10:00 Women's Bible Study 6:30p Service of the Longest Night	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 10:00 am Worship Prayer Shawl Sunday	29 9:00a Christmas Worship 7p—AA, Fellowship Hall	30	31 6:30a Men's Bible Study 7p TLC Choir Rehearsal			

Trinity Lutheran Church
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**Join Us for Snacks & Facts
January 9 @ 2:00p
Police Chief Adam Brunclik
Presentation on Fraud**



The JOURNEY

January 2024

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Rev. Daniel Tabor—Pastor

Pastor Barb Kleven—Associate Pastor

Julie Sunderland, Parish Administrator

Joanne Schilling, Choir Director

Betty Blanch & Donnarae Carrell, Custodians

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Sunday School 10 am (Sept – May)
Office Hours 8 – 11:30 am, 12:30 - 3:00pm (M-Th)
Bulletin deadline 9 am Tuesdays
JOURNEY deadline Monday - 3rd week of the month
Pastor's Office Hours Mondays (8 am–3:00pm)
Wednesdays (8–11:30 pm) other days by apt.



Sunday Worship Services

Jan 7 – Worship w/communion @ 10 am

Jan 14—Worship w/communion @ 10 am

Jan 21—Worship w/communion @ 10 am

Jan 28—Worship w/communion @ 10 am

KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

Debbie Davis	Tracy Reid
Andy Hedman	Bill Rice
Barb Hinderman	Ro Sackmann
Ed Leader	Carter Sackmann
Lora	Timothy Wallace
Sharon Mackey	Donna Willis

In the military: Rigil Christensen, and all those serving in the military.