



THE TORCH

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January 2024
Sunday Worship
9:00 AM

Trinity Lutheran Church • 18137 Criswell Street • Bettendorf, Iowa 52722 • 563-332-5188
Pastor Stephen Nilsen 563-332-6432 (office) 319-540-1172 (cell) snilsen@trinitylcpv.com (email)

Happy New Year!

By the time you're reading this, you have probably shared all the holiday cheer with your family and friends for another year: gathering to share meals, giving and receiving gifts, lifting your voices in song, and many of the other traditions along the way. As relatively new pastors with a new baby, my wife Leah and I are learning what will work for us to find time with family while sharing in worship with so many beloved folks at the congregations we serve. Whether you're a pastor or not, whether young or old, it often feels like there's never enough time in the Christmas season.

I remember growing up, my parents hurrying us from one end of Nebraska to the other to see relatives on each side of the family tree, and then returning to our home in the Cedar Rapids area to savor those last moments before the break would be over and we'd return to school, maybe wearing some of those new socks grandma had gotten us - or maybe telling friends on the playground about new toys or baseball bats or other exciting gifts that we got that year. However the mood felt, there was always bound to be a teacher or someone older at church who would ask the question we thought about every year: did you get everything you wanted for Christmas this year?

I remember the joy I would have telling a person about the exciting bigger gifts I got, those times when Santa really listened and got us exactly what we wanted. I remember the years where there was some disappointment because the rest of my family seemed so satisfied to get together and play cribbage while I was going to have to go back to school and tell my friends I didn't get the Nintendo 64 all of them got. Of course, I also can think back and remember the memories of playing games and sharing laughter with my grandparents on the last Christmases I shared with them while they were alive.

In the Christmas season, we always have such great joy, but with it can come a rush of other emotions. As we head into the new year ahead (or maybe you're already reading this in 2024), we have hopes for new goals we are setting, plans for our church life together, and wishes for our family, community, and world. The hope we have found in the Word made Flesh, Jesus, born for us this Christmas season is a hope we can share with the whole world. In the face of division and despair around us, we look to a shining star just as the Magi (or wise men) did all those years ago. We look on with hope, even in the face of things that seem hopeless.

As I ponder the Good News of Christ's birth, I remember what happens immediately after it in Matthew 2:12-20: how there are dreams of terror and then a massacre of innocent infants, how Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt to live in exile through the remainder of Herod's life, how nothing seemed particularly safe for the baby Jesus. In the midst of these trying times, where we hear of war in the Holy Land and even find Christ in the rubble (look up "Christmas Lutheran Church" in Bethlehem to learn more), we are reminded that God finds us, God comes to us even (especially?) when we are at our most devastated.

No matter what you got or didn't get on your list this year for Christmas, I hope that you will continue to dream with me: to dream of the ways that God shows up here at Trinity Lutheran Church and around the Quad Cities, to ponder the ways our year ahead might shine the light of Christ in this weary world, and to join the dreams of our ancestors for the hope that we find only in Christ. As we look forward to the hope we have, may we remember those who are finding themselves hopeless, and bring the presence of Christ's peace to them through all we do.

Dreaming of our future together with God,

Pastor Stephen Nilsen

Trinity Office Hours Tues, Wed, Thurs - 9AM-1PM
Pastor Stephen's Office Hours Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs -10AM - 2PM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the December meeting, Pastor Stephen's message came from a devotional book titled, "Ordinary Blessings for Christmas Season" that was for church employees. It was also very applicable to church volunteers. The message was that December is a good time to reflect on what has been done and not yet done. While it is always easy to focus on what didn't get accomplished during the year, my preference is to celebrate our successes and accomplishments that Trinity experienced. One of those accomplishments is the success of the 2023 budget. If you recall, at the 2023 annual meeting, a budget of \$172,639 was approved. The budget anticipated church collections of \$158,600. That budget was actually a deficit budget of just over \$14,000. Thanks to everyone's diligent efforts in 2023 on the expense side, and generous financial offerings on the giving side, we will have church collections that exceeded \$158,600. Expenses in 2023 will also come in below the \$172,639. I am excited to announce that Stewardship and Council will be presenting a budget at the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 28th that is very close to exactly balanced. The final touches are being put on it, but at the December council meeting we were looking at a budget that was a surplus by right around \$100.00. This budget also contemplates some expenditures to grow programs that are important to Trinity.

We also anticipate that we will be bringing forth a plan for a new sign out front of Trinity. Stay tuned for more details as Property and Council work through the financials of a beautiful sign that will be able to communicate the events and happenings that occur at Trinity to all that drive by. I believe the new sign will be one of the larger accomplishments for Trinity in 2024. As 2023 comes to a close, I hope you are as excited as I am to see what lies ahead for Trinity in 2024.

Justin

MEETINGS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

January	2	Education	2:30	PM
January	2	Worship & Music	4:30	PM
January	4	Property	11:00	AM
January	8	Council	6:30	PM
January	15	Stewardship	6:00	PM
January	28	Annual Congregational Meeting	10:00	AM

YEAR TO DATE THROUGH NOVEMBER 2023

Collections to date	\$172,788.22
Expenses to date	\$139,574.58
Net to date	\$ 33,213.64

No funds have been transferred from Stewardship Reserves year to date.

ATTENDANCE TOTALS FOR NOVEMBER

December 3	67
December 10	61
December 17	60
December 24	50
December 24 Eve	76

WANT TO CONNECT THE WITH WEEKLY HAPPENINGS AT TRINITY?

Sign up for our weekly email bulletin that will let you know what's happening in the week ahead and have other great upcoming announcements, as well as the weekly bulletin for worship. Call (332-5188) or email (office@trinitylcpv.com) Paula in the office to sign up!

BIRTHDAYS

3 Hannah Schnack
 4 Mary Shelton
 4 Joshua McBride
 5 Tonia Kennedy
 6 Cassie West
 7 Ken Kaul
 9 Vicki Engler
 10 Pam Schroder
 12 Don Cook
 19 Luke Prather
 19 Luke Ven Horst
 20 Paxton Heidenreich
 22 Dani Dexter
 24 Melissa Aguilar
 25 Glenna Sbertoli
 30 Janet Riedesel
 31 Aiden Engler



JANUARY



	January 7	January 14	January 21	January 28	February 4
Altar Guild	Diane Kaufmann	Diana Mayes	Linda Busch	Diane Holst	Connie Short
Communion Assistant	Marcia Brunsvold	Carol Kaufmann	Jim Sbertoli	Claudia Neumann	
Lector	Sally Morrow	Jo Ann Hogenson	Glenna Sbertoli	Diane Noll	John Newman
Usher Greeter	Travis Brunsvold Diane Cook	Don Cordts Chris Kaul	Carol & Ed Kaufmann	Diane Cook Judy Rutledge	Carol Kaufmann Al McIlrath
Fellowship				Annual Meeting Council will provide snacks	

If you would like to help us in our Sunday Gathering by doing any of the above tasks, please contact the church office to be added to the list of volunteers.



Food Assistance Gift Cards (Formerly Food Baskets)

For the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays we handed out seven \$200 Fareway gift cards to families that need a helping hand, for a total of \$1400. The families were very appreciative of the generous gift provided by members of Trinity. After 19 years of collecting food and monies for food baskets and gift cards, Lolita Baker and Lanette Lane are stepping down from this Program. Anyone wishing to continue the program, please contact Pastor Stephen. Lolita and Lanette will be happy to provide assistance to their successors. *Any questions* call Lolita Baker (563) 570-3936, email

Lnbaker7014@gmail.com or Lanette Lane (563) 359-4196, email laal@mchsi.com.

TRINITY CARD MINISTRY

Trinity card ministry will be making valentines on January 10 and January 24 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to come and be crafty.



Altar Flowers



Do you have a birthday or anniversary you'd like to commemorate? Starting in January, we will have Altar Flowers that you can sign-up to sponsor for any of the worship services throughout the year. The bulletin board will be by the door between the narthex and hallway.

Questions?
Call or Email Paula at
563-332-5188 or
office@trinitylcpv.com

Social Ministry Collections Notice

After hearing the great presentation from Diane Noll about the organization Stir the Fire Ministries and the various ministry opportunities we join in to support their work in Zambia, we're kicking off the new year with a collection of bed sheets. These sheets will be used as bedding for children in need as well as sewn together in some cases to use as mosquito protection. All sizes are appreciated, and we'll collect the sheets in the narthex now through Ash Wednesday (February 14).

SHEETS DRIVE

Now through February 14!

Supporting



Donate flat sheets (of any size) so that missionaries may bring them to those in need in Zambia

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 28 after worship



Trinity Lutheran Church's Annual Congregation Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2023 after the 9:00 AM Worship Service. If your committee does not have your report turned in, please get it to Paula as soon as possible. It takes a lot of time to put the report together and have it ready for all to review before the meeting. At the meeting, we'll elect council members, endowment committee members, voting members for Synod Assembly and the Luther Property annual meeting, as well as hear about a proposal for new front signage at TLC. Email: office@trinitylcpv.com with questions.

A flyer for a "Cabin Fever Reliever" event. The background is a warm, light brown color. On the left, there is a graphic of a playing card (the King of Clubs) with a white king piece and a yellow king piece on it. Above the card are two dice and a fan of cards. The text on the flyer reads: "Saturday Jan 13 5 PM", "Cabin Fever Reliever", "Card & Board Game Night", "Potluck Hotdish & Desserts", "Sign-up to bring a dish in the Narthex or online", "More Info: Facebook.com/TrinityLCPV Email: Office@TrinityLCPV.com", and "Trinity Lutheran Church - Pleasant Valley Fellowship Hall".

Saturday
Jan 13
5 PM

Cabin Fever Reliever

Card & Board Game Night

Potluck Hotdish & Desserts

Sign-up to bring a dish in the Narthex or online

More Info:
Facebook.com/TrinityLCPV
Email: Office@TrinityLCPV.com

Trinity Lutheran Church - Pleasant Valley Fellowship Hall

Cabin Fever Reliever: Card & Board Game Night with a Potluck Twist in Fellowship Hall

Saturday, January 13 at 5 PM

Get out of the house and get together with friends and family to join in for some card games and board games along with a potluck for fellowship and fun for all ages! You can sign-up to bring a hotdish or dessert in the narthex or online (see the weekly update). Be sure to bring your favorite games to share in some fun on an evening here at Trinity! Bring your friends!

A flyer for a Bible Study. The background is a light blue and white wavy pattern. On the right, there is a circular image of a brown leather-bound Bible with the words "HOLY BIBLE" printed on the cover. The Bible is surrounded by green sprigs of herbs. A small circular badge with the text "ALL ARE WELCOME" is positioned above the Bible. The text on the flyer reads: "BIBLE Study", "WEDNESDAYS AT 10 AM", "Join us for a weekly Bible study centered around the texts for the upcoming week's worship service as we find what God is up to in the text and our lives this week".

BIBLE Study

WEDNESDAYS AT 10 AM

Join us for a **weekly** Bible study centered around the texts for the upcoming week's worship service as we find what God is up to in the text and our lives this week

WEEKLY READINGS

01/07 Isaiah 64:1-9 , Psalm 80:1-7,17-19,
1 Corinthians 2:9-13, Mark 13:24-37

01/14 Isaiah 40: 1-11, Psalm 85 1-2,8-13,
2 Peter 3:8-13, Mark 1:1-8

01/21 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, Psalm 126,
1Thessalonians 5:16-24, John 1:25:6-8,19-28

01/28 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16, Psalm 89:1-4,
Romans 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-38

FALL & WINTER COAT & BOOT DRIVE

Help our community in need by bringing any new or lightly used coats, jackets, boots, or shoes for people who are served by either Central Community Circle Food Pantry or Humility of Mary's Outlet Center. There's a shopping cart in the narthex to drop off donations for those in need. Hats, gloves and scarves are also appreciated!

Amitie will not meet in January or February 2024 due to weather concerns. Hope to see you in March!

Rudella Eberlein, Convenor



Southeastern Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

SERVE THE BROADER CHURCH AT NEXT YEAR'S SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Each year, our congregation is represented by two voting members at the Southeastern Iowa Synod's Assembly. This upcoming year, the assembly will be held in Coralville, likely at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and Conference Center. The 2024 Assembly will be held Friday, May 17 through Saturday, May 18 (likely just the first part of the Saturday). Travel and Hotel Costs would be covered by the congregation, and this is a great opportunity to see what broader ministry our congregation is a part of in our area around Southeastern Iowa. We're seeking interest in this now so that we can try to have these names ready for nomination at January's Annual Congregation Meeting. If you have any questions, you can speak to Pastor Stephen or ask last year's voting members, Barb and Darrell Paul.

Scott County Library's Bookmobile Returns to Trinity in 2024

The Scott County Library Bookmobile will stop by the church parking lot through the winter and into the early spring on Tuesday afternoons every three weeks. Anyone with a library card from a library in Scott County can check out books and other media. We'll have snacks and drinks available in the fellowship hall.

4:15-4:45 PM on January 16, February 6, February 27, March 26, and April 16

We'd love to see you there!



ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

In 2023 . Trinity was able to distribute \$14,000 from our Endowment Fund to various agencies within the ELCA and our community. We would like to invite you to read the heartfelt Thank You Notes from many of the recipients posted on the bulletin board outside the office.

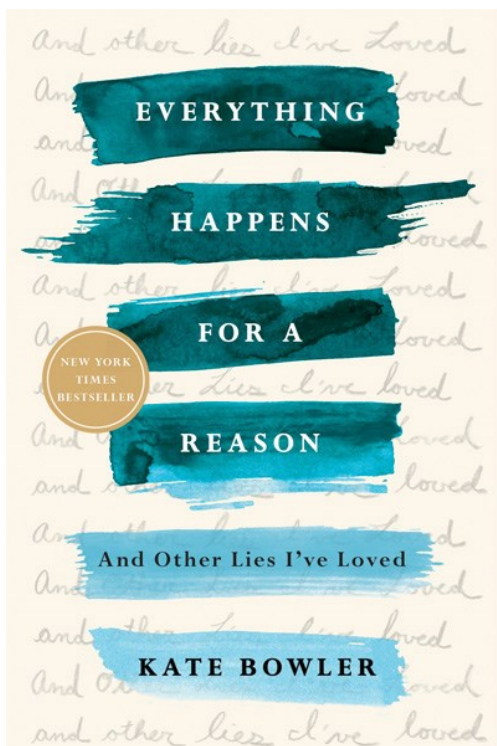
Each year, the distribution amount is based on the balance of the funds, based on the by-laws of the committee. We are happy to announce that our 2024 distribution will be \$16,000. The committee encourages our congregation to make suggestions for these distributions. We had a great response from you last year. As you travel through 2024, please be attentive to potential needs in our community. Forms will be available soon.

We want to remain transparent regarding the endowment accounts. Investments are held in various funds with Thrivent. Beginning in January, we will post the monthly financial reports on the bulletin board. If you have any questions, please feel free to talk to any of the committee members.

Committee members: Alan Diers, Diana Mayes, Mitch Sussex, Susan Varilek.

Treasurer: Mitch Sussex

Council Representative: Marcia Brunsvold



Lenten Book Study: *Everything Happens for a Reason (And Other Lies I've Loved)* by Kate Bowler

Wednesdays at 6PM – February 21-March 20

As part of our Lenten Midweek Dinner Church & Study Series, Pastor Stephen invites you to take part in a book study on the honest and emotional book *Everything Happens for a Reason (And Other Lies I've Loved)* by Kate Bowler. Bowler is a professor at Duke Divinity school, specializing in prosperity gospel, and her Stage IV colon cancer diagnosis plunges her into reckoning with her own mortality and the various sayings we tell each other to get through life. This book is known to bring forth great conversation about what it means to live in our world today. We'll split the study over the course of the five Wednesdays in Lent before Holy Week, and if you'd like to buy the book, you may either talk to Pastor Stephen or purchase one online at the following: [Amazon](#) | [Barnes & Noble](#) | [Bookshop.org](#)

The readings for the weeks will be:

February 21	Preface & Chapters 1& 2	p. xi - 28
February 28	Chapters 3 & 4	p. 29-52
March 6	Chapters 5 & 6	p. 53-105
March 13	Chapters 7 & 8	p. 106-140
March 20	Chapter 9	p. 140-168

If you have questions, feel free to contact Pastor Stephen.

JANUARY'S FUN BIBLE FACT

Noah's Ark was 450' long, 75' wide, and 45' high and had three stories.

Seeking Help with Livestreaming Worship

Our worship services are available to view on both our Facebook page (facebook.com/TrinityLCPV) and our YouTube channel (youtube.com/@TrinityLCPV). As we continue to provide this ministry for those who are unable to join us in worship in-person, please consider helping with the livestreams. After much work from dedicated volunteers, our live-stream set-up is very easy to operate. Please contact Pastor Stephen or Randy Goslin (rgoslin@mchsi.com) if you would like to help.



New Trinity Lutheran T-Shirts Available to Order

Trinity's Council has goals to make our congregation more visible in the years ahead, and one part of that is a new T-shirt promoting our congregation that we can wear to events like the CROP Walk and other outings in the community! Order forms are available in the weekly email, worship bulletin inserts, just below here on this page, in the narthex, or online at <https://bit.ly/TLCPV-tshirts>

The new t-shirts will be powder blue and costs will be as follows:

*Youth sizes - \$8 each
Adult S, M, L, XL - \$8 each
Adult 2XL - \$10 each*

HEY! I'd Like One (or More) of Those New T-Shirts!

Name(s):

Phone:

T-Shirt Size(s):

Sample T-Shirts are available in the narthex if you would like to see how they fit

DINNER CHURCH

LENTEN MIDWEEK



Simple Gathering
Simple Word
Simple Meal

**WEDNESDAYS IN LENT:
FEB 21 / FEB 28 / MAR 6 / MAR 13 / MAR 20
5 PM MEAL AND WORSHIP
BOOK STUDY TO FOLLOW**

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH - PV
FELLOWSHIP HALL



This year's Lenten Midweek Services will be held in a Dinner Church format. What does that mean? The meal is part of the service. We'll hear a short reading, break bread and share in worship together gathered around simple soups. If you're interested in cooking one of the meals, see Pastor Stephen.

Ash Wednesday 2024

Ash Wednesday and Lent will be here before we know it, and we want to let you know what the plans are for TLC this Ash Wednesday. There will be an Ash Wednesday worship service at 6 PM with the usual imposition of ashes. This year we will also have brief blessings and ashes available throughout the day from 11 AM onward, so if you have plans for something else happening February 14, you are welcome to stop by the church parking lot throughout the day for the imposition of ashes and a blessing.

If you would like to assist in burning last year's palms from Palm Sunday to make the ashes for this year, please contact Pastor Stephen.


Ash
Wednesday

February 14
Worship Service at 6 PM

Disbursing Blessings & "Ashes to Go"
Anytime after 11 AM



January 2024, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

Amplifying the Voices of Iowa Children and Families

Individuals struggle without access to critical healthcare and family support services. Human service providers are overworked and underpaid. Former refugees and immigrants strive to build new lives in the U.S.

These are all issues faced by Iowans from all different walks of life. Join Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) to advocate for our community members at Lutheran Day on the Hill (LDH) on **Monday, February 19, 2024.**

In partnership with the three Iowa synods of the ELCA, LDH is LSI's biggest day of advocacy. Over 150 participants gather at Capitol Hill Lutheran Church in Des Moines to learn about critical issues Iowa children, adults, and families are facing. You'll learn more about the legislative process, the issues impacting your neighbors, and your role as a citizen in helping to amplify their voices.

After learning how to advocate for our neighbors, the group heads to the Iowa State Capitol to talk directly with legislators.

For more information and to register for this year's Lutheran Day on the Hill, visit LSIowa.org/LDH.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.



Last year, Pastor Stephen and his wife Leah attended the Lutheran Day on the Hill, and he would love to join in with you in advocating for adoption, resettlement services, mental health access, and more at this year's Lutheran Day on the Hill. If you have other questions about the event, please ask Pastor Stephen.

