

# The JOURNEY — Walking Daily with Jesus

## Pastor's Article

From the Pastor's Desk:

January 2025 Journey

*“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’”* (Lamentations 3:31, ESV)

As we enter the new year of 2025, it is only natural that we look back at the past year. Few would confess that 2024 was a normal year. The nation went through a presidential election in which divisions among people were accentuated, with each political party saying that the very future of our country depended on the nation voting for their candidate.

Many of us can look back at 2024 and will remember it as the year that we lost a loved one, a brother, sister, or even a spouse. Some look back at the year and remember it as the time that they received a diagnosis from the doctor which has changed their lives. But some will remember it as the year that they received healing as well. Some will remember 2024 as the year that they entered a new relationship, found a new job, were blessed with children or grandchildren.

This is a good time of the year to look back and to count our blessings. It is good to be reminded that God is with those who are called His “Children” (1 John 3:1). He is eternally merciful, and every morning His love for us is renewed. He supplies our every need, through His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, God gives us a living hope for the new year, a hope that will give us courage and strength to face any trial.

My prayer for you in this new year is found in Romans 15:13, *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”* (ESV)

In Jesus name,  
Pastor Dan

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Peace  
Love  
&  
Joy



## **From the Council President:**

Happy New Year. Did you make any New Year resolutions this year? My #1 resolution is to spend more time studying my Bible readings more thoroughly. I was recently convicted of not comprehending or even remembering my daily bible readings. I could not blame this on old age or forgetfulness. This enlightenment from God came to me upon reading the Parable of the 4 Soils. This teaching must be very important as it shows up in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

"Jesus' explanation of the Parable of the 4 Soils highlights four different responses to the gospel. The seed is "the word of the kingdom." The hard ground represents someone who is hardened by sin; **he hears but does not understand the Word**, and Satan plucks the message away, **keeping the heart dull and preventing the Word from making an impression**. The stony ground pictures **a man who professes delight with the Word; however, his heart is not changed**, and when trouble arises, his so-called faith quickly disappears. The thorny ground depicts one who seems to receive the Word, but whose heart is full of riches, pleasures, and lusts; **the things of this world take his time and attention away from the Word, and he ends up having no time for it**. The good ground portrays the **one who hears, understands, and receives the Word—and then allows the Word to accomplish its result in his life**. The man represented by the "good ground" is the only one of the four who is truly saved, because salvation's proof is fruit (Matthew 3:7-8; 7:15-20)."

[www.gotquestions.org/parable-sower.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/parable-sower.html)

When I first read this parable, I thought it was talking about 4 different persons. But as football referees' decisions get overturned, upon further review I know this is how our individual responses are to hearing God's word. How many times have I read or listened to Bible Readings and the next day couldn't tell you what I read or heard? How many times have I passed by scriptures because I didn't understand what was being said. How many times have I been too busy to read the Bible or attend Bible Studies? The times I do remember are the times I felt the Holy Spirit teaching me something, times I met in Bible Studies with brothers and sisters in Christ. It is inspirational getting to hear their understanding of what the Word was saying to them. There is no greater experience than getting to know them better in a small group setting.

"Knowing how to study the Bible is important, because determining the meaning of Scripture is one of the most important tasks a believer has in this life. God does not tell us that we must simply read the Bible. We must study it and handle it correctly (2 Timothy 2:15). Studying the Scriptures is hard work. A cursory or brief scanning of Scripture can sometimes yield very wrong conclusions. Therefore, it is crucial to understand several principles for determining the correct meaning of Scripture. First, the one who would study the Bible must pray and ask the Holy Spirit to impart understanding, for that is one of His functions. ... The Bible is God's book, and we need to ask Him what it means. If you are a Christian, the author of Scripture—the Holy Spirit—dwells inside you, and He wants you to understand what He wrote. Second, to study the Bible properly, we should always read the surrounding verses and chapters to discern the context. ... To study the Bible, we should understand the background of the book we are studying: it's helpful to know who wrote the book, to whom it was written, when it was written, and why it was written. Also, we should take care to let the text speak for itself. Sometimes people will assign their own meanings to words in order to get the interpretation they desire. Third, to study the Bible properly, we should not think of ourselves as totally independent in our analysis of the text. It is arrogant to think that we cannot gain understanding through the lifelong work of Bible scholars and commentators." Many Bibles have commentaries, historical maps, and life applications to help us understand scriptures better. "It is always wise to study the Bible with other believers, assisting each other in understanding and applying the truth of God's Word." [www.gotquestions.org/study-the-bible.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/study-the-bible.html)

Please consider joining a Bible study small group if you have not tried one. It is a good thing for newer TLC members or visitors to get connected to other church members. It's a good opportunity to be part of a group of like-minded Christians learning what God has to say to us through his prophecy, gospels and promises. Many people who haven't tried out a Bible study find it intimidating. Just ask anyone who attends a Bible study what to expect by coming to a bible study. They'll tell you how accepting, caring, loving and fun the Bible study groups are. You will not be asked to anything you don't want to do. God speaks directly to us through his scriptures.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The good work we all are equipped to do is to share the grace, love and promises God has for all people who believe. We cannot do this without being plugged into the power of God's Word. Check out the Journey Newsletter and Worship Announcements for contacts to TLC's Bible Studies. If you feel led to start up a new Bible study small group contact Pastor Dan for guidance and resources.

Isaiah 43:18-19 foretells of the coming of the Christ Jesus, but it also gives us guidance on how God is making the way for us to make new constructive changes in our lives. "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

Blessings on this new year and on keeping those resolutions. Thank God for all the new people joining us in worship and ministry. Do you perceive the new things God is doing at TLC?

Jim McGraw





## JANUARY-SUNDAY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS



	Jan 5 9:00a	Jan 12 9:00a	Jan 19 9:00a	Jan 26 9:00a	
<b>GREETERS</b>	Terri Freeman	Sue Svitak	Katrina Gustafson	Joanne & Eldon Kvale	
<b>USHERS</b>	Rob Freeman Wally Thom	Tom Svitak Mike Capra	Janet Schieffer Needed	Wes Mohns Kevin Ploessl	
<b>COMM. ASSTS</b>	Dan Dahl	Ellen Ehrich	Pat Mackey	Substitute	
<b>READER</b>	Kathy Thom	Gloria Widiker	Brenda Mackey	Cindy Rubin?	



1/1 Sue Capra  
1/2 Colette Sandow  
1/3 Carol Raether  
1/17 Steven Tracey  
1/24 Connie Dahl  
1/24 Maryann Cowen  
1/26 Jeffery Arvesen

### Christmas Decoration Removal

On Tuesday, January 9th at 9am, we will be taking down the Christmas decorations throughout the church. If you are available and able to assist please join us.

Many hands make light work.



### Snacks & Facts

2 pm, Tue. 1/14/25

Pat Keller from the Birchwood Historical Society will be speaking on the history of the Birchwood area.



# Meeting

### NEXT MEETING OF . . .

**Birchwood Food Pantry Open.** . . . . . **Jan. 6 & 20, 10:30-12:30pm**  
**Worship & Music Team.** . . . . . **Jan. 6, 9:00am**  
**Women of Trinity** . . . . . **Jan. 11, 10:00am**  
**Trinity Council Meeting** . . . . . **Jan 21, 6:30pm**



## JANUARY 2025 Message from Your Associate Pastor

## Celebrating Epiphany

January 6, we think of the three wise men bringing gifts to Jesus. The season of Epiphany lasts all the way until lent. In many countries, Epiphany is commonly known as Three Kings' Day or the Feast of the Epiphany. It means "manifestation" or "showing forth."

The three kings are important because their visit illustrates that Jesus was the king of all kings who came for all people.

The star that guided the wise men to Christ also symbolizes Epiphany, as well as the three gifts they gave to Jesus:

- Gold (fit for a king).
- Frankincense (used to worship at a temple).
- Myrrh (used for embalming).

**Matthew 2:11** says the wise men visited and worshiped Jesus in a house, not at the stable.

These three wise men were from "the East," so they traveled 800 to 900 miles to see the Christ child. They could have known of the writings of the prophet Daniel, who 500 years before had been the chief of the court seers in Persia. **Daniel 9:24-27** includes a prophecy which gives a timeline for the birth of the Messiah. Also, they may have been aware of the prophecy in **Numbers 24:17** which mentions a "star coming out of Jacob."

The birth of Jesus, the Star of Jacob, is described in Matthew 2:1-2 Where the wise men from the east came to Jerusalem searching for the king of the Jews. They had believed the prophecies that were written about the birth of the Messiah. God sent a supernatural star to guide them. Imagine these three wisemen knowing the prophecy about the star, and then seeing it, followed it to Bethlehem! They called the "Star of Bethlehem," "His star" **Matthew 2:2**. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly! **Matthew 2:10** and when they arrived in Bethlehem, they gave costly gifts to Jesus and worshiped Him.

Let us learn and follow the wonderful example of these three kings. They:

1. Read and believed God's Word
2. Looked diligently for Jesus,
3. Recognized His worth.
4. Humbled themselves to worship Jesus.

They were truly wise men! **Hebrews 11:6** says: He rewards those who diligently seek Him. Let us, like the wise men seek God diligently. We will rejoice exceedingly when we do!

WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM.

Have a blessed New Year!  
Pastor Barb

## Women of Trinity – December Happenings

We are praying the Advent and Christmas Season is a true blessing for everyone! What a blessed and busy month we have had!

Thanks to everyone who participated in our **Christmas Fest!** It was tremendously successful and generated \$1820 (including lefse sales) to be used toward the organizations that Women of Trinity support. Many thanks to our beloved President, Cindy Rubin, for all of the organizational help to undertake such a large event, to Sue Svitak for her oversight with the making of crafts by TLC members and organizing the craft tables as well as the organization of the food preparation, to Elaine Ploessl for her craft table and posters displayed around the hall depicting the organizations we donate to, to Karen Hayes for her great help in the food preparation, and all of the many, many others who contributed their time and talents. To God be the Glory!

**The Silent Auction** for the quilt and Christmas stocking concluded with the opening of the Cantata program. Thanks to Susan and Jerry Janetski for donating the quilt and to those who bid!

The annual decisions as to what organizations Women of Trinity should support and the amounts to donate were agreed upon. What a blessing it is to be able to give to these worthy causes!

Pregnancy Help Center \$500  
Benjamin House \$500  
Rice Lake Area Health Foundation \$500 (Birchwood Food Pantry)  
Embrace \$300  
Lutheran Social Services \$500  
Love Fund \$400  
ADRC \$200  
Staff \$100 each  
TLC Roof Fund \$1500

Following the meeting, pizza was provided and then all participated in packing cookies for shut-ins and for the Bake Sale held on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Bake Sale totals will be over \$700!

**Get ready to CLEAN!** Service Committee One will be at the church at 9am on January 14<sup>th</sup> to clean and Service Committee Two is scheduled to clean on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 9am. Please put that date on your calendar. Our facilities are a true blessing to our church!

Janet Schieffer was made aware that Best Western was replacing all 57 of their white comforters, and she is beginning to find organizations to take them. A local veterans group took 15! Organizations recommended were: Neighbor to Neighbor, Benjamin House, Embrace, and House of Hope in Hayward. If you would like to suggest another organization, please contact Janet.

**CALLING ALL WOMEN OF TRINITY!** Our next meeting is January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 10:00am! Please join us for fellowship, support of our sisters and our church, and planning future events!



# stephen MINISTRY®

## There are times when every one of us experiences difficulties—

- loss of a loved one
- job loss
- imprisonment
- hospitalization
- disability
- infertility
- spiritual crisis
- loneliness
- discouragement
- divorce
- cancer
- many other challenges

God never intended for us to go through these experiences alone. That's why God has brought us together as a congregation—and why we have Stephen Ministry.

Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who have received 50 hours of training to minister to people experiencing a crisis or going through a difficult time in life.

Every week, a Stephen Minister will meet with you—privately and confidentially—to listen, care, encourage, support, and reflect Christ's presence in your life.

**If you'd like to learn more about Stephen Ministry for yourself or someone else (inside or outside our congregation), contact a pastor or Stephen Leader.**



### Mission and Outreach

This year we were able to make Christmas special for five families. Thank you very much for your generosity. The Adopt-a-Family tree is one of our favorite outreach programs.

Looking for something to do on Mondays during the cold winter days? Join us making mission quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We meet anytime between 9am and 3pm each Monday. You don't have to be a pro at sewing. You can do anything from cutting out fabric squares, design and make quilt tops. If you can tie a knot we can use your help! We have some very talented ladies that can help.

Our quilts go where ever there is a need. The quilts go to people in poverty, people who have been subjected to a disaster or war.

We are so blessed to have such a wonderful active congregation.

Thank you all,



Congratulations to Tom and Sue Svitak for the winning bid on the beautiful Christmas Stocking.



Congratulations to Donnarae Carrell for the winning bid on the beautiful quilt.



# Ballad of Bethlehem

## Christmas Musical



Thank you for a wonderful Cantata.

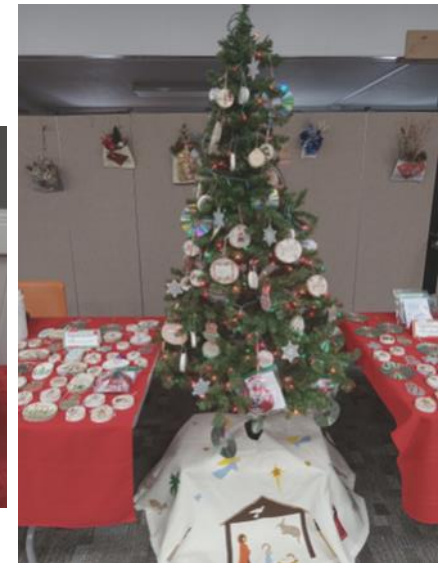
We appreciate each of you.

Joanne Schilling	Connie Dahl
Karen Hayes	Barb Kleven
Cindy Rubin	Janet Schieffer
Kathy Thom	Donnarae Carrell
Di Hubbard	Char Mohns
Gelene Tabor	Dan Dahl
David Dakins	Wes Mohns
Paul Munding	

**Special thanks to:** Meaghan Holley  
Mike Rubin Women of Trinity



## Christmasfest





# January 2025

<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>
			<b>1</b> 6:30a Men's Bible study	<b>2</b> 6p Divine Drama	<b>3</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 8a Text Study 9a Worship w/communion	<b>6</b> 9:00a Quilters 10 a WMMT Mtg 1:00p Christian Life Mtg 10:30a-12:30p—Food Pantry Open  3:30p Women's Bible Study 7p AA, Fellowship Hall	<b>7</b> 11:30 Mission & Outreach	<b>8</b>  7p Choir Rehearsal 8p PT Rehearsal	<b>9</b> 9:00 Take down Xmas decorations  10a Women's Bible Study  6p Divine Drama	<b>10</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>11</b> 10a WOT Mtg
<b>12</b> 8a Text Study 9a Worship w/communion	<b>13</b> 9a Quilters 3:30p Women's Bible Study 7p AA, Fellowship Hall	<b>14</b> 9a WOT service committee #1 cleaning Kitchen  2p Snacks & Facts	<b>15</b> 6:30a Men's Bible study  9a WOT service committee #2 cleaning Kitchen  7p Choir Rehearsal	<b>16</b> 10a Women's Bible Study  6p Divine Drama  Assemble Journey for January	<b>17</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 8a Text Study 9a Worship w/communion  Love Fund/Food Pantry Offering	<b>20</b> 9a Quilters 10:30a-12:30p—Food Pantry Open  3:30p Women's Bible Study 7p AA, Fellowship Hall	<b>21</b> 6:30p Council Meeting  <b>Journey Deadline</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 10a Women's Bible Study  6p Divine Drama	<b>24</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 8a Text Study 9a Worship w/communion  Prayer Shawl Sunday	<b>27</b> 9a Quilters  3:30p Women's Bible Study  7p AA, Fellowship Hall	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	



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Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,  
he is a new creation. The old has  
passed away; behold, the new has  
come. 2 Corinthians 5:17



## **The JOURNEY** **January 2025**

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Rev. Daniel Tabor—Pastor**

**Pastor Barb Kleven—Associate Pastor**

**Julie Sunderland, Parish Administrator**

**Joanne Schilling, Choir Director**

**Donnae Carrell, Custodian**

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

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

**♦ trinitylutheranbirchwood.com ♦**

**♦ tlcbirchwood@gmail.com ♦**

**JOURNEY Editor ♦ Julie Sunderland ♦ tlcbirchwood@gmail.com**

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



### **January Worship Services**

**Jan 5 — Worship w/communion @ 9 am**

**Jan 12 — Worship w/communion @ 9 am**

**Jan 19 — Worship w/communion @ 9 am**

**Jan 26—Worship w/communion @ 9 am**

### **KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS**

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

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