

TRINITY TODAY!

Because God first loved us, we live as Jesus in the world
December 2025 | volume 48, issue 11



**Special thanks to all the
volunteers who helped decorate
Trinity for the Christmas Season**

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INTERIM PASTOR JEN HACKBARTH

Dear Friends in Christ,

When I was in my 20s, I developed an intense fear of flying. I can't identify the exact moment this fear began, but a combination of experiences with turbulence and a harrowing flight through a snowstorm didn't help. I also wonder if it coincided with growing up, as I no longer felt invincible and worried about my family, which included my new husband. Whatever the reasons, this new fear made flying miserable. I started dreading flights days ahead of time and was exhausted when I reached my destination. I loved traveling, but it started to feel like a burden rather than a joy.

I dealt with a fear of flying for years. Learning about the mechanics of flying helped a bit, as did traveling with people who could comfort me during flights. Yet what finally helped me was deciding that the fear didn't serve me. The fear wasn't keeping me safe or helping anyone. It was making my life smaller and draining me for no good reason. I learned to feel the fear and let it go. I still have scary moments on flights, but I've come a long way.

This year's Advent theme is "What Do You Fear?" Our stories as people of God are shaped by our ancestors in the faith who stood up to their fears. Jacob wrestled with an angel of God until he was given a blessing. Moses led his people through the Red Sea to freedom despite his insecurities. Esther approached a volatile king to save her people. The psalmist wrote,

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

There is much to fear in today's world. As we enter into the season advent, we are reminded that God chose to arrive as a vulnerable newborn baby in a humble setting. God could have arrived in a palace, surrounded by walls and security, yet God's power is not found in safety. God's power is present in solidarity, in uniting with those experiencing suffering and oppression. This is where we find hope.

How easy it would be to give in to cynicism during these days. Cynicism tells us that the world is dangerous, to trust no one,

and that cynics are smarter than people who are optimistic. It insists that a pessimistic view of the world keeps us safe.

Yet there is nothing safe about advent. Jesus arrived to a displaced family and his birth was soon followed by death threats. Throughout his life, Jesus' security did not come from lack of danger, but from his trust in God. Jesus knew fear, but he approached the world with an open heart.

The subtitle of our advent theme is "insisting on hope." To live means to deal with fear, but fear doesn't serve us or God's purposes. It doesn't keep us safe. To hope means to believe that the world can still change, that goodness still exists and that God's kingdom is among us. We can feel the fear, yet trust in God.

Psychologist Jamil Zaki says, "Cynicism is a self-fulfilling prophecy. When you give up on possibility, those possibilities go away, and this is part of why I think it's so important to hold on to hope. To me, hope is not naïve or pie in the sky, it's practical. It's what keeps us energized and keeps us fighting for a future that most of us want by allowing us to see it more clearly."

During advent, we wait in two ways: for the Christ child to be born, and for Jesus' return to redeem all of creation. We live in the in-between, when the promises of Christ sustain us. We rely on God's vision for the future to guide us, and we bring this future into our lives today through our faithful actions as the body of Christ.

What fears aren't serving you today? How is the false promise of safety keeping you stuck? How are the promises of God's future opening your life today?

Transition Team update: The Transition Team has been meeting three Tuesday evenings a month. Please watch for a congregational survey (available online and in paper form). They will start listening sessions with members, staff, and ministry teams in the new year. You can find weekly Transition Team updates in worship bulletins and the Trinity eblast.

*Interim Pastor
Jen HackbARTH*



PASTOR OF LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION THE REV. PETER WESTON MILLER



Advent is Home and the Holy Work of Housing One Another

This week, with a steady flow of key Trinity stakeholders and partners, I had the immense joy of touring the new Emergency Housing Services Building.

It's beautiful and bright, modern and open, so much more than gleaming countertops and tile floors.

Tucked into the corner of the Washington County Gov. Center Campus, it is a statement of faith and imagination, of God's discernment turned to action.



From way back to the early days of Trinity's Warming Space in 2019 and listening to the stark reality that there was no place for our neighbors to go. There were no beds for single folks who lost a job, or lost insurance, other than a rest stop or parking lot.

We felt convicted with many faith communities to shift our language and understanding from a "problem to be solved" and "shelter" to an opportunity to express our values and seeing the inherent Belovedness of our neighbors.

A shift toward the powerful promise of Advent:

God makes a home among us. God makes home here, Emmanuel, Jesus with us. In the flesh. In the manger.

Not in perfection or stability, but right in the middle of human vulnerability, in a borrowed room, among people who were themselves far from secure.

In Jesus, God chooses to be housed in the fullness of our humanity: our emergencies and fears, our fragile hopes, our deep longing for belonging.

Home is everything. It's both basic and expansive. Where we are is where God is. Which isn't the structure or a building. It's

who we are as community. It's the blessings that we share. It's the abundance of God's purpose for us. It's the relationships that bind us together. It's protection and sanctuary and sabbath. Home is where we experience hope.

That is why the opening of Washington County's new Emergency Housing Services Building feels so connected to the heart of Advent. It is, quite literally, a place where neighbors experiencing instability can find home for a time. A warm, dignified space designed to honor their wholeness even in a season of disruption. It's a proven model (with 24/7 support from Stepping Stone) that works, that restores, that rebuilds, that renews.

As the temperatures drop and the nights lengthen, this season invites us to remember that the Holy One is already present wherever hospitality is offered, wherever dignity is protected, wherever people gather to create belonging for someone who has been pushed to the margins.

I am so grateful to have seen those first seeds come to fruition. In all the hard organizing work (Rev. Jenny Mason, HSAT, MICAH, Heading Home collaborative) that has been done to build this infrastructure in our backyard and all those who will continue to be blessed by finding home.



Advent hope is not passive; it asks us to stay awake, to face our fears, to keep watch, to look for light, to plant seeds in the dark, and participate in God's ongoing arrival.

May we continue to give thanks for home, for finding it together in God's love for us in Jesus and for sharing it with ALL.

*Pastor
Peter Weston Miller*

Giving Summary

Congregational Council

Our congregational governance calls for an elected council and includes the Interim Pastor, Jen Hackbarth and Pastor of Lifelong Faith Formation, Peter Weston Miller. Parish Administrator, Sarah Kinsman is also on council as a non-voting, ex official member.



John Hodler

COUNCIL PRESIDENT



Kirsten Parker

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT



Shane Brodchus

COUNCIL SECRETARY



Jill Longnecker

COUNCIL TREASURER



Bill Bjorum

COUNCIL MEMBER



Shane Brockshus

COUNCIL MEMBER



Bryan Barts

COUNCIL MEMBER

For more information about your council or to get in touch, please visit: <https://www.trinitylc.org/our-leadership>

WE ARE A GRATEFUL PEOPLE

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." - Colossians 3:17

2026 STEWARDSHIP UPDATE: "WE ARE A GRATEFUL PEOPLE."

As of November 20, we have received 144 pledges totaling \$673,666 and 72 members have increased their pledges for a total increase of \$108,412. We are so grateful for your generosity! Let's move into the coming year with hearts full of thanks, ready to grow, give, and serve!



Happy 94th Birthday to
Gloria Williamson!

Lifelong Faith Formation

"Fear and Light" — A Community Invitation

For Trinity's intergenerational Christmas program this year, we invite you to pause and reflect on the quiet beauty of that familiar carol line from O Little Town of Bethlehem: "Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light."

Everlasting light sometimes flickers. Sometimes it blazes. God's light often illuminates the valleys of shadow in our lives: grief, loneliness, worry, uncertainty. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem reminds us that God's light does not wait for perfect conditions. It shines into our fear, bringing warmth, courage, and hope right where we are.

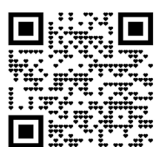
Share a short reflection, a poem, a photo with description, or thought around the theme of Fear & Light to be used throughout Advent and Christmas.

Consider one of these prompts as you write or create:

- Where do you see light shining in unexpected places?
- What does "everlasting light" mean to you this year?
- Where is God's light bringing something new to the shadows of life?
- What do you see Christ shining in your hopes and fears this season?



Your responses might become part of our Intergenerational Christmas Program on Sunday, Dec 14 and other Christmas worship opportunities, read aloud during the service, or displayed alongside candles and lanterns in our gathering space — a shared constellation of hope.



Share your words, poetry, song, visual art, or photos or prayers with Sarah Olson (solson@trinitylc.org) by Monday, December 1,

and together we'll let our light shine for the St. Croix Valley.

Advent Lights: Sharing Light Through Service & Story

What do service projects and the silver screen have in common? Sharing light!

Elementary-aged youth are invited to join Sarah Olson for the next round of FAFA on Wednesdays, December 3, 10, and 17, from 6:45–7:45 pm (right after Dinner Church). For this session, we'll spend part of our evenings serving others through onsite projects and also enjoying a Christmas movie classic together.

Please note for our December 10 service project, we're collecting the following items for emergency food kits to go to Valley Outreach: peanut butter, canned tuna/chicken, canned fruit & vegetables, fast meals (mac & cheese, Hamburger Helper, etc.), low-sugar cereal, 1 LB bags of dry beans, rice, and pasta. No expired items, please!

No cost to participate — just bring your festive spirit!

Faith Lab is on J-term this January

Jan. 7: Baptism Birthday Party (all ages welcome; geared toward 3 & under). Youth helpers needed.

Jan. 14: Bible Discovery (all ages welcome; geared for readers graduating to a full NRSV Bible).

Jan. 21: Worship Orientation (all ages welcome; geared for 3 & under). Youth helpers needed.

Jan. 28: Communion Preparation (all ages welcome; geared for grades 1–3).

Parents should attend their child's milestone with their child. Please note that each Wednesday of January, if your child will not participate as a helper or participant, you may skip Faith Lab that night; Dinner Church and FAFA continue as usual. Look for registration for each milestone at the beginning of January.

Save the date for the Mid-Winter Intergenerational Retreat

Beat the winter doldrums and take a break from the routines of home by retreating together — as a family, a couple, or on your own — at Camp Wapo in beautiful Amery, Wisconsin.

We'll rest, play, and spend time in devotion together. This retreat is for all ages and stages! From babies to grandparents, everyone is welcome. The retreat will be led by your Trinity CYF Team and Zanny Johnson. Look for registration at the beginning of January.

Dates & Schedule:

Families arrive at Camp Wapo in time for dinner at 6:00 pm on Friday, January 23, 2026. Retreat activities conclude just after lunch by 1:00 pm on Sunday, January 25, 2026. Please watch your inbox the week before the retreat for a detailed itinerary.

Cost —

Trinity Fee:

- \$25 flat retreat fee per family to help Trinity cover retreat supplies

Wapo Fees:

- Adults (18+) — \$100/person
- Youth (12–17) — \$70/person
- Children (3–11) — \$60/person
- Wapo Family Max: \$325
- Total Family Max: \$325

MID-WINTER Intergenerational Retreat AT CAMP WAPO



JANUARY 23-25, 2026

Rest, play, devotions for all ages and stages!

Racial Justice

Implications of the Gospel Infancy Stories

During the Christmas season we are introduced to the baby Jesus through stories told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. While we have no drawings or historical descriptions of Jesus and know relatively little about his family, we can imagine, from these stories, what he may have looked like, along with other notable attributes.

Infancy Stories Summarized

Matthew begins with a genealogy for Jesus from Abraham to King David to Jesus. His birth is announced to Joseph in a dream by “an angel of the Lord.” It’s also in Matthew that the Magi “from the east” – likely Babylon or Persia – visit the baby Jesus and present him with gifts. Subsequently, we learn about the holy family’s flight to Egypt to escape King Herod, moving to Nazareth only after Herod’s death, where Joseph works as a carpenter.

Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy from Jacob through David to Jesus. His birth is announced by the angel, Gabriel, who visits Mary with the news. Luke also describes Joseph and Mary’s journey to Bethlehem, a small rural town, for a census. There Jesus is born and laid in a “manger,” a feeding trough for animals – as other rooms weren’t available. Here we meet the shepherds who are the first to visit Jesus and share this good news with others. Eight days later, Jesus is presented at the Temple in Jerusalem, consistent with Jewish law and tradition.

The Jesus that Emerges

So how might we imagine Jesus, in light of these stories? How do we as Christians hear, read, and interpret these stories? Following are some points to consider. First, Jesus was a member of a devout Jewish family – a religious minority. His father was a carpenter and his first “bed” was a feeding trough, suggesting a poor, working class family. His ethnicity was likely in line with the Jewish people of 1st-century Judea, dark skin, dark short curly hair, and Semitic features. Interestingly, the earliest depictions of Jesus, found in catacomb paintings in Rome (2nd–3rd centuries CE), show him with dark skin, short dark hair, without a beard, and in a youthful Greco-Roman style—an image probably influenced more by cultural assimilation than historical accuracy.

Jesus and his family were also refugees to Egypt for some years, where they fled the murderous Herod, not unlike many of today’s refugees seeking asylum in our country today. The first witnesses to Jesus’ birth were foreigners – the Magi – and the socially marginalized – the shepherds. In Jesus’ society, shepherding constituted one of the lowest social, political and economic roles. They were considered untrustworthy, and their work – according to some interpretations of Torah – made them continually unclean. It seems, then, that the historical Jesus, himself, came from the margins of society – poor, refugee, religious minority, without political power. Moreover, the “good news” of Jesus was shared with and witnessed first by a community with little status, the shepherds; and those with no status at all, the foreign Magi. From the outset, God Incarnate was born of and for those on society’s edges, not those in positions of privilege and power.

Implications for Us

The Christmas stories emphasize details that we can’t afford to miss. Jesus being born into poverty, being announced to the socially outcast, and his parents becoming violence-fleeing refugees for the wellbeing of their child. There is an entire foundation here on which to build a framework for Christians who are working toward social justice today. The stories

suggest the need for us as Church to prioritize the poor, the insignificant, forgotten, and the marginalized. These are the people who gathered at this lowly manger and dared to believe that the baby who lay there, this good news, belonged to them. The gospels’ birth-narratives about Jesus are centered on them. People are of infinite value in these stories; especially people and communities who are marginalized by society. Indeed, as Jesus grows up, he lives into this promise, to gather the outcast, the socially

marginalized, those labeled and treated as less than by the privileged and powerful. And he calls for a society that does this, too.

Sadly, the Church has often missed out on building relationships and community with people pushed to the fringes of our larger society. And in some cases, we who carry the name of Jesus are the very ones who have driven these folks to society’s fringes.

But the Christmas stories invite us again to something new. Another world is possible if we choose it. They hold wonderful encouragement for those of us seeking to enable Jesus’ call to love and justice to speak through our lives.

God is already at work in the margins of our society. The question for those of us who wield some measure of power is whether we will participate in this socially transformative and holy work. So, wherever you are, keep choosing love, compassion, action, reparation, and justice.

This is what these Christmas stories are saying to me this year. What are they saying to you? Merry Christmas!



Ethiopian Orthodox Church Nativity Scene, painted in traditional style

Lifelong Faith Formation

DINNER CHURCH

Faith + Fellowship + Fun + Food

Dinner Church & Wednesday Learning

Join us for Dinner Church, a community meal and worship service for everyone—families, singles, couples, and friends. Connect with the Body of Christ every Wednesday evening in the River Room. The night is a full schedule of faith and fellowship for all ages:

4:30–5:15 p.m. Youth Choir Rehearsal (Kindergarten –Middle School) – Choir Room

5:20–6 p.m. Children's Faith Lab (Faith Formation for Ages 4–Grade 5) – Chapel

5:30 p.m. Community Meal Service Begins – River Room (Families with children in Faith Lab and staying for Dinner Church should grab food for the whole family during this time.)

6:15–6:45 p.m. Dinner Church (eat together, worship together) – River Room

6:45–7:45 p.m. Break into Small Groups:

- Middle School Confirmation (Grades 6–8)
- Adult Faith Lab

FAFA – Faith And Fellowship Affinity (elementary school age group)

High School Youth Trip (Grades 9–12)

We're going to Puerto Rico this summer for a service trip!

Our trip will be either July 11–18 or July 18–25. Join us for the required informational meetings on one of the following dates at 7:30 11/30, 12/4, 12/8, or 12/18. If you can't make any of the dates, please email me and I'll send you a recording of the meeting. These meetings are required for youth and at least one parent/guardian before registration. Links will come out via email...if you're not getting my emails or you have a friend who doesn't attend our church, please email me at dkruse@trinitylc.org and I'll get you the info.

December 2025 • Trinity Today



Sunday Faith Forum

Sundays at 10 a.m. – River Room – Between worship services

**Living Well in Shared Sacred Community—The Jesus Way
Bring Your Curiosity and All Are Welcome !**



Dec 7: Conversations with the Transition Team and Pastors

How would you describe Trinity to others? Trinity has established 5 Core Values: Engaging Worship, Radical Hospitality, Authentic

Community, Compassionate Action. Do these five values still fit? What do you like about Trinity? What are your concerns? What dreams do you have for this community? These are just some of the things the Transition Team would like to hear from you. And as always, this is a time to ask questions of the team or pastors! Join us! It will be fun!

Dec 14: Trinity Mission Team Presents

Join the Trinity Missions Team in the Narthex between services! This will be a great opportunity to talk with team members about the local, regional and global mission work Trinity has been busy supporting. Explore more about this important work and service, how you can be involved and how you can contribute through your gifts of service or money.



Dec 21: Hospice and Palliative Care in Tanzania

Selian Hospice and Palliative Care Program is one of the missions founded by Dr. Mark Jacobson, a dearly loved and past member of Trinity. Throughout October Kris Linner and Michele Hermansen led a team of nine hospice and

business professionals to Selian Hospice and Palliative Care Program in Arusha, Tanzania (trip funded by a Global Health Ministries/capacity-building grant). Trinity team members Mel Sullivan, Jim Brown, Dorothy Washington, and Dr. Jack Swanson were part of this team.

Kris and Michele will share some of the team's experiences with hospice, including a variety of home visits and conducting a week of training for Tanzanian hospice workers from around the country. They and the Trinity team will share the similarities and differences from the US, the challenges and what pulls at one's heart. Questions, ideas, concerns...contact Pastor Peter or Penny Catlin at pccatlin@juno.com.

Worship & Music



SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 a.m. Worship—Gathering in the Worship Center and led by choirs, organ and instrumentalists. Here you will participate with robed clergy and worship leaders. You will sing hymns, songs, liturgy and psalms from a worship book and hear a message relevant to our lives today.

11 a.m. Worship—Gathering in the Worship Center and led by a band incorporating a wide variety of contemporary worship music. The congregation engages in a time of praise and worship following the historic pattern of Lutheran worship (Gathering, Word, Message, Meal, and Sending.)



Online Options For Worship

Both services will be available online and livestream from our Worship Center at Trinity. Find worship online on our website at: <https://www.trinitylc.org/online-worship> and livestream on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/trinitylcstillwater/>

PLEASE JOIN US THIS ADVENT

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30 | FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

In the time of Herod, we long for God to break in | Luke 1:5-13

9 am – Harp, Recorder & Organ

11 am – Trinity Worship Band

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 | SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

When we're running out of hope, God is at work | Matthew 11:1-11

9 am – Trinity Youth Choir, Violin, & Soloist Thomas Glass

11 am – Trinity Worship Band

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 | THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10 am - "Reflections on Fear & Light," Trinity's Youth-Led Intergenerational Christmas Program. **One worship service only.** Together we'll reflect on the quiet beauty of that familiar carol line: "Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light." As children help tell the Christmas story—shaped by our community's reflections on fear and light—we are led toward the Divine Light that meets us in every shadow. Bring a source of light to worship—a phone flashlight, lantern, etc.—to share in the glow of hope.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 | CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION CONCERT

3 pm - Featuring the St. Croix Sounds Orchestra, Soprano Emma Grimsley, the Trinity Choir, and the Youth Choir. You will hear classic favorites, as well as familiar and not-so-familiar music for the season. No cost to attend, a free-will offering will be taken to support music at Trinity. Appropriate for all ages. Please join us for this special afternoon of incredible music in the Worship Center. *Reception to follow in the Narthex!*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 | FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

When you're afraid, give me your hand | Matthew 1:18-25

9 am – Trinity Choir & Organ

11 am – Trinity Worship Band

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24 | CHRISTMAS EVE

Good news is louder than fear | Luke 2:1-20

11 am – Worship for children and their families

2 pm – Contemporary worship with the Worship Band (*Livestream)

4 pm – Festival worship with Brass, Choir & Organ (*Livestream)

9 pm – Candlelight worship with Soloists & Organ

NOTE: No in-person worship on Christmas Day (Thursday, December 25). There will be a 10 am re-broadcast of the 4 pm Christmas Eve service.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28 |

LESSONS + CAROLS WITH TRINITY BRASS

The ancient story told in words and music

10 am - One Worship Service Only.

Concert Series

Dec 6 | Croix Chordsmen Christmas Show | 3:00 pm

Step back in time and experience the magic of Christmas radio brought to life on stage.

Tickets: <https://croixchordsmen.org/>

Dec 14 | Trinity Christmas Concert – Sunday, Dec. 14 – Christmas Celebration Concert 3 pm

– Featuring the St. Croix Sounds Orchestra, Soprano Emma Grimsely, the Trinity Choir, and the Youth Choir. You will hear classic favorites, as well as familiar and not-so-familiar music for the season. No cost to attend, a free-will offering will be taken to support music at Trinity. Appropriate for all ages. Please join us for this special afternoon of incredible music in the Worship Center. Reception to follow in the Narthex!

Dec 20 | St. Croix Valley Opera – Home for the Holidays | 7 pm

Step into a world of sparkling holiday magic as Broadway's radiant leading lady and two-time Tony Award nominee Laura Osnes returns to her home state for one dazzling, unforgettable night. Laura's celebrated voice—heard on Broadway in Cinderella, Bonnie & Clyde, Anything Goes, and in Hallmark holiday movies—will fill the stillness of winter with warmth, wonder, and memories to last a lifetime.

Tickets: <https://www.scvopera.org/>

Dec 21 | Christmas with Cantus | 3pm

Cantus weaves together three holiday stories with time-honored carols and new classics. Blending narration and song, the program features Margery Williams' The Velveteen Rabbit and The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg alongside an abridged romp through Pyotr Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker.

Tickets: <https://www.cantussings.org/>

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

At Trinity Church

Sunday,
Dec 14,
2025
3:00 pm

FEATURING

The Trinity Choir - Clark Weyrauch, Director

The Trinity Youth Choir - Sonia Esch, Director

St. Croix Sounds Orchestra - Dr. Kris Tjornehoj, Director

Organ and Piano - Carol Carver



Guest Soloist: Emma Grimsley, Soprano

No cost to attend, there will be a free will offering to support music at Trinity!

Missions and Devotions

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH EARTH KEEPER. LEAVE IT BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT

Dear Trinity community, here are your December Earth Keeper T.I.P.s (Thoughtfully. Intentionally. Purposefully.)

Alternative Gift Giving Ideas

In this time of greater need, consider these sustainable and alternative gift giving ideas this holiday season.

Charitable Donations and Food Shelves

Choose an organization or cause that is dear to your heart and give what you can. Food shelves are especially in need and accept money and food donations.

Thrifting, Creating and Experiences

Hit the fun second hand stores and find unique gifts. It doesn't have to be new to be great! Use your talents to make homemade gifts. They can be tasty treats or a cozy scarf. Use your creativity and imagination and go wild! Making memories is one of the greatest gifts you can give. Whether it's a night out at a movie, dinner or a performance or even a nice getaway, experiences are the gifts that we remember forever.

Community Charging at Trinity Lutheran Church (CC at TLC)- Check out the EV Charging Station Project

We're driving sustainability and a Green Stillwater forward by installing the first public use EV chargers in downtown Stillwater—creating an oasis in downtown Stillwater's charging desert and inviting our community and visitors to power up with us!

- Cleaner air (zero harmful emissions)
- Increased foot traffic to downtown businesses, leading to increased economic growth for Stillwater's small business community
- Enhanced brand image for Stillwater
- A public station for your use when you get your EV!

Check out details of the project on TLC's website by going to the Earth Keepers page under the 'Get Involved' tab. Consider a donation to the project to help us continue our efforts of promoting a strong local economy and a cleaner and sustainable environment.



Join Trinity

Interested in becoming a member of Trinity? We would love to have you!

Please scan the QR code to fill out a membership form. Zanny Johnson, Connections Coordinator, will follow up with

more details about the upcoming membership classes. For your convenience, the classes will be held on the same day you attend worship: the Wednesday class will be immediately after Dinner Church, and the Sunday class will be between services at 10 a.m.

Men's Bible Study

Thursdays at 8:30 a.m.

Boutwells Landing, Skyview Conference Room

Studying of the Parables of Jesus.

- 3 weeks on the Parables of the Kingdom
- 3 weeks on the Parables of Grace
- 3 weeks on the Parables of Judgement

Jesus told parables because he wants YOU to figure it out! He and we want to know what YOU think. Come and help figure it out!



Trinity Library

The library is up and running but we do have a request of the congregation: PLEASE RETURN ANY MATERIALS you might have at home by January 1, 2026. We are going to be doing an inventory and need to have as much of the

collection here as possible. We truly appreciate your help in updating our software. Once this is done the catalogue will be available online with a link from the Trinity website. Open house dates are to be determined so keep watching Trinity Today for updates. Thanks and Welcome to YOUR library! – Sue Swanson

Mental Health Group

During October and November six Trinity members met four times to discuss a six episode podcast entitled "Our Stigma". The podcast was organized and compiled by Pastor Seth Perry of Elim Lutheran Church in Scandia, MN. He interviewed people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in rural and urban areas of the Twin Cities who are living with mental illness and substance abuse issues.

One of Pastor Perry's goals is to create welcoming, supportive environments in our churches for those living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders. In our small group we discussed difficult recovery journeys and heard about ways concerned community members can support our neighbors who live with mental illness and/or substance abuse.

Our small group hopes to promote awareness of mental illness and to understand how we can offer opportunities for others to do so.

The small group was attended by Lysa Ausmus, Carolyn Briol, Rita Friesen, Carol Straka, Ann Wolff, and Jeneal Olsen.

Please contact Jeneal Olsen (momjmo@comcast.net) if you have any questions, concerns or support you'd like to offer.

Missions and Devotions

Celebration with Bega Kwa Bega and Trinity Missions Team

On Monday, November 3, the Missions Team was honored to have two visitors from the St. Paul Area Synod and Iringa, Tanzania sharing a soup and salad meal and teaching us about what they do. Kirsten Levorson is the Director of Bega Kwa Bega and spends time in the St Paul Area Synod as well as in the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Frank Mkocho, Scholarship Secretary for the Iringa Diocese, was visiting us in the St. Paul Area.

We enjoyed conversation and a meal and taught each other about our relationship together.



Join us at 11 a.m. on Sunday, December 14 to celebrate Missions

After our one service at 10 a.m. on Sunday, December 14, the Adult Forum will be in the narthex, a display of Missions Team happenings. You will have a chance to choose a person that you may want to help sponsor for education at a secondary school in Tanzania, owned and operated by the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. You will have a chance to support our local refugees through gift cards to

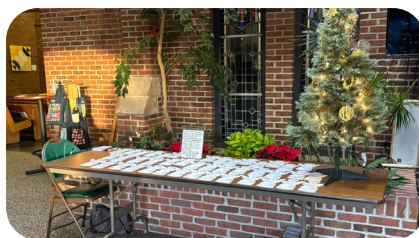
RefugeeHousingMN. You will be able to see gifts that are returned for children and caregivers of incarcerated persons. You will be able to learn more about Tanzania, more about Housing Needs, more about our new Emergency Housing Service, more about our Community Services'.

Want to join the Mission Team?

The Trinity Missions Team can have ten voting members. This coming January two of the members three year terms are complete. We thank Marie Liberda and Sandy Wendt for their faithful years of ministry on this team. Would you consider serving? It's fun, It's enjoyable, it's work! We work most of the time within our four pillars: Housing Insecurity, Refugee Resettlement & Inclusion, Local Companions and Global Companions. We have teams that work together on each of these pillars and you can choose to work on the committee of your choice. Please contact a member of the team if you are willing to serve. It'll change your life!!

December 7 – Mission Moment which will emphasize TZ Scholarships and dedicated to the Late Rev. Don Fultz and our fabulous Eunice Fultz and their work with BKB. Angel Tree pickup cards will also be available.

December 14 – One service at 10 a.m. Missions to have tables out in the narthex afterwards, including scholarship tree. Angel Tree gifts returned.



THURSDAY MORNING YOGA

Join Sandy on Thursday mornings at 9:00 am at Trinity Lutheran in Stillwater in person, or virtually, for a mat/chair yoga class that incorporates strengthening poses and balancing poses.

Thursday from 9 - 10AM CST

This 6-week session runs from:
11/6 - 12/18/25
*No class on 11/27

Register at:
bit.ly/Trinity-Nov



Art for Sale!

Trinity member Elaine Fredrickson art for sale, generously donated by her daughters. All proceeds going to support Trinity's music and fine arts. Artwork may be purchased during office hours. Contact Linda Flood at lflood@trinitylc.org



Let's Go Events!

Caroling

Come join us as we bring Christmas cheer to our neighbors
Thursday, December 11, 5:30
Meet at The Estates at Greeley, 313 Greeley St.

Second location The Estates at Linden

RSVP and questions, please contact Jill Longnecker at jnjlony@msn.com

Grief support group for the holidays

As we approach the holidays, grief can become especially difficult. Join us as we explore grief in a community of understanding, receive spiritual support and share coping strategies with others. Led by spiritual director and grief educator Zanny Johnson, we will meet at Trinity on Tuesday afternoons at 3 p.m. on November 18, 25, December 2, 9 and 16. RSVP required to Zanny at zjohnson@trinitylc.org.



Accountability Belonging Inclusion Diversity Equity

Accountability Belonging Inclusion Diversity Equity

Diversity is God's creation. Equity is God's justice. Inclusion is God's family. ~ Bishop Talbert Swan. Join ABIDE Readers for a discussion of Black AF History: The Un-whitewashed Story of America by Michael Harriot. The impacts of systemic racism on the Black community are manifold, but Harriot's focus on Black resilience and creativity in the face of oppression is a hopeful take on troubled American history. Read more at <https://www.supersummary.com/black-af-history>

The book is available with a 15% discount at Valley Bookseller, on the ABIDE Bookshelf in the Narthex, 973.04 HARR, and at local libraries. We hope you can join us Monday, Jan 26, 6:30-8:00pm via Zoom. For the link, contact wolff701@msn.com

Pride Justice

What Are You Reading? Learning Together 101

"What are you reading?" What a great question! Whether asked as an icebreaker in getting to know someone, or asked at a family, friend, or colleague gathering, the question and it's response is transformative! The response provides insight into what the person is currently interested in, and it may also provide you, the Question Asker, with a new topic to explore!

What are YOU reading?

Trinity is very fortunate to have a library within its building and is doubly lucky to be located just a block away from the Public Library. In 1897, the Stillwater Public Library became a free, public lending institution, following its 1859 launch as a subscription-based lending library. What a gift to the community to have free reading materials available so easily. With so much available to read, where does one begin?

On November 7, the Pride Justice Team hosted their second community collaboration gathering. The event included fresh-brewed coffee and tea, delicious, sweet and savory baked goods, delightful conversation with

new and renewed family, friends, and neighbors, and a visit from the Stillwater Public Library! The Pride Justice Team invited the public library to share lists and information about Inclusive books for ALL ages, and they generously and enthusiastically said yes! What a gift to have an energetic, passionate, and experienced librarian share their knowledge and love for reading and books, which included an inclusive reading list for all ages!

In November 2024, Trinity unanimously adopted a Statement of Inclusion. It begins:

*God's love is all inclusive.
Trinity Lutheran Church joyfully
celebrates the wholeness of you.*

What a beautiful act of worship to joyfully celebrate each of God's Beloved Children! Each story unique and precious in God's sight, and in God's story. How fortunate are we to have libraries filled with free books that invite us to get to know more about the diverse and inclusive stories of God's people!!

Pastor Jen and the Pride Justice Team are collaborating on a four-week book discussion, reading the book, *Becoming Nicole: the Transformation of an American Family*. You are invited to join the discussion either in person on Wednesday evenings during Faith Lab, or on ZOOM on Tuesday evenings. See details in the box below. Hope to see you there!

In case you were unable to join the community collaboration event, The Pride Justice Team wants you to also have the invaluable list of book titles shared at the gathering. The librarian was very clear that there are SO MANY MORE BOOKS than this short list, and the list changes frequently. ENJOY! And

next time someone asks, "What are you reading?", maybe one of these titles will be your response!

Picture Books and Early Nonfiction

- Marley's Pride by Joelle Retener
- Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle by Nina Lacour
- Pink Is For Boys by Robb Pearlman
- The Wishing Flower by A.J. Irving
- The Family Book by Todd Parr
- Ho'oni: Hula Warrior by Heather Gale
- Pink, Blue, and You! By Elisa Gravel

Books for ages 6-12

- Too Bright to See by Lyle Luko]
- The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher by Dana Alison Levy
- Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World by Ashley Herring Blake
- Lunar Boy(Graphic Novel) by Jes and Cin Wibowo
- The Tea Dragon Society(Graphic Novel) by Katie O'Neill
- A Child's Introduction to Pride
- This is Our Rainbow(Short Stories) edited by Katherine Locke

Books for teens

- I Wish You All the Best by Mason Deaver
- PET by Akwaeke Emezi
- The Miseducation of Cameron Post by Emily M. Danforth
- Felix Ever After by Kacen Callender
- Gender Queer(Graphic Memoir) by Maia Kobabe
- Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Saenz

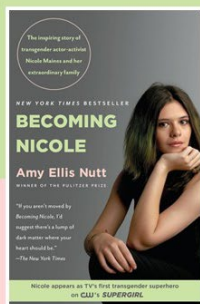
Books for adults

- Less by Andrew Sean Greer
- The House in the Cerulean Sea by TJ Klune
- A Little Life by Hanya Yanagihara
- On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous by Ocean Vuong
- Don't Want You Like a Best Friend by Emma Albon Karen Gieseke (she, her) Pride Justice Team Chair



BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP:

BECOMING NICOLE, THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY BY AMY ELLIS NUTT



Becoming Nicole, The Transformation of an American Family

The inspiring true story of transgender actor/activist Nicole Maines, whose identical twin brother, Jonas, and ordinary American family join her on an extraordinary journey to understand, nurture, and celebrate the uniqueness in us all.

Two options to join a discussion:

WEDNESDAY FAITH LAB:

6:45-7:45pm

January 21, 28, February 4, 11.

VIA ZOOM:

6:30-7:30pm

January 20, 27, February 3, 10.

The book may be purchased at Valley Bookseller, Stillwater. Cost for paperback \$20 plus a 15% discount when you mention being part of the Trinity book group discussion.

CELEBRATING SENIORS EVENT

Please join us in our Christmas Celebrating Seniors event for a short worship service with communion (led by Interim Lead Pastor Jen Hackbarth) and a Swedish meatball luncheon with entertainment by Trinity's own staffers Andrew Kreye, Sarah Olson and Zanny Johnson.



Wednesday, December 10
11a.m. to 1p.m.
Trinity Lutheran Church
River Room

This event is free of charge and open to all Trinity members ages 75+ and one guest.
Sponsored by Trinity's Caring Friends.
No RSVP necessary



Trinity Piecemakers and Sunshine Ministry Update

Carolyn Minor is stepping down after a decade as the leader of the Piecemakers quilting group at Trinity, which creates quilts for Lutheran World Relief and Bundles of Love.

Rita Friesen has assumed the contact person role for the group, which meets in the "Quilting Quarters" on the lower level of Trinity every Tuesday afternoon from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. September through May.

Anyone interested in helping with the non-fancy block quilts is welcome and can contact Rita Friesen at: ribfriesen@gmail.com

Carolyn is not retiring from the Sunshine Ministry, which provides funds for members to receive a birthday rose at ages 75, 80, 85, and 90+. The funds are raised through dishtowels embroidered by volunteers. Those who embroider and would like to volunteer can contact Carolyn at carmin42@outlook.com.

Please thank Carolyn for her years of service leading the quilting group, wish her a happy retirement from that specific role and tell her you want to embroider!

Baptisms

- **Norah Loretta Wilmes**, child of Holly & Sean Wilmes
- **Crosby June Weyrauch**, child of Lily Lancaster & Clark Weyrauch

Christian Sympathy

- Family & friends of **Dennis Notaro**
- Family & friends of **Edwin (Ed) Cain**
- Family & friends of **Richard (Dick) Luhsen**

Worship On TV

Trinity's traditional Sunday worship service is rebroadcast on channel 14 through Valley Access Channels (VAC) on the following days and times:

- Sundays at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.
- Mondays at 7 a.m. & 1 p.m.

Office Hours

The church office is open the following hours or by appointment.

Monday–Thursday
9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Christmas holiday Office Hours: Please note Trinity Church building is closed Dec 25th through Jan 5th

Worship Attendance

Sunday, September 7

Online views/week 10 am331

Sunday, September 14

In-person 9 am.....155

In-person 11 am.....124

Online views/week.....452

Sunday, September 21

In-person 9 am.....172

In-person 11 am.....85

Online views/week.....518

Sunday, September 28

In-person 9 am.....161

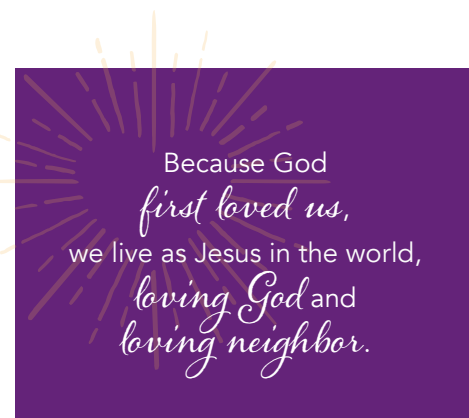
In-person 11 am.....97

Online views/week.....481

NOTE: Online views in one week are one-minute or longer views.

All submissions featured in Trinity

Today are subject to change based on space available



Core Values

Engaging Worship
Radical Hospitality
Authentic Community
Lifelong Faith Formation
Compassionate Action

Inclusion Statement

Read our Inclusion Statement at:

<https://www.trinitylc.org/our-mission>

TRINITY TODAY!

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Email: info@trinitylc.org

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CHRISTMAS GARDEN GIFT OPPORTUNITIES

FORM AND PAYMENT MUST BE SUBMITTED BY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025



*In the spirit of honoring or memorializing loved ones this Christmas, we welcome donations toward Trinity's Building Fund, or the Christmas Garden (floral display) to beautify our Worship Center this season. Names will be printed in the January issue of Trinity Today. **Online:** To make your donation online, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera. **In Person:** If you prefer, please stop in the church office Monday through Thursday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. with your cash or check and Jeannie or Linda will assist you in completing the form. **Mail:** Fill out the form and mail it with your payment to Trinity Lutheran Church, PO Box 339, Stillwater, MN 55082.*

☐ Trinity's Building Fund: \$ _____ ☐ Christmas Garden (suggested donation of \$25): \$ _____

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Given by: _____ Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

