



TIDINGS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WATERTOWN, MINNESOTA



Who Are We Really?

There is an internal conversation within the pages of Scripture around this question. On the one hand, Scripture affirms what

Jesus says about us in the waters of baptism. We are loved and chosen and forgiven and seen and healed and heard and known. This list could continue, because in Scripture Jesus meets us and speaks to and for us. The late German pastor and theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, once said in a lecture he gave to a group of seminarians that when we read Jesus speaking to people in Scripture, we should also read his words as addressed to us no matter who we are and what we face. Jesus' promises transcend time and space and find their way into our ears by the power of God's Holy Spirit in our lives and hearts.

At the same time, Scripture also opens us to another reality about ourselves. In the Book of Romans, the Apostle Paul writes: *For I do not do the good I want, but the very thing I don't want to do is what I end up doing.* (Rom. 7:19) There are many such examples and experiences in our lives that reveal the truth of this. Sometimes we talk about this as a good intention. We may want to do something not only because we'd enjoy it, but also because we see the benefit in it not only for us, but also for others. And then life interferes, our schedules become crowded, and something falls away for now. We'll do this sometime, we tell ourselves and others. And honestly, these things do happen. There's so much we cannot control in this life. The promise to be open to whatever the opportunity is in the future is, in ways that are real and true, spoken with generosity and hope.

Generosity and hope spill forth from who God has named and claimed us to be. The source comes from another promise about us, also written by the Apostle Paul: *...and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ Jesus who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* (Gal. 2:20)

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Paul Lutter, Interim Pastor



MARCH 2026

INSIDE:

Lent & Holy Week
Children's Ministry
March is Food Share Month
Pastoral Transition Update
A Visit With the Bishop
Council Highlights

Worship

Sundays • 9 am

Lent Wednesdays • 7 pm

Onsite & Online

STAFF:

Interim Pastor	Paul Lutter
Children's Ministry	Chelsea Farniok
Music Ministry	Hannah Rosholt
Office Manager	Robyn Behrens
Financial Secretary	Gail Cassidy
Financial Administrator	Mary Jech

Trinity Lutheran Church

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What's Happening AT TRINITY LUTHERAN?



Lent Midweek Services

Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18, 25
Light Supper from 5:30 - 6:30 pm
Services at 7:00 pm ~ Onsite & Online

Our Lenten series, "Unbound: Longing for Wholeness", explores how Jesus draws us away from the things that bind us and toward a life of abundant peace. During our midweek services, members of the congregation will share personal testimonies of how God's grace has met and opened them in their lives. Join us for a light supper and worship each Wednesday evening in Lent.



HOLY WEEK & EASTER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday, March 29 @ 9:00 am

Maundy Thursday, April 2 @ 7:00 pm

Good Friday, April 3 @ 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday, April 5 @ 9:00 am & 10:30 am



Easter Garden Plant Sale

Order Deadline is March 22

Purchase a plant from the Trinity Easter Garden Sale to adorn Trinity's altar on Easter morning and then enjoy it at home all season long! Order forms are available at the Welcome Center or you can order online at www.trin.org/easter-garden.



Thursday, March 19 | 10:00 am

Trinity's OWLS (Older, Wiser Lutherans) Fellowship Group welcomes Trinity member Kelly Hirsch this month to share an inside look at his cabinet making business and the timeless craft of woodworking.



Drive Thru Prayers

Mon-Fri, March 30 - April 3
7:30 - 8:30 am

During Holy Week, Trinity will be offering prayers and free coffee to morning commuters driving by the church. All are invited to stop by for a cup of coffee and a prayer to start your day.

If you would like to volunteer to help with Drive Thru Prayers, please contact Marilyn Panzer at 952-807-5272 or mpanzer531@gmail.com.



Palm Sunday Breakfast

Sunday, March 29
10:00 - 11:00 am

Join us for a continental breakfast on Palm Sunday, March 29 in the Fellowship Hall following worship. Rolls, breakfast pizza, juice, and coffee will be served as we shout "Hosanna!" and launch into Holy Week.



Easter Egg Hunt

Palm Sunday, March 29
10:00 am

Families are invited to grab your baskets and head to Trinity to search for treat-filled eggs that remind us of the new life we receive in Christ. Meet in the Trinity parking lot for the big hunt!

Children's Ministry



CASTLE Sunday

In March, our Sunday School kids will focus on serving others through a Food Drive! We invite the whole congregation to join us by bringing in food shelf items throughout the month. You can use the "Pack the Pew" bags found in the Worship Center pews. On March 22, the children will have a special activity where they'll build fun "food castles" using all the donated items to celebrate your generosity. Afterward, the food will be delivered to Gather and Grow Food Shelf to help families in our community. Thank you for partnering with us to teach our kids the joy of giving and caring for others!

THIS MONTH AT A GLANCE

- March 1:** Sunday School Class
- March 8:** No Sunday School (Spring Break)
- March 15:** Sunday School Class
- March 22:** Castle Sunday!
- March 29:** Easter Egg Hunt



Youth Game Nights

Wednesdays, March 4 & 25
6:00 - 6:55 pm

Calling all youth in grades 6–12! Join us in the Pioneer Room on Wednesdays, March 4 and 25, from 6:00 to 6:55 pm for an evening of games, prizes, and friendly competition. It is the perfect way to enjoy some high-energy fellowship between Lenten supper and worship, so drop in and see if you can take home a win!



MN Food Share's March Campaign

Trinity will be collecting food, supplies and dollars for the **Gather and Grow Food Shelf**. As a community of faith, we are called to help those who are hungry and in need.

Throughout the month of March, Gather and Grow receives a percentage match on both pounds of food and financial gifts collected, making this an especially impactful time for our congregation to support neighbors experiencing food insecurity. Non-perishable food items, personal care items and monetary donations are all welcome.

Whether through prayers or donations, we thank you for your generosity this month during the Minnesota Food Share March Campaign!

Check out the "Pack the Pews" bags for a list of the items that Gather and Grow Food Shelf is in special need of this time of year.



Pack the Pews Sunday is March 22

Join Trinity for "Pack the Pews Sunday" as a part of Minnesota Food Share's March Campaign. Empty grocery bags will be available in the back rows of pews in the month of March. Everyone is encouraged to

take a bag (or two) home with them, fill it with non-perishable food items and/or household supplies and return it to church by Sunday, March 22. Thank you for your generosity during this Food Share Month.

Congregational NEWS



BAPTISMS

Nolan McCain

son of Andrew & Lindsay McCain
Baptized January 31, 2026

Miles Boyd

son of Samuel & Sarah Boyd
Baptized February 7, 2026

FUNERAL

Warren Henning

10/26/49 ~ 12/4/2025
Memorial Service on
February 10, 2026

NEW MEMBERS

Tony & Susan McCleary

Luke & Tessa Buttenhoff
Maeve & Jude

Eric & Hannah Vogel

Archie, Wesley, August

MEMORIALS

In memory of

Lori Green

General Memorial ~ \$25

Krystal Riesgaard

General Memorial ~ \$25

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

February 17, 2026

FINANCIAL REPORT

Operating Fund summary January 2026

Beginning balance 1/1/2026:	\$ 5,146.46
Operating Fund inc:	\$ 20,716.12
Operating Fund exps:	\$ 37,353.56
Net balance (Jan.):	- \$ 16,637.44

**Operating Fund balance as of
1/31/2026: - \$ 11,490.98**

**2026 operating fund EXPENSES
exceeded INCOME by \$16,637.44.**

Capital Improvement Fund:
Parsonage demo bill paid: \$24,775.03

Cash Summary:
Old National: \$ 67,135.06
(includes \$3,258.24 for Jan. federal withholding)

Citizen's Building Fund: \$ 64,553.44

Comments:

- 6% of operating fund income for benevolence to Minneapolis Area synod amounted to \$1,241.46.
- January Xcel bill amounted to \$2,571.01 (down about \$70 from December).
- Garbage hauling is up to \$487/month.
- One-time payments for elevator maintenance contract, web hosting, and copyright licensor were paid.

M/S/C Nancy Stello / Kevin Beck / carried

PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor Paul went over plans for Lenten worship services and Palm Sunday Brunch, along with other updates.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Transition Team Report** The Transition Team presented and talked through the Ministry Site Profile with Council.

Motion was made to call a Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 22, 2026, at 10:15 am to vote on the Call Committee.

M/S/C Steve Boylan / Kari Olson / carried

Bishop Jen Nagel will be at the Special Congregational Meeting to talk about the Ministry Site profile and install the Call Committee.

- **Stewardship Update** Jim reported that the Time & Talent form along with the Estimate of Giving were mailed to the congregation last week and will be collected February 22, 2026.
- **Communion Assistants / Tellers** for upcoming services were discussed. A final 2026 schedule for these roles is being created.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Call Committee** Reviewed Candidate List; Council will call for a vote on Call Committee members on March 22, 2026.

Motion was made to extend the Call Committee application period to March 1, 2026.

M/S/C Nick Neaton / Kevin Beck / carried

- **Council Retreat** scheduled for April 21, 2026 at 5:00 pm with a potluck meal.

- **Committee Assignments** Council is working toward having a Church Council Liaison for each Ministry Team/Committee. Liaisons will attend meetings and work to reinvigorate the teams.

PASTORAL TRANSITION UPDATE

Ministry Site Profile Summary

The Trinity Transition Team is excited to share a summary of our Ministry Site Profile (MSP)—the roadmap that will guide our search for Trinity’s next pastor. This document reflects who we are today and the vision we hold for our future.

The Trinity MSP centers on our core purpose: welcoming everyone, learning together, and living faithfully to change lives. Building on our vibrant ministries and strong history of outreach, we are prioritizing youth and family ministry, connecting faith to daily life, and equipping members to lead.

Based on our congregational conversations, we are seeking a partner in ministry—a joyful, collaborative leader who excels in preaching and community building. Our goal is to find a pastor who will not only lead worship but also empower each of us to use our own unique gifts.

Pick up a printed MSP Summary at the Trinity Welcome Center this month, or view the summary online at trin.org/pastoral-transition.



A Visit With Bishop Jen Nagel

Part of the Pastoral Transition Process includes approving members of our Call Committee and inviting the Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop, Jen Nagel, to Trinity to have a conversation with us about our Ministry Site Profile. Join us for both of these important opportunities.

JOIN US ON SUNDAY, MARCH 22 FOR:

- A Special Congregational Meeting (at 10:00 am) to approve our Call Committee members.
- A conversation with Bishop Jen Nagel following worship in the Fellowship Hall.

It’s vital that the Bishop hears our unique perspectives to help identify the perfect match for Trinity. Your presence ensures your voice is heard before the Call Committee begins its official search for candidates. Please join us for this significant day!

A Trinity Social Justice Update from team member Adam Rowan

In Matthew 22, Jesus gives us all the direction to love God and love your neighbor as yourself. This is our purpose and responsibility as Christians. Right now there are many of our neighbors in Minnesota who are hurting, scared and in great need. The last few months have been overwhelming and have created a great need in our local and state community to let God’s light shine.

It is with that calling that a group of 20 Trinity members gathered recently for a meeting of the Social Justice Committee for a session focused on Community Action. We shared our lived experiences as to why we showed up. We shared first-hand stories of ways that we were personally impacted, hurt, scared and concerned during the last few weeks and months. Many in the room have immigrant family members for whom the last few months have been especially difficult. There was a general feeling of needing community as well as assistance in finding ways to help others.

Together we formulated ways that we can be the church and live out God’s command:

1. We created an email list to share ideas.
2. We are working to create a shared document with ways to discuss the realities that our neighbors are facing using first-hand experiences with others who may or may not agree.
3. We are brainstorming ways to show up for the community. Some examples include reaching out to the elementary school to see if there are needs for families sheltering in their homes; and scheduling a candlelight prayer vigil for our neighbors in need, potentially on the ice of Swede Lake.

This is just the start, but the group agreed that we need to be active and visible in the community to follow the command of Jesus to love our neighbors. We are just beginning the journey and welcome all ideas and participation. Watch church announcements for future meetings of this group. Join us or let the office know of your interest in being added to the group communications.

▶▶▶▶ Last Month in Pictures

Trinity had fun last month with some of our favorite winter traditions — a Sunday School movie event and collecting underwear for those in need!



PASTOR PAUL'S FAITH RESOURCE CORNER

A Little Different Kind of Resource (It's a YouTube Link)

Weekly, Kate Bowler (historian, professor, writer, podcast host, wife, and mother) releases a podcast out into the world called, Everything Happens. Often on this podcast, she interviews people who are faithful, smart, and fun. She releases her program as a podcast and it is also posted on YouTube so people can lean even further into the conversation. In the week I'm writing this, she interviews one of my favorite writers, Anne Lamott. Lamott and her husband are releasing a book about writing that I've ordered and am eager to read. I thought it would be fun if, over the month of March, you would watch their conversation. Please note: Lamott's language can be a bit earthy. But don't let that hold you back. She has things to teach us. I love her work, and I hope you will, too. Let me know what you think! ~ Pastor Paul

Here's how to find the video:

Search: "The Everything Happens Podcast" on YouTube. Then find the episode with Anne Lamott titled: "If You're Exhausted by the World, You Need to Hear This" uploaded on February 10, 2026.



WE ARE AN OFFERING

A Heartfelt Thank You from Trinity's Stewardship Team

Thank you to everyone who submitted their pledge cards and Time & Talent forms during our "We Are An Offering" Stewardship Campaign! These financial pledges and volunteer interests are vital, as they allow our Finance Committee and Ministry Team leaders to prayerfully and accurately plan for Trinity's ministries in the year ahead.

If you haven't had a chance to turn yours in yet, it's not too late! You can drop off your physical pledge cards and Time & Talent forms at the church office anytime or conveniently complete both online at www.trin.org under the GIVE menu.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am Sunday School 10 am Worship & Music Team Mtg 10:15 am Happy Birthday Jacob Empting Andy Olson	2 AA Meeting 8 pm Happy Birthday Allison Vierling	3 Quilters 9 am Handbells 5:45 pm Happy Birthday Jack Zellmann	4 Prayer 12:30 pm Lent Supper 5:30 pm Youth Games 6 pm Worship Choir 6 pm Lent Worship 7 pm Worship Band 7:45 pm Happy Birthday Everley McCleary Jeff Peterson Ryan Ress	5 Housekeepers 9 am Happy Birthday Libby Bottem	6	7 Happy Birthday Tom Matson
8 Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am <i>No Sunday School</i>	9 Apostles 8:30 am Priscilla Circle 2 pm AA Meeting 8 pm Happy Birthday Samantha Horsman Jim Sandquist	10 Quilters 9 am Finance Committee 6:30 pm Happy Birthday Angela Eliason Diana Gilles Howie Gilles	11 Prayer 12:30 pm Lent Supper 5:30 pm Worship Choir 6 pm Lent Worship 7 pm Worship Band 7:45 pm Happy Birthday Marlene Bender	12 Happy Birthday John Fritzke Tristan Gens Kayla Jones Dave Kind	13 Happy Birthday Rachel Blackketter	14
15 Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am Sunday School 10 am Happy Birthday Kara Loehrs	16 AA Meeting 8 pm Happy Birthday Anja Gilbert	17 Quilters 9 am Handbells 5:45 pm Church Council Meeting 6:30 pm Happy Birthday Tina Quinlan Mary Speckel	18 Prayer 12:30 pm Lent Supper 5:30 pm Worship Choir 6 pm Lent Worship 7 pm Worship Band 7:45 pm	19 OWLS 10 am	20 Happy Birthday John Quinlan	21 Happy Birthday Diane Filek Betty Gulbrandson David Hirsch Rece Illies Mary Jech Katie Lohmann Eileen Nelson Rick Zellmann
22 PACK THE PEWS SUNDAY Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am Sunday School 10 am Special Congregation Meeting 10:15 am Bishop Visit 10:30 am Happy Birthday Paige Erickson Dylan Hecksel	23 Apostles 8:30 am Handbells 5:45 pm AA Meeting 8 pm Happy Birthday Nancy Hendricks Joel Paschke	24 Quilters 9 am Happy Birthday Katy Jo Danielson Emmarie Hirsch	25 FCA Breakfast 7 am Prayer 12:30 pm Lent Supper 5:30 pm Youth Games 6 pm Worship Choir 6 pm Lent Worship 7 pm Worship Band 7:45 pm Happy Birthday Bailey Hecksel	26 Tidings 9:30 am Happy Birthday Greta Gersema Dustin Stutsman	27 Happy Birthday Jonathan Gallus Dustin Gens Julie Lague	28 Happy Birthday Kevin Holmes Karla Keller Jim Salzsiedler
29 PALM SUNDAY Worship 9 am Breakfast 10 - 11 am Easter Egg Hunt 10 am Happy Birthday Mary Jacks	30 Handbells 5:45 pm AA Meeting 8 pm Happy Birthday Meg Erickson Heidi Guetzkow Sandy Loehrs Thomas McMahon	31 Quilters 9 am Happy Birthday Sandy Beckman	Apr 1	2	3	4
Drive Thru Prayers 7:30 - 8:30 am each weekday morning of Holy Week in the Trinity parking lot.						



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Faith That Blooms Anew

"Why are you anxious?" asked our Lord. Then He said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." (Matthew 6:28-29) Jesus' words remind us that just as God clothes the lilies of the field in beauty and splendor, he also provides faithfully for his people. The same Creator who tends to the flowers of spring cares for every detail of our lives.

People of faith come to see that truth unfold year after year — in the budding trees, the soft blossoms, and the steady return of color after winter's gray. God's reliability is woven into creation itself. As poet Adeline Whitney once wrote:

*God does not send strange flowers every year,
When the Spring wind blows o'er the pleasant places,
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces,
The violet is here.*

Each spring, those familiar blooms whisper the same promise: God is faithful still.