



# TIDINGS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WATERTOWN, MINNESOTA



## A Matter of Discernment

**All were amazed and perplexed, saying...What does this mean? (Acts 2:12)**

The disciples who witnessed God's gift of the Holy Spirit were a bit disoriented. The life they had before was no more. They may want to claim otherwise. Like us, the disciples downplayed the work of God in their midst. They didn't really have language large enough to convey the gift God has given in the person of the Holy Spirit. How could they? This was the first encounter with the Spirit. Yes, Jesus promised this gift would arrive. But there is a crease in expectations between something that would eventually be given and something that has now arrived.

A friend once asked me to be a reference for their family to foster a child. They talked about the possibility that this would happen: how excited and relieved they were, and how all new possibilities would now occur. And then, when they were informed that they were chosen to foster this child, they fretted. They worried. They wanted everything not only to be good; they wanted everything to be absolutely perfect. It wasn't perfect, but everything got real and authentic in a hurry. There were family dynamics that shifted. After a while, everything evened out. The relationship between this child and the foster family is now solid. The child returned to their home; they now have two families to call their own.

You may not be surprised at the question asked by the disciples. Things were going to change and shift. There would be times when communication between themselves and the Spirit could use a little tweaking. Maybe things they thought they knew about the Spirit needed to be re-examined. Maybe they're not sure how to proceed with the Spirit, because walking together takes practice. They were going to have to learn things about one another that could only be clarified by joining together. They would need to renegotiate things along the way – this is true in any relationship and any partnership. Still, Oswald Bayer, a retired German theologian, once wrote: "God's presence makes possible the future." What kind of future is the Spirit leading you into as a congregation? Come and see!

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Paul Lutter, Interim Pastor



MAY 2026

### INSIDE:

- May Events at Trinity
- Children's Ministry Update
- Vacation Bible School
- Call Committee Corner
- Ministry Highlight
- Calendar & Birthdays

**Worship**  
**Sundays 9:00 am**  
**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

513 Madison St SE | PO Box 1177  
Watertown, MN 55388  
phone: 952-955-1891  
email: trinityoffice@trin.org

[www.trin.org](http://www.trin.org)

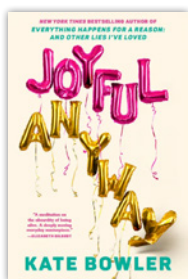
Office Hours: Mon - Fri 9:00 am - Noon

# What's Happening AT TRINITY LUTHERAN?



## Joyful, Anyway: An Adult Faith Series

Thursdays through May 21 | 7:00 - 8:00 pm  
Pioneer Room



Join this study of Kate Bowler's new book, *Joyful Anyway*. A Duke professor and host of the *Everything Happens* podcast, Bowler explores how to find joy amidst life's difficulties, arguing that joy isn't about fixing problems but about finding small, surprising moments of delight even when life is hard. We'll read, laugh, and learn from

her work—and from one another. Invite a friend and join us! (This study began in April, but you are welcome to jump into the conversation anytime.)

## We Tell Ourselves Stories: A Writing Workshop with Pastor Paul

Mondays, May 11, 18, 26 | 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Pioneer Room

Maybe you're someone who has dabbled with writing. Maybe you are quite established. Or maybe you're curious in trying to write something. For three Monday evenings in May, I'd like to invite you to join me in doing some writing. No experience necessary. I'll have some prompts to guide us. You are welcome to read what you've written – but you don't have to, either. The point of all this is to try, and to see what comes, when you write. Bring your notebook and pen, your computer, and your curiosity. Let's explore together how and where God shows up in this process. Please sign up online at [www.trin.org](http://www.trin.org) under the EVENTS menu to indicate your interest.

Grace & Peace, Pastor Paul Lutter

## Graduate Blessing Sunday

Sunday, May 17

Join us as we celebrate with, pray for, and bless our high school seniors as they prepare to graduate this spring. Worship and a special reception following worship on Sunday, May 17 will be held in honor of the Class of 2026!



## Wrapping Up A Great Year of Confirmation

Confirmation classes for the 2025-2026 year will meet for the final time on Wednesday, May 6. I want to thank Lori Sieling so much for her faithful work with those students in the sixth grade. My thanks to both Joshua Cherry and Katy Jo Danielson for their generous work as Huddle Guides for grades seven and eight. Thanks to the parents of these youth who made sure to get their kids to and from church on Wednesday evenings. And, of course, thanks for the students who participated over the course of this year in learning more about their faith.

May you continue to grow, by God's grace, in your faith, by the power and presence of God's Holy Spirit in your lives.

Grace & Peace, Pastor Paul Lutter

# Children's Ministry

## Children's Ministry Update from Children's Ministry Coordinator, Chelsea Farniok

As we wrap up another wonderful program year, I want to extend a sincere thank you to all our Trinity families who participated in and supported our Sunday School. We had lots of memorable events and lots of fun. Your commitment to your children's spiritual growth is the heartbeat of this ministry, and your presence each week is greatly appreciated. A special note of congratulations to our 5th graders on celebrating your First Communion this month! It is always a joy to witness this milestone in your faith journey, and we look forward to seeing how you continue to grow in grace.

The momentum doesn't stop here, though! I am so excited for another high-energy week at Vacation Bible School: Rainforest Style! We are ready to dive into the wonders of God's creation together. Whether you are joining us for VBS or heading off on family adventures, I hope that everyone has a safe and wonderful summer. We can't wait to hear your stories and see your faces again soon!

### Dates to Note:

**May 3:** First Communion for 5th Graders

**May 10:** Final day of Sunday School

**June 15 -18:** Vacation Bible School



Adventure is calling...



## Vacation Bible School at Trinity

June 15-18, 2026 • 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Family Dinner at 5 pm

Kids ages 3 years old through 4th Grade are invited to **Rainforest Falls VBS**, where we will explore the nature of God—discovering who God is and how much he loves us! Each evening will include a Bible story, singing, prayer, games, snacks, explorations, friendships, and more!

Register @ [www.trin.org/vbs](http://www.trin.org/vbs)

**Volunteers Needed!** There are many opportunities to help out with VBS. Adults and youth in 5th Grade and older are invited to volunteer. Email Chelsea Farniok at [cfarniok@trin.org](mailto:cfarniok@trin.org) to sign up to be a VBS volunteer.



Thursday, May 21 | 10:00 am  
Fellowship Hall

Join the OWLS this month as we welcome the Carver County Historical Society! Discover local history through stories and photos—and feel free to bring your own vintage items to share.

**Please Note:** The OWLS are taking a break for summer, but exciting fall programs are coming soon. Stay tuned for details!

## MEMORIALS

*in memory of*

**Scott Johnson**  
General Memorial ~ \$45



## Have You Remembered Trinity Lutheran Church in Your Will?

Some people are able to continue to give to Trinity in death, as well as in life. Giving through your will helps to continue the 160-year tradition of ministry and mission at Trinity, continuing the legacy of your witness. With the advice of your attorney or tax adviser, the following language may be added to your will, trust, or codicil: "I bequeath X% of my estate to Trinity Lutheran Church, 513 Madison Street SE, Watertown, MN 55388." Thank you for considering a lasting gift to Trinity Lutheran Church!

## FINACIAL COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Because the Church Council held a retreat in place of their regular April meeting, minute highlights are not available this month. Meeting minute highlights for May will be provided in the next newsletter. Below you will find a summary of the March finances.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

#### Operating Fund summary for March 2026

**Beginning balance**  
**3/1/2026: -\$ 21,395.05**  
Operating Fund inc.: \$ 36,163.12  
Operating Fund exps: \$ 34,248.29  
Net balance (Mar.): \$ 1,914.83

**Operating Fund balance as of**  
**3/31/2026: -\$ 19,480.22**

**Year to date operating fund**  
**expenses exceed income by**  
**\$24,626.41.**

#### Capital Improvement Expenses:

None

#### Cash Summary:

Old National: \$ 59,181.97  
*(includes \$2,671.38 Mar. federal withholding)*

Citizen's Capital Fund: \$ 75,406.26

#### Comments:

- 6% of operating fund income for benevolence to Minneapolis Area synod amounted to \$2,167.50.
- March Xcel bill for fuel and electricity amounted to \$2,248.81 (down about \$1,143 from Feb).
- March snow removal cost \$525.

## CALL COMMITTEE CORNER

The Call Committee Corner serves as a dedicated space for the committee to provide the congregation with regular updates throughout the prayerful process of calling a new pastor.

**May 2026 Update:** The Call Committee met with Pastor Jen Collins this past week to review the process for calling a new pastor. The Minneapolis Area Synod is currently working to match our Ministry Site Profile (MSP) with potential pastoral candidates. We are now concluding the nomination process and moving into the next phase of discernment.

We ask for your continued prayers, patience, and support as we move forward together in this season of transition. ~ Trinity Call Committee

# Ministry *Highlight*

## Spreading Light with The Sunshine Ministry



At Trinity, we strive to ensure that the warmth of our faith community reaches beyond our sanctuary walls to touch every corner of our congregation. This is the heartfelt mission of the Sunshine Ministry, a dedicated group committed to bringing joy to those who cannot always join us in person. Several times a year, our volunteers organize and deliver thoughtful small gifts to Trinity's homebound members and the residents of Westwood Place in Watertown.

While the gifts are a kind gesture, the true heart of this ministry lies in the personal visits. These moments of shared conversation foster a vital connection back to the Trinity community. The experience is a mutual blessing; our visitors often find they leave feeling just as spiritually uplifted as those they visited.

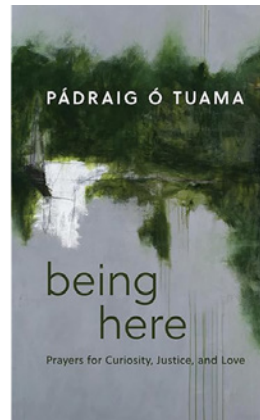
### Interested in learning more the Sunshine Ministry?

If you feel called to share your time, we would love to have you. Please contact the church office or Cindy Essen at [cessen@citlink.net](mailto:cessen@citlink.net) to learn more about becoming a Sunshine Ministry visitor.

### With Gratitude

Thank you to everyone who helped make our Lent, Holy Week, and Easter celebrations at Trinity so meaningful—from worship and music to meals and special events, your gifts and dedication truly blessed our community. We are deeply grateful for all the ways you shared your time, talents, and love.

## PASTOR PAUL'S FAITH RESOURCE CORNER



### Pádraig Ó Tuama, Being Here Prayers for Curiosity, Justice, and Love

Later this month, on May 24, the Church will celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and world. In Romans, we read, in part, "...but

that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." (Rom. 8:26) Intercedes is an important word that ultimately means "prays." The Spirit prays for us, "with sighs too deep for words." I don't know how it is for you when it comes to prayer. Is it easy? Difficult? Confusing? Or are you not sure what to make of it? All of this is likely. Prayer can confound us – even those who pray every day.

According to poet and theologian Pádraig Ó Tuama,

**"[P]rayer is not a passport to heaven. If anything, it's a way of seeing here, a way of being here."**

In this book, Ó Tuama accompanies us in our daily prayers. In a collection of 31 prayers, we are invited to pray, reflect, explore, and experiment with how we might pray. I've been reading Ó Tuama for years. This collection is a lovely guide – even a guidebook to accompany us in our prayers.

If prayer intimidates you, know that neither Ó Tuama nor I mean for this to be the case. Rather, it's an invitation, and thus a welcome, into the act of coming before God and talking with him. I hope you try this and see what you think. Even better: let's talk about it with one another. In the end, know that God is here, with you, listening to you even before you say your first word.

# ➤➤➤ Last Month in Pictures

From worship filled with music and Holy Week and Easter traditions to youth-led meals, and gatherings of small groups like the Apostles and OWLS, there is so much to celebrate at Trinity.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 <b>Happy Birthday</b> Wilbur Light Zachary Lohmann	2 <b>Happy Birthday</b> Wade Baluski
3 <b>FIRST COMMUNION</b> Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am Sunday School 10 am	4 <b>Writing Workshop</b> 6:30 pm <b>AA Meeting</b> 8 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Kristin Hecksel Luke Sandquist	5 <b>Quilting</b> 9 am  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Mark Fritze Kim Whitehead	6 <b>Prayer</b> 12:30 pm <b>6-8 Confirm.</b> 6:30 pm <b>Worship Band</b> 7:30 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Madison Gohman Michael Huber Kallie Jackson	7 <b>Housekeepers</b> 9 am <b>Adult Faith Series</b> 7 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Leona Farniok Hannah Rosholt Shelley Stenson	8  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Ailsa Gilbert Kimberly Patterson	9  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Lynn Hendricks Theresa Hennessey Sharon Schroeder
10 <b>MOTHER'S DAY</b> Worship 9 am Fellowship 10 am Final Day of Sunday School 10 am  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Caroline Farniok Stephanie Salonek	11 <b>Apostles</b> 8:30 am <b>Priscilla Circle</b> 2 pm <b>Writing Workshop</b> 6:30 pm <b>AA Meeting</b> 8 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Erik Eliason Elena Ress	12 <b>Quilting</b> 9 am <b>Finance Committee</b> 6:30 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Sophia Danielson Carter Jones Jenna Kohls Mickey Kottke Amelia Neaton	13 <b>Prayer</b> 12:30 pm	14 <b>Adult Faith Series</b> 7 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Brynn Illies Glen Schroers Dan Sieling	15  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Jake Berhow Lexis Brever Drew Isakson Matthew Isakson McKenzie Mitteness	16  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Parker Jackson
17 <b>GRADUATE BLESSING SUNDAY</b> Worship 9 am Fellowship / Grad Reception 10 am  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Lorelei Kuffenkam	18 <b>AA Meeting</b> 8 pm <b>Writing Workshop</b> 6:30 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Jackson Bauernfeind Sue Johnson Vicki Wingert	19 <b>Quilting</b> 9 am <b>Church Council Mtg.</b> 6:30 pm	20 <b>Prayer</b> 12:30 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Jordyn Gohman Cora Schaupp Eric Vogel Ryan Whitehead	21 <b>OWLS</b> 10 am <b>Adult Faith Series</b> 7 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Dan Hagelin Rochell Prigge	22 <b>Church Reserved</b> 5 pm	23 <b>Crock / Bender Wedding</b>  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Lonne Gilbert Alden Hirsch
24 <b>Worship</b> 9 am <b>Fellowship</b> 10 am  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Madison Dalbey Luke Maas	25 <b>MEMORIAL DAY</b> <i>Church Office Closed</i> <b>AA Meeting</b> 8 pm  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Declan Kuffenkam Gary Vanderbilt	26 <b>Quilting</b> 9 am  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Kevin Beck Samantha Fautsch Jennifer Jackson Norah Stienessen	27 <b>FCA Breakfast</b> 7 am <b>Prayer</b> 12:30 pm	28 <b>Tidings</b> 9:30 am  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Dave Hendricks Steven Paschke	29  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Peggy Markgraf Mike Panzer Pat Sandquist	30  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Tessa Buttenhoff Carl Hagelin
31 <b>Worship</b> 9 am <b>Fellowship</b> 10 am  <b>Happy Birthday</b> Hannah Skahaug						

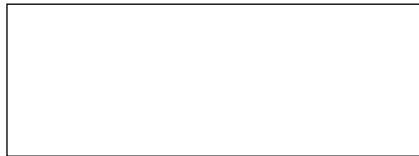


513 MADISON ST SE | PO BOX 1177  
WATERTOWN MN 55388  
www.trin.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
WATERTOWN MN  
55388  
PERMIT NO. 22

*If you have a new address or if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact the church office at 952-955-1891 or trinityoffice@trin.org.*



### SIGN UP FOR EMAIL UPDATES FROM TRINITY

Stay up to date with what's going on at Trinity Lutheran Church. Sign up for email updates to receive eNewsletters and other church-wide announcements. Subscribe to Email Updates on our website [www.trin.org](http://www.trin.org).



Like us on Facebook

Facebook/Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA) Watertown MN



Follow us on Instagram @trinwatertown

## Seizing Holy Opportunities

In *Holy Moments*, Matthew Kelly discusses the world's need for more small (but sometimes large) instances of people caring for others, cultivating joy, encouragement and love instead of anger, envy, fear. Kelly defines a Holy Moment as "a single moment in which you open yourself to God. ... You set aside personal preference and self-interest, and for one moment you do what you prayerfully believe God is telling you to do."

This may mean mowing the lawn for a neighbor with a broken leg, praising a child on his artwork, buying a surprise snack for someone having a bad day, working extra shifts for a coworker with cancer so she can receive her full salary while out sick, paying for the next car's drive-thru order. Anyone can create a Holy Moment, because you don't need special skills, position or wealth. "If you want to see miracles, make yourself available to God," Kelly suggests.

He adds that God has a track record of collaborating with "the most unlikely people to make amazing things happen, and now He wants to collaborate with you." When we're open to God's leading, holy opportunities abound. And we will experience as much joy as the ones to whom we show care.