



TIDINGS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WATERTOWN, MINNESOTA



God Made Real Among Us

What's your favorite Christmas Carol? Joy to the World? What Child is This? Hark, the Herald Angels Sing? O Little Town of Bethlehem? Away in a Manger? Silent Night? There are so many, how do you choose just one!

What's your favorite Christmas memory? Christmas shopping for family and friends? Lighting candles at worship on Christmas Eve? Gathering with family for a special meal? Opening presents on Christmas morning? There are so many, how do you choose just one!

What's the best Christmas gift you've ever received? Something fancy, expensive, shiny, and new from the store? Or something small, simple, inexpensive, and homemade?

The Advent and Christmas Seasons are filled with so many thoughts, so many memories, so many expectations. But the one thing that these all have in common is that they're REAL. They're not made up, they're not just part of our imaginations. They're real. Because in the end, that is what Christmas is all about: God made real among us.

In the Gospel of John 1:14 we read: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." All the memories we have, all the gifts we've been given, all that we hope for in the future are not simply fleeting thoughts. They are grounded in the grace of God who has come to us in the birth of Jesus, who lived, died, and rose to new life so that we might find new life as well.

During this Advent and Christmas season, may you be filled with the light, the life, and the love of God.

~ God's Peace, Pastor Engholm



DECEMBER 2023

INSIDE:

Advent Midweek Worship
Christmas at Trinity
December Events
Children's Ministry Update
Council Meeting Highlights
Parish Health Matters

Worship
Sundays 9:00 am
Wednesdays 7:00 pm
Onsite & Online

STAFF:

Pastor	Jeffrey M. Engholm
Children's Ministry	Hannah Rosholt
Children's Ministry	Chelsea Farniok
Office Manager	Robyn Behrens
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Office Hours: Mon - Fri 9:00 am - Noon

What's Happening AT TRINITY LUTHERAN?



Midweek Advent Worship

Wednesdays, November 29, December 6, 13, 20

Light Supper from 5:30 - 6:30 pm

Worship at 7:00 pm ~ Onsite & Online

Advent is a time of anticipation as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Join us each Wednesday evening in Advent for a light meal served by the Trinity youth in the Fellowship Hall, followed by a "Holden Evening Prayer" worship service.



Saint Lucia Tea Open House

Saturday, December 9

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

All are welcome to enjoy traditional Scandinavian refreshments and a festive holiday atmosphere at Trinity's Saint Lucia Tea, a Swedish festival of light.

Volunteers Needed! We are looking for volunteers for baking, decorating, serving at the event and more! Please complete a volunteer sign up sheet at the Trinity Welcome Center or sign up to volunteer online at www.trin.org/lucia.



Christmas Celebration Service

Sunday, December 10 | 9:00 am

Trinity will be having a "Christmas Celebration" during worship on December 10. We will be featuring many of our wonderful Trinity musicians who will be sharing their musical gifts as we prepare for the birth of our Lord!

Children's Christmas Service

Sunday, December 17 | 9:00 am

Our Sunday School children will be leading worship in story and song on December 17. Join with the whole congregation as we sing Christmas carols both old and new to welcome the Christ child into our midst once again!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Services at 9:00 am, 2:00 pm & 4:00 pm

This year we will be having three services on Christmas Eve. At each service we will be singing familiar Christmas carols, listening to special anthems, and lighting Christmas candles. Please join us at worship on this most holy day!

Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 31 | 9:00 am

Join us for a reflective service of Lessons and Carols at 9:00 am. Coffee and conversation to follow the service in the Gathering Hall.

Sunday Fellowship Hour

During Advent, we'll be serving coffee downstairs in the Fellowship Hall following worship on Sunday mornings. Join us for coffee and conversation.



A Night of Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 10 | 4:00 pm

You're invited to go Christmas Caroling with Trinity – a heartwarming holiday experience for those visited and for those doing the caroling! We will meet in the Trinity Fellowship Hall, organize into groups, and head out into our community to share our Christmas songs and greetings. All ages of carolers are welcome!



Golden Agers / OWLS Advent Lunch

Thursday, December 14 | 11:45 am

Trinity's Golden Agers (members 70+) and OWLS (Older, Wiser Lutherans) and a guest are invited to enjoy lunch in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, December 14. Join us for food and fellowship to celebrate the Christmas season together.



Please Note: This annual luncheon has moved from a Sunday following worship to a Thursday. We hope this still works in your schedules.

Children's Ministry

Children's Ministry Update

Christmas is coming, and excitement is in the air! We hope to see as many kids as possible in Sunday School December 3 and 10 as we continue to explore the Christmas story and practice our Christmas music!

On Sunday, December 17, the Sunday School children will lead the music at the 9:00 am worship service. Following the service, we'll enjoy cookies, cocoa, and camaraderie.

December at a Glance:

- Dec. 3** 10:00-10:45 am Sunday School
(Christmas Service Practice)
- Dec. 10** 10:00-10:45 am Sunday School
(Christmas Service Practice)
- Dec. 17** 9:00 am - Children's Christmas Service
(No Sunday School after worship)
- Dec. 24** Christmas Eve! *(No Sunday School)*
- Dec. 31** New Year's Eve! *(No Sunday School)*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Christmas Blessings Adopt-a-Family

Each year, Trinity partners with the Watertown-Mayer Elementary School to help make Christmas a little brighter for local families in need. Gift requests can be found at www.trin.org under EVENTS. There are still gift requests unclaimed. The deadline to return gifts to the church will be Wednesday, December 6. Thank you for your generosity this holiday season.

Congregational NEWS

PASTORAL ACTS

BAPTISMS

Liam John McCain

son of

Andrew & Lindsay McCain

Baptized on November 11, 2023

Ava Lee Shakon

daughter of

John & Lauren Shakon

Baptized on November 12, 2023

THANK YOU FOR YOUR YEAR-END GIFTS

Thank you for all the ways you have been sharing your financial gifts with Trinity, especially your gifts given electronically with online giving. As 2023 comes to a close, we'd like to say a special thank you for your YEAR END GIFTS this holiday season!

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

November 21, 2023

FINANCIAL REPORT

Operating Fund summary October 2023

Beginning balance 10/1/2023:

-\$ 17,676.16

Operating Fund income: \$ 28,145.77

Operating Fund exps: \$ 31,962.56

Net balance (September): -\$ 3,816.79

Operating Fund balance as of

10/31/2023: -\$ 21,492.95

2023 operating fund EXPENSES exceeded INCOME by \$23,432.16.

Building Fund expenses:

Internal loan payment: \$ 5,000.00

Mortgage loan balance: \$ 80,000.00

Cash Summary:

Bremer: \$23,432.16

(includes \$1,634.28 for Oct. federal withholding and \$14,321.96 in hail damage receipts)

Citizen's Building Fund: \$43,886.80

Comments:

- 6% of operating fund income for benevolence to Minneapolis Area Synod amounted to \$1,685.34.
- Xcel bill for fuel and electricity amounted to \$759.01 (down about \$150.00 from September).
- \$50,000.00 was taken from capital/building fund to pay the down payment on the AV update. This will be reimbursed by the Foundation when funds are available to be transferred.
- Property taxes for the parsonage in the amount of \$1,140.00 were paid.
- The October Noisy Offering for the Royals room amounted to \$469.70.

M/S/C Diane Holmes / Corky Ibeling / carried

PASTOR'S REPORT

The Audio/Visual Committee is working with Dave Farber on the details regarding our move to livestreaming our services. The groundwork is being laid for installation probably after the first of the year. Many thanks to the Trunk-or-Treat and Halloween Food Drive volunteers for their successful efforts in October. On Sunday, November 5, we celebrated All Saints Sunday by lighting candles for those who have been baptized and who have died over the past year. We also recognized all the new members we have received over the past several years. And our youth group held a Bake Walk during our fellowship hour. Looking forward to all the familiar traditions of Wednesday night suppers and Holden Evening Prayer, Sunday School Christmas Service, Saint Lucia Tea, etc.

OLD BUSINESS

- Christmas Eve services will be at 9:00 am, 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm.
- At the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, amendments are made and approved to the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It was recommended that ELCA congregations review and adopt these amendments. These amendments are housekeeping items, no significant changes. Motion made to adopt these changes. A congregational vote to approve these changes will be added to the 2024 Annual Meeting agenda.

M/S/C Nancy Pickering / Diane Holmes / carried

NEW BUSINESS

- Mary Jech presented the 2024 Spending Plan. Motion made to approve the 2024 spending plan as presented.

M/S/C Corky Ibeling / Tammy Vsarpir / carried

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

The Christmas Story can be summed up in this simple passage from scripture:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. ~ John 1:14

The phrase, "the Word became flesh" simply means that God became real to the world, became real to God's people, became real to us. Even though it's been two thousand years since Jesus was born, we celebrate his presence among us not only at Christmas, but every time God becomes real to us.

So here's a question for you now:

When has God become REAL to you?



Watertown Foodshelf

Supporting Our Community Food Shelf

This Christmas season, you are invited to donate non-perishable food items or financial donations to support the holiday food baskets the food shelf will provide to those in need. Donated items can be dropped off at Trinity's Donation Station at the main parking lot entrance and financial donations can be given to the church office. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

PARISH
Health



A column from Trinity's Parish Health Ministry Team



The new year is fast approaching. Are you someone who makes New Year's resolutions? Often, we focus on health related goals such as losing weight, quitting smoking, reducing alcohol consumption or getting more exercise. Here are some additional thoughts to consider that might boost your spiritual health in the new year as well.



- Find a Bible reading plan. There are online Bible apps or you can download an audio Bible that you can listen to in your car.
- Listen more. Make time to listen to your spouse, friends or your kids more intently. Stop what you're doing and really listen to their heart. Make eye contact. Relax and learn.
- Build meaningful relationships. Spend time in-person and in community with others. Make this a year of building closer relationships with the people God has put in your life.
- Become a praying person. We all know we should pray more but some of us have trouble fitting in into our busy day. Prompts can help remind us to pray. Put a sticky note reminder on the fridge or on your mirror that names someone or maybe names an important cause in need of prayer.
- Expand your horizon. Break out of your normal routine and expand your horizon. Take a class, learn a new skill, learn a new language, or learn about a different religion.

2024 is a new year and a fresh start. Keep God at the center of your planning as you prayerfully consider your resolutions for the coming year.

▶▶▶▶ Last Month in Pictures

The first Sunday of Advent at Trinity was filled with crafts, candles, decorations and music as we excitedly await the celebration of Christ's birth!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1 style="margin: 0;">December 2023</h1>					1 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Daniel Empting Adam Rowan	2 Fellowship Hall Rsvd. 11 am - 4 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Daniel Venske Gordon Wandersee
3 Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am Sunday School 10 am	4 AA Meeting 8 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Cody Hilgers Shiree Hirsch	5 Quilters 9 am Kitchen Rsvd. 6 pm Worship Band 7:00 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Josh Gallus	6 Prayer 12:30 pm Advent Meal 5:30 pm Worship 7 pm Worship Choir 7:30 pm	7 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Carroll Lambrecht	8 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Colleen Alvig	9 Saint Lucia Tea 10 am - 12 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Adam Hembroff Briinlee Loehrs
10 Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am Sunday School 10 am Caroling 4 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Kurt Becker Lydia Haller Elliot Maas	11 Apostles 8:30 am Cemetery Board Mtg. 6:30 pm AA Meeting 8 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Josh Hoover Danita Kuntz Christi McMahon	12 Quilters 9 am Worship Band 7:00 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Steve Danielson Monica Fritzsche	13 Prayer 12:30 pm Advent Meal 5:30 pm Worship 7 pm Worship Choir 7:30 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Nicole Gersema Christine Huber Dorine Vanderlinde	14 Golden Agers/OWLS Lunch 11:45 am Finance Committee 6:30 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Nancy Brown Stan Hill	15 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jack Herman Caden Horsman	16 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Kelly Graff Leah Kohls Mary Seifert
17 CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am <i>No Sunday School</i> <i>Happy Birthday</i> Carole Pierson	18 Priscilla Circle 12 pm Youth Ministry Mtg. 6:30 pm AA Meeting 8 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Laramee Paradise	19 Quilters 9 am Gwen Dalchow Memorial 11 am Council Mtg. 6:30 pm Worship Band 7:00 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Natalie Whitehead	20 FCA Breakfast 7 am Prayer 12:30 pm Advent Meal 5:30 pm Worship 7 pm Worship Choir 7:30 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Carli Graff Chuck Sandquist Susan Westermann	21 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Destini Bergstrom	22 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Cassel Danielson Leon Fritzsche	23 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jodi Boylan Jenny Haller
24 CHRISTMAS EVE Worship 9 am <i>No Sunday School</i> Worship 2 pm Worship 4 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Theresa Thompson	25 CHRISTMAS DAY <i>Church Office Closed</i> AA Meeting 8 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Dan Blakstad Christopher Fautsch	26 Quilters 9 am <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jodi Maas Roger Nelson	27 Prayer 12:30 pm <i>Happy Birthday</i> Steve Johnson	28 Tidings 9:30 am <i>Happy Birthday</i> Katelyn Haller Elsa Impola Richard Murray Olivia Salonek	29 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Steve Venske	30 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Shirley Domjahn Liz Hirsch Laurie Mann
31 LESSONS & CAROLS Worship 9 am <i>No Sunday School</i> <i>Happy Birthday</i> Randy Nichols	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>Monday, December 25 Christmas Day ~ Office Closed</p> <p>December 26-29 ~ 9:00 am - Noon</p> <p>Monday, January 1 New Year's Day ~ Office Closed</p> </div> </div>					

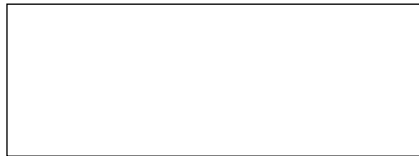


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Christmas Eve Services

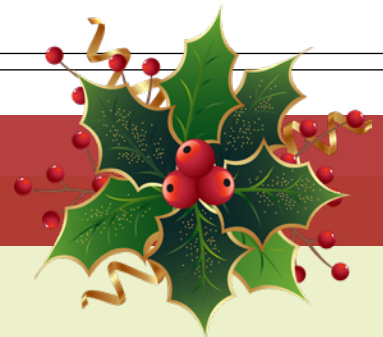
Sunday, December 24
Candlelight Services
9:00 am, 2:00 pm & 4:00 pm



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Follow us on Instagram @trinwatertown



Why Advent?

Waiting can be hard, and not just for children. But I do love Advent: this four-week time when the Christian church prepares for Christmas. Maybe I like Advent so much because it involves active waiting, not thumb-tiddling. It is a gift the church offers the world, to be active (which isn't the same as busy) in ways that open our hearts — and the hearts we touch — to the true meaning of Christmas. Mother Teresa said, "At this Christmas when Christ comes, will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern."

When I take time during Advent to remember in prayer and with gifts of money and time those who have less food than I do, those who are lonely, those without a home; when I pause to share love with a child or an elder, or gratitude for a healthcare worker, pastor or teacher; when I wait for justice to replace oppression but, while I wait, find ways to work for that result ... the Spirit's warmth fills my waiting heart. I am ready to welcome Jesus.