

The JOURNEY — Walking Daily with Jesus

From the Pastor's Desk:

Romans 12:1-2: *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.*

Here we are in the Year of Our Lord, 2024. For some of us, our New Year resolutions are already a thing of the past, abandoned because, for us, change is difficult.

A few months ago, I announced my decision to retire from full-time ministry. I have a call in my heart to spend more time with family. This decision will bring about change for Trinity Lutheran Church. Even for the Church, change can be difficult. It is for this reason that I announced my retirement date of May 31, 2025, so far in the future.

You see, the Church as a whole is suffering from a shortage of pastors. The shortage knows no denominational boundaries. The lack of pastors is a problem in every Christian denomination. The reasons for this shortage are varied. The response to the COVID virus has played a huge role in pastors either retiring, or just changing vocations. Workload, hours, pay, impact of ministry on families: these all play a part in the shortage of pastors.

But we need not lament these things, or fret about our future. This is Christ's church, and He has promised that *"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* (Mt. 16:18.)

Congregations may have to change their expectations of how their pastors will be trained for ministry. They may need to make a choice between a seminary-trained pastor holding a Master of Divinity degree, and a lay person who has chosen another route leading to a certificate allowing them to serve a congregation. Congregations may have to choose between a full-time pastor, or a part-time pastor working alongside lay leadership to fulfill Christ's command to *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."* (Mt. 28: 19-20).

Trinity Lutheran will be facing just such a decision in the future. With this in mind, Leadership is putting together a "Roadmap Strategic Planning Team" to help to guide our congregation through the decisions which we will face. I do believe that God has a plan for Trinity Lutheran Church. Please pray for this team! Please make your wishes known to this team! Please support and encourage this team.

"May the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7.)

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Letter from Trinity President

In next few weeks, your TLC Roadmap to the Future Planning Team will have its kickoff meeting. The purpose of this team of faithful and dedicated brothers and sisters in Christ is to set some specific goals to better deliver Christ's mission to our world. And our world needs to hear about Christ. Proverbs 15:22 says, *"Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers, they succeed."* Our greatest advisers are the Holy Spirit and Scriptures. *"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."* Proverbs 16:9. So before start setting goals, we need to enlist every one of you to be inspired and committed to pray for this team and God's plan for the future of TLC. *"The heartfelt and persistent prayer of a righteous man (believer) can accomplish much [when put into action and made effective by God—it is dynamic and can have tremendous power]."* James 5:16.

These prayers are not only for your personal prayer time at home, but also in corporate prayer praying together in worship, in the Wednesday prayer group, in Bible study groups, in women and men's small groups. We need to ask the Holy Spirit's presence to guide us on what TLC should look like in 3 to 5 years in the future but we cannot do it on our own.

Jonathan Graf, President of the Church Prayer Leaders Network, wrote an article entitled *Benefits of Praying Together* in which he lists 3 benefits of corporate prayer.

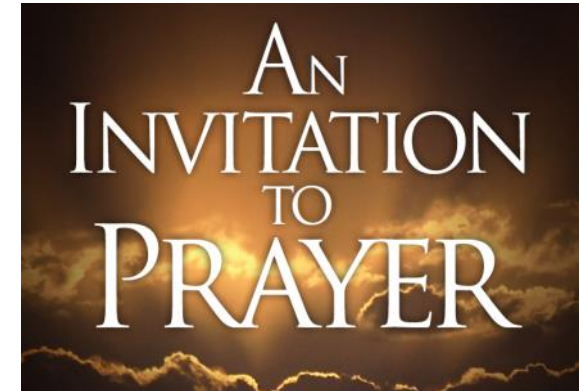
1. Praying together invites the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

In 2 Chronicles 6-7, we see the dedication of Solomon's Temple. While *"the whole assembly of Israel was standing there"* (2 Chron. 6:3), Solomon prays a dedicatory prayer in which he invokes the presence of God. *"Now, my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. Now arise, O Lord God, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. May your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, may your saints rejoice in your goodness"* (2 Chron. 6:40-41). Of course the presence of God entered with dynamic power! There is a different atmosphere in churches where people pray together and who have praying people. Worship seems more powerful. There is a sense of connection with God that is not there in non-praying churches. As you pray together as a congregation, God will begin to "show up" more and more.

2. Praying together increases the faith of a congregation to believe God for the miraculous.

Churches that pray together begin to see the miraculous power of

God at work in their midst. It goes beyond what they can and should do into what God wants to do through them. If you increase the level of praying together among your congregation, you will see more miracles happen as your faith rises.



3. Praying together moves people from seeking their own purposes to desiring God's purposes.

Most people's prayers seek the best fix for a situation. We typically pray whatever we are told to pray for a situation, with no real thought of "What does God want to do here?" Something happens to that dynamic, however, when people pray together. They start to let go of their desires to see their purposes fulfilled and start to open themselves up to what God wants. The value of this to a church is huge when it comes to ministry and decision making. If people pray together over an issue, even if people come to prayer thinking they know what the church should do, praying together opens them up to God's desire. People who are disgruntled with decisions a church has made usually have not prayed with the body over that issue. Pray together and watch unity grow.

The Challenge - Jeremiah 29:11-13 is a powerful promise written to a corporate body of people. *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."* The "all" there is numeric—God is saying if all of you would seek me, you will find the plans I have for you. If we want to see God's blessing in our churches, if we want to see Jesus' transforming power, the dynamic ministry of the Holy Spirit in our midst, then we need to pray together.

As we all come together in lifting TLC's future to the Lord, we will all have an exciting new faith-building experience as we travel down this road together.

Jim McGraw

FEBRUARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

	Feb 4 10:00a	Feb 11 10:00a	Feb 18 10:00a	Feb 25 10:00a
GREETERS	Kathy Thom	Sue Svitak	Char Mohns	Eldon & Joanne Kvale
USHERS	LeRoy Brensel Wally Thom	John Schieffer Tom Svitak	Wes Mohns NEEDED	LeRoy Brensel NEEDED
COMM. ASSTS	Dan Dahl	Ellen Ehrich	Pat Mackey	Joanne Schilling
READER	Kathy Thom	Cindy Rubin	Gloria Widiker	Dianne Buxton



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- Penny Iverson 02/11
- Joanne Kvale 02/12
- Rolf Kleven 02/13
- Leona Olson 02/14
- Elaine Ploessl 02/20
- Alyce Tracey 02/24
- Ken Dahlby 02/24
- Gelene Tabor 02/25



Meeting

NEXT MEETING OF . . .

- Birchwood Food Pantry Open.Feb 5 & 19, 10:30-12:30pm*
- Worship & Music Team.Feb 5, 10:00am*
- Women of TrinityFeb 10, 10:00 am*
- Men's Ministry of TrinityFeb 15, 6:30 pm*
- Trinity Council MeetingFeb 20, 6:30 pm*

A letter from Your Associate Pastor

Restoring our souls in Winter

Winter can be a difficult time with cold days and snow leaving us tired, disappointed, and isolated as we mostly stay indoors. We need our souls restored, but how? God's Word gives guidance for restoring our souls. The stillness of winter is a great time to reshape and restore our souls. *"Be still and know that I am God!"* Psalm 46:10

Rest and learn - The Lord gives us rest when we learn from Him and find rest in Him. This rest can come through knowing and meditating on His Word. Matthew 11:28-30

Refresh - It's refreshing to the abundant life that Jesus brings! Satan comes to steal and kill our joy, but Jesus came to bring us abundant life! *"He took our sins in His body on the cross that we can die to sin and live for righteousness, for it is by His wounds we were healed!"* 1 Peter 2:24

This month we start LENT on February 14th and each Wednesday until Easter we have the wonderful opportunity to remember and be refreshed in all that Jesus has done for us on the cross!

Live in the Light of God's Word - In the dark days of winter we need more light! *"If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son*

Cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:7
"God's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path." Psalm 119:105
 The Lord is mighty to save. Join others in a Bible study and enrich your faith and enjoy fellowship with others!

Learn contentment - Winter is isolating. What can be more isolating than being in prison? While he was in prison for the sake of the gospel, the apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:11-12: *"I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need."* God will meet our every need as we trust in Him, no whatever the situation!

Keep in touch - Remember that others, too, are experiencing the cold isolating time of winter. Reach out, keep in touch, and share the warmth of love and friendship with them!

Let this Wintertime be a time to rest, refresh, and learn about God's goodness and grace and share it with those around us!

As we continue in these cold, sometimes boring days of winter, remember that our wonderful Savior will lead us through every valley as we trust in Him! He shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19. "

Grace and peace to you!

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 Fest 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

MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICES & MEALS:

Lent begins February 14 with Ash Wednesday Worship service to include communion and the imposition of ashes. A mid-week Lenten service will be held on Wednesdays from February 21-March 20, at 6:30 pm. We hope to have a light meal before each mid-week service, at 5:30 pm, provided sponsors have signed up to provide them! So please consider providing a meal for about 30 people and sign up in the Narthex.

February 21	Mid-Week Worship Meal (sponsored)	6:30 pm 5:30 pm
February 28	Mid-Week Worship (T) Meal	6:30 pm 5:30 pm
March 6	Mid-Week Worship (T) Meal	6:30 pm 5:30 pm
March 13	Mid-Week Worship (T) Meal	6:30 pm 5:30 pm
March 20	Mid-Week Worship (T) Meal	6:30 pm 5:30 pm

Mission and Outreach



Dessert and Coffee will be served!

Snacks and Facts

Second Tuesday at 2pm

Join us for **"The Ins and Outs of Estate Planning"**

Attorney Brittany Stephens will present and answer questions.

February 13th, 2024, at 2pm

Trinity Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall
Birchwood, WI

Join in a short Devotion.
Everyone Welcome!

Coming up on March 12th, 2024

Avoiding Bank Fraud with Joanne from Dairy State Bank



Beginning in February during Lent 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

LWR Kits are specifically designed to help people coping with poverty, disaster, conflict and more. Whether a kit helps someone to maintain good hygiene, care well for a newborn baby, keep education going during a crisis or learn a new vocation, LWR Kits provide dignity and hope in the direst situations.

Our January meeting was canceled due to weather. Our next meeting will be February 10, 2024 at 10 am in the Fellowship Hall. We will be discussing participating in the Children's Shoebox project in 2024 among other topics.



Mark your calendars for the Women of the Word Retreat in April! See more information below.

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

SAVE THE DATE

The 10th Annual Women of the Word Retreat will be held April 5-6, 2024 at the Forest Springs Camp and Conference Center. The theme is *Beautifully Broken, Gracefully Mended*. Guest Speaker is Alice Sharping.

FSC is located in Westboro, about 60 miles away from Wausau, along the rustic glacial ridge of north central Wisconsin and offers a wonderful opportunity to unplug, have fun, learn and grow.

The scenic 570-acre setting provides a rich combination of natural beauty and modern conveniences. For more information about Forest Springs, visit www.forestsprings.us

More information about the retreat, costs, and registration deadline will be coming soon.

This is a wonderful time to gather with our sisters in Christ for an inspiring and relaxing retreat!





Members of the 2024 Trinity Council were installed on January 14, during the worship service. From left: John Schieffer (Operations), Eric Anderson (Vice President), Sue Svitak (Fellowship), Pastor Dan Tabor, Lay Assistant Ellen Ehrich, Sue Janetski (Secretary), and Elaine Ploessl. Not present were: Jim McGraw (President), Dan Dahl (Treasurer), Mike Rubin (Financial Secty/Stewardship), Cindy Rubin (Education, Youth & Family), Di Hubbard (Evangelism), Marcia Kampf (Women of Trinity), and Kathy Thom (Worship & Music)

HELP!

Can you push a button?! Then we could use you to volunteer to run the PPT show on Sunday mornings. It is basically a matter of advancing the slides in the PPT program. Training provided!

If you are interested or have questions, please talk to Joanne Schilling, at 715-651-4875.



FELLOWSHIP 2024

It's time to begin filling up your calendars with fellowship, fun and food!

Planning for 2024 fellowship events is underway and includes the following dates:

Potluck after Sunday services:

June 30 July 28 Aug 25 Sept 29



Church Potluck



Crafting for Christmas will be quarterly events scheduled on the 4th Thursday of the month, 1-3 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Materials, instructions & snacks will be supplied. The items made will be sold during Christmas Fest in Birchwood on the 1st Saturday of December along with the Women of Trinity's Chili and baked goodies sale.

Crafting dates are:

Feb 22 April 25 Aug 22 Oct 24

February 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 10a Women's Bible Study	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3
4 10a Worship	5 9:00a Quilters 10a WMMT Mtg 10:30a-12:30p—Food Pantry Open 3:30p Women's Bible Study 7p—AA, Fellowship Hall	6	7 6:30a Men's Bible Study 7p TLC Choir Rehearsal 8p PT Rehearsal	8 10a Women's Bible Study	9 OFFICE CLOSED	10 10a WOT Mtg
11 10a Worship	12 9:00a Quilters 3:30p Women's Bible Study 7p—AA, Fellowship Hall	13 2p Snacks and Facts	14 Ash Wednesday 6:30a Men's Bible Study 11:30a Mission & Outreach mtg 6:30p Ash Wednesday Service 7p TLC Choir Reh	15 10a Women's Bible Study 6:30p Men's Ministry Mtg	16 OFFICE CLOSED	17
18 10a Worship Love Fund/Food Pantry Offering	19 9a Quilters 10:30a-12:30p—Food Pantry Open 3:30p Women's Bible Study 7p AA, Fellowship Hall	20 Journey Deadline 6:30p Council Meeting	21 6:30a Men's Bible Study (T) 5:30p Midweek Lenten Meal 6:30p Midweek Lenten Service 7p TLC Choir Reh	22 10a Women's Bible Study	23 OFFICE CLOSED	24
25 10a Worship Prayer Shawl Sunday	26 9a Christmas Worship 10a VBS Planning Mtg 7p AA, Fellowship Hall	27	28 6:30a Men's Bible Study (T) 5:30p Midweek Lenten Meal 6:30p Midweek Lenten Service 7p TLC Choir Reh	29 10a Women's Bible Study		

Trinity Lutheran Church
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The JOURNEY

February 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

501 E. Chetac Ave ♦ PO Box 8 ♦ Birchwood, WI 54817

(715) 354-3790 ♦ (715) 416-4966 (Pastor's cell)

♦ trinitylutheranbirchwood.com ♦

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JOURNEY Editor ♦ Julie Sunderland ♦ tlcbirchwood@gmail.com

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	Tuesday - 3 rd week of the month
Pastor's Office Hours	Mondays (8 am–3:00pm) Wednesdays (8–11:30 pm) other days by apt.



February Worship Services

Feb 4 — Worship w/communion @ 10 am
Feb 11 — Worship w/communion @ 10 am
Feb 14 — Ash Wednesday service @ 6:30 pm
Feb 18 — Worship w/communion @ 10 am
Feb 21 — Midweek Lenten service @ 6:30 pm
Feb 25 — Worship w/communion @ 10 am
Feb 28 — Midweek Lenten service @ 6:30 pm

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.