

December 2023



TRINITY TIDINGS

Trinity Lutheran Church

Pastor's Page

How does a weary world rejoice?

Merry Christmas, Trinity Lutheran!

I always look forward to this time of year. The lights are looking beautiful hanging from our homes, Christmas trees are decorated with favorite ornaments, cookies are baking in the oven, presents are being opened. The Christmas season seems so magical ... until it actually comes.

It's as if every year we magically forget how wearying the season really is! Sure, you remember the beauty of having all the lights up, but you always seem to forget how frustrating it is to put them up. You love cutting down a Christmas tree every year, but do you also remember freezing your fingers and toes off? You love cookies, but do you really love the dishes? You love presents, but do you love the long lines at the store?

And for some of us, Christmas is a sad time. For some, it's a time where we miss loved ones who have passed. For some it's a time of unfulfilled promises and broken relationships. Christmas can be hard. Instead of joy, sometimes we feel weariness creeping into our bones.

I imagine Mary and Joseph might have felt that way too, traveling long dusty roads and not finding a proper place to sleep at night. They were weary travelers. But God broke in and created something new. Shaped from all that weariness, God created hope, joy and love in the form of little baby. And God is doing the same thing for us today.

God makes room for both our weariness and joy in this Christmas Season.

So we hope you can join us during Advent, as we explore this theme of how a weary world can rejoice! We'll learn about the ways that God breaks into our lives in ways that are both big and small and how if we take the time to look around and pay attention, we'll find signs of God's presence wherever we go.

Pastor Paul Cannon



Advent and Christmas worship schedule

- Sunday, November 26th** 8:00 & 10:00 First Sunday of Advent worship
- Sunday, December 3rd** 8:00 & 10:00 Second Sunday of Advent worship
- Sunday, December 10th** 8:00 Third Sunday of Advent worship
10:00 Sunday School Christmas program/worship
Cookie party to follow in the Fellowship Hall
- Sunday, December 17th** 8:00 & 10:00 Fourth Sunday of Advent worship
- Sunday, December 24th/Christmas Eve** **(No morning worship services)**
2:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
4:00 p.m. Candlelight worship with Holy Communion
(Livestreamed and available to view online later.)
7:30 p.m. Candlelight worship with Holy Communion
- Monday, December 25th** **Merry Christmas!**
- Sunday, December 31st** **One worship service at 9:00 a.m.**

Children & Youth Ministry News

Family Sunday School/Children's Ministry:

We are so excited to celebrate the birth of our Savior that brings good news of great joy for all people at our Christmas program on Sunday, December 10, at the 10:00 a.m. worship service. We invite you to come watch the program and stay after for a cookie party in the Fellowship Hall. The children have been preparing for this special day and we know it will be a joyful delight this season. Special thank you to Courtney Fairbanks for directing and JoAnn Dolezalek for piano accompaniment. Even in a weary world, we pray we find ways to rejoice this Advent season. Merry Christmas Blessings to our Trinity Family!

Upcoming Dates to know:

December 3 – Program Rehearsal/Family Sunday School 9:00-9:45 a.m.

December 10 - Program Rehearsal 9:00 a.m.-9:45 a.m., Christmas Program at 10:00 a.m. service, Cookie Party to follow in the Fellowship Hall

December 17 – NO Sunday School - Merry Christmas!

December 24 – NO Sunday School - Merry Christmas!

December 31 – NO Sunday School - Happy New Year!

January 7 – Family Sunday School resumes 9:00-9:45 a.m.



Confirmation continues to meet at 6:30 pm on Wednesdays.

There will be no Confirmation on Wednesday, December 20 or 27.

EDGE High School Youth Ministry

At the end of November, EDGE went on a Christmas outreach shopping trip to Target to help support the giving tree tags at Trinity. EDGE was also joined by 8th grade confirmation students to pack college care packages. We have been having some great discussions around the youth gathering themes of "authentic" and "free" at our weekly meetings. This month, EDGE will focus on Advent and have our annual Christmas Party with games, food, and fun. After Christmas break we'll be back in the New Year with a game night, service projects, Soup Lunch, and much more! We wish everyone a joyous and blessed Christmas season!

December 3 - EDGE Serves Coffee Hour

December 6 - EDGE Meets 6:30-7:30 p.m.

December 13 - EDGE Christmas Party 6:30-7:30 p.m.

December 20 - NO EDGE: Merry Christmas!

December 27 - NO EDGE: Happy New Year!



Thank you for Youth Gathering Support

Our youth group would like to say a special thank you to the many folks who have donated and supported our Envelope Wall fundraiser for the New Orleans National Youth Gathering!

We have raised approximately \$1,500 of our \$5,200 goal. Our goal is to have all envelopes filled and returned by Christmas. Thank you!

We would also like to thank the Women's Bible Study group for their donation and everyone who donates at the Advent Tea! Your generosity is sincerely appreciated by all the Trinity youth going on the trip!

Holy Hotdish - Women's Bible Study and Fellowship

Holy Hotdish gathers again Sunday, December 10, from 6:00-7:15 p.m. in the fellowship hall at Trinity. We look forward to seeing you! We'll go over Nehemiah Chapter 5:1 - Chapter 8:18 and Week 3 in our study book. Bring your Bible, study book, and a pen! Contact Marie to get a study book and be added to our email list.



The Path Program

Trinity hosts the Path Program December 17 through December 31. Sign up sheets are in the Narthex. We need volunteers to bring meals, visit with the families in the evenings, and to sleep in the nursery as an overnight host. Thank you for supporting this ministry!

Staffing Changes

There have been a lot of changes, and more coming to our church staff. We want to update you all on some staffing changes and where we are in our search for a Music Director.

First, please help us welcome Lucas Starr as our New AV Manager! He will be replacing Jaron Roberts, who is leaving to pursue a career in Real Estate Photography. We will have a sendoff blessing for Jaron on December 3rd.

We've also said goodbye this year to Tyler Olson, who resigned from his position as our choir director. We thank him for sharing his gifts and for many years of helping bring beautiful music to Trinity. We wish him the best and know he will be a blessing on his future endeavors.

Our Music Director position is still open, and we are in the process of interviewing candidates. We've learned it's a competitive field which might require some patience, but we're confident that we have an attractive position and that God is working to find the right fit!

While we've been waiting for a worship director, we have been very blessed to have many talented volunteer musicians step up and lead. JoAnn Dolezalek has agreed to fill in on a temporary basis as our Pianist/accompanist. Her presence has added stability and been a huge blessing. We also have teams of volunteers, led by Kathy Aho and Barb Mork, who have been helping select, organize and plan our music. We're confident we can provide a high level of music while we wait to fill the position for our Music Director.

Meet Lucas: Hi I'm Lucas. I'm honored to be working here at Trinity Lutheran Church as the AV Manager. I'm originally from the Chicago area, but went to school in Orlando Florida at Full Sail University with a bachelor's degree in Show Production. I graduated in 2021, and moved to the area in early 2023. In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, making videos, and just getting the most out of the life God has given me! Can't wait to meet all the new friends here!



The Christmas Giving Tree is up, with tags for 60 local foster children and 20 developmentally disabled adults. Children's gifts will be due back to the church by Monday, December 4., and adult gifts are due back by Monday, December 11. All gifts should be unwrapped or in a gift bag. Thank you for your support of this program each year!



Christ was born into a weary world. King Herod ruled the land with a legacy of ruthlessness. The Romans treated the people of Israel with contempt, imposing harsh taxes and land seizures that forced many into subsistence farming. Poverty and destitution were pervasive. And yet, Christ was born, bringing good news of great joy for all people.

As Advent comes again to a weary world, we ask, "How does a weary world rejoice?" From the opening chapters of Luke's Gospel, we have found a few answers: we acknowledge our weariness, we find joy in connection, we allow ourselves to be amazed, we sing stories of hope, we make room, we root ourselves in ritual, and most importantly, we trust our belovedness. In the parallel birth stories of Jesus and John, joy arrives—despite trepidation, fear, or grief. In these stories, we find rhythms for rejoicing. As we move through our series, we hope to create space for acknowledging the weariness of our world while celebrating God's closeness with great joy.

And so, this Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a "thrill of hope" in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice. Advent booklets are included in this newsletter. Our first Sunday of Advent worship will be Sunday, November 26th. Like and share the daily Advent posts on our facebook page.

Christmas Season Poinsettia Garden

If you would like to contribute toward our Christmas season poinsettia garden in memory of or in gratitude for someone or something, please complete this form and return it to the church office. In order to be listed in the Christmas Eve insert, please return no later than Sunday, December 17th.

Forms received after December 17 will not be included in the Christmas eve insert.
(Please print. Thank-you!)

In memory of _____

In gratitude for: _____

From _____

Mail to Trinity Lutheran Church, Attn: Julie Morgan, PO Box 447, North Branch, MN 55056

BLESSING BAGS

The "winter" Blessing Bags were delivered to the North Branch Police Department and Food Shelf right before the cold weather hit, and they were greatly appreciated by those organizations!

We're now looking towards the coming holiday, and Christmas isn't too far off! In the past years we have been able to stuff 60 gift bags full of small gifts and everyday essentials for boys and girls, ages 0-13.

Our greatest need is for warm insulated gloves or mittens, but please check out the display board in the narthex with many other items that are needed and return to church by December 1st. If you would rather give a cash donation, we can do the shopping for you!

We plan on packing on Wednesday, December 6 at 1:00 p.m. in the Genesis Room if you'd like to help! If you have any questions, please call 674-4033. Thank you!! Lori Fisk

The Outreach Committee will be meeting the second Tuesday of every month at 9 a.m. in the Genesis Room. Many exciting projects are being planned for the next few months. Come and join us December 12.

Martha Arnold, Chair person.



Ushers
and
Communion
Assistants

We are looking for more people to help out as ushers at our 10 a.m. worship services, and will also need communion assistants at our 8 a.m. services. We also need volunteers for our Christmas Eve services. If you are interested in helping out in this way please sign up in the narthex, or talk with Julie or Pastor Paul.

Trinity's grocery shelf has seen an increase in use.

Non-perishable or personal care items, may be placed on the shelf. We have a freezer available as well. We have multiple requests for gas cards. If you'd like to make a monetary donation, note "Grocery Shelf " or "Gas Cards" on your donation and we will do the shopping for you. Thank you for supporting your community in this way!



Please email articles for the January Trinity Tidings to office@trinitynorthbranch.org by December 11. Thank you!

Join us for Coffee Hour following our 9 a.m. worship service on December 31, and wish Syl Marking a happy 90th birthday. The Marking family will be providing birthday cake for Coffee Hour that morning. Happy Birthday, Syl!



To submit a prayer chain prayer request or to be added to the email recipient list, please call the office or email office@trinitynorthbranch.org

TRINITY WOMEN IN GOD'S SERVICE (TWIGS)

Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 27 at Our Savior's Stillwater

A Day of Making Comfort - Gather with other women from the St Paul Area synod to make fleece blankets to be donated.

Saturday April 27 St. Paul Area Synod

Women's Convention at St. Paul Lutheran Wyoming MN

ALTAR GUILD

Serving for the month
of December

Sue Gustafson & Jane Magnison



Fare for All at Trinity Lutheran Church.

3:00-5:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 6.

Fare for All is open to everyone! The more who shop the better the buying power of the organization. www.fareforall.org



Our weekly worship will be available each Sunday live at 8 & 10 a.m. on our YouTube channel, and about 90 minutes later on our facebook page. Links can be found on our website.







Like Trinity Lutheran Church on facebook, and comment on our posts! Worship videos are posted each Sunday!



"Christ in Our Home" daily devotionals for October, November, December have arrived.

Large and regular print books are available. If you'd like a copy, email jmorgan@trinitynorthbranch.org or leave a message for Julie at 651-674-7047 to pickup.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunday worship services are livestreamed on YouTube, and available for viewing later on YouTube and facebook.					1 	2
3 Worship Service/ Communion 8:00 & 10:00 am 9:00 am Coffee Hour 9:00 am Sunday School	4 9:00 am Fellowship Team meeting 6:30 pm Advent Tea Children's giving tree gifts due	5	6 1:00 Blessing Bag packing 3:00-5:00 Fare for All 5:30 pm New Creation 6:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm EDGE Youth Ministry	7 9:00 am Women's Bible Study	8	9
10 Worship Service/ Communion 8:00 & 10:00 am 9:00 am Coffee Hour 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Sunday School program/Cookie Party 6:00 pm Holy Hot Dish Bible study	11 Tidings articles due Adult giving tree gifts due 	12 9:00 am Outreach meeting	13 5:30 pm New Creation 6:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm EDGE Youth Ministry	14 9:00 am Women's Bible Study 	15	16
17 Worship Service/ Communion 8:00 & 10:00 am 9:00 am Coffee Hour No Sunday School Trinity hosts the Path program through 12/31	18	19 7:00 pm Council Mtg	20 5:30 pm New Creation No Confirmation or EDGE	21 9:00 am Women's Bible Study	22	23 
24 Worship Service/ Communion 2:30, 4:00 7:30 pm 31 Worship Service/ Communion 9:00 am 10:00 am Coffee Hour Noisy Offering—RIP Medical Debt/THEE Alliance	25 	26 Church Office closed	27 Church Office closed	28 Church Office closed	29 Church Office closed	29

Treasurer's Report

Statement of Income and Expenses

Month Ending October 31, 2023
Trinity Lutheran Church, North Branch, MN

<u>Income</u>	October Actual	October Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Unified Giving	\$ 30,085	\$ 33,333	\$ 279,996	\$ 329,740
Loose Offering	\$ 617	\$ 375	\$ 5,577	\$ 3,608
Other Income	\$ -	\$ 42	\$ 7,199	\$ 6,605
Phoenix Operating Reimbursement	\$ 1,908	\$ 2,500	\$ 26,361	\$ 24,667
Special Bequests	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Regular Giving	\$ 32,610	\$ 36,250	\$ 319,133	\$ 364,620
<u>Expenses</u>	October Actual	October Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
<u>Mission Support</u>				
Synod Support	\$ 2,429	\$ 2,429	\$ 24,292	\$ 24,292
Missionaries	\$ 188	\$ 188	\$ 1,875	\$ 1,875
Iringa Church Tanzania	\$ 92	\$ 92	\$ 917	\$ 917
Sub-total Mission Expenses	\$ 2,708	\$ 2,708	\$ 27,083	\$ 27,083
<u>General Expenses</u>				
Ministry Support	\$ 28,337	\$ 34,606	\$ 293,915	\$ 346,431
Church Property	\$ 5,012	\$ 10,357	\$ 80,437	\$ 83,696
Stewardship	\$ -	\$ 150	\$ 797	\$ 1,500
Learning & Youth	\$ 1,497	\$ 458	\$ 5,499	\$ 6,350
Worship	\$ 270	\$ 233	\$ 2,836	\$ 3,193
Witness & Service	\$ -	\$ 17	\$ 107	\$ 166
Sub-total General Expenses	\$ 35,116	\$ 45,821	\$ 383,593	\$ 441,336
Total Regular Expenses	\$ 37,824	\$ 48,530	\$ 410,676	\$ 468,420
Total Net Income - October 2023	\$ (5,215)	\$ (12,280)		
Unified Support - Phoenix	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 70,000	\$ 70,000
Income Less Expense after Phoenix Support	\$ 1,785	\$ (5,280)		
Total Net Income - Year-To-Date			\$ (21,543)	\$ (33,800)

August Income was \$3,640 under the October Budget
August Expense was \$10,705 under the October Budget

Net Income is \$1,785 for October
Net Income is -\$21,543 Year to Date

Please consider online giving.

YTD Phoenix Rent Received \$196,224.04

Respectfully Submitted,

Todd J. Fisk

Treasurer

See our website www.trinitynorthbranch.org to give electronically on a one-time or recurring basis. Select the date and frequency (one time, weekly or monthly) and designate the amount and fund (Unified, Building, Viking Vittles, Memorial or Other.) Changes can easily be made at any time.

Offering can also be mailed to Trinity Lutheran Church, PO Box 447, North Branch, MN 55056.

From the Church Council

This issue of Trinity Tidings is being printed before the November Council meeting, so we'll have to inform you of what we intend to do rather than what we did. The budget for 2024 will be the main topic discussion at both the November and December meetings. Revenue for the budget is based on the pledges received. If you have not made a pledge yet, it would most helpful if you could get that information to the office. Having an accurate estimate of the revenue is paramount to creating the budget.



Also, other than the current members, no one has indicated on the Time and Talent Sheet that they are willing to serve on the Church Council. There are three positions to be filled at the annual meeting, February 4, 2024. Term is three years, typically one meeting per month. If you have an interest and are willing to serve, please let the office know.

Tom Hals, Council President

From the Council President—The Star of Bethlehem

*Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?
For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship Him. Matthew 2:2*

So begins the story of the three wise men or Magi, Eastern astrologers, following a star to Bethlehem to worship the Christ Child. About forty years ago my wife, Candi, and I were able to attend a lecture during the Holiday season titled "Star of Bethlehem" presented by Karlis Kaufmanis. An astronomy professor born in Latvia in 1910, Kaufmanis taught at Gustavus Adolphus in the 1950s and the University of Minnesota in the 1960s and 1970s. He had done years of research on this topic and gave this lecture about 1,000 times across the country. His lecture added something special to our Christmas that year and we attended it again for several years thereafter.

A synopsis of Kaufmanis' lecture is that Jewish astrologers believed the Messiah would come when the planet Saturn, the Messiah's star, and the planet Jupiter, the King's star converged and reflected the sun's rays to look like one bright star shortly before dawn called a heliacal rising. The two planets moved into conjunction in May, October and again in December of 7 B.C. The first occurrence telling them it was going to happen, the second telling them to go and the third time directing them to the manger.

The Star of Bethlehem lecture left me with a new appreciation of the Christmas story and strengthened my faith. We all have many fond memories of Christmas spent with friends and family and remember special gifts given or received. The greatest gift, however, is one we all received over 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Merry Christmas, Tom Hals

Raise Right (formerly Scrip) gift card order forms are available on the narthex bulletin board. These gift cards are the same as you would buy in a store, and Trinity receives a percentage of each purchase. An order will be placed December 3. We will call you when cards arrive, usually a week later. To order online go to raiseright.com/shop, choose sign up, join existing program. Trinity's code is BDE7C8LF12L85. See Sue or Julie with questions.

Attendance & Views

Date	In person	Online views
10/22 8a	45	49
10/22 10a	77	64
10/29 8a	36	68
10/29 10a	125	77
11/5 8a	46	70
11/5 10a	105	56
11/12 8a	51	47
11/12 10a	108	54

Trinity is forming a team of Shalom Thrift Store volunteers. A member would commit to working 4 hours one day a week each week. Shifts are 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. or 12:30-4:00 p.m. Duties would include pricing, sorting, accepting donations, cash register at the Cambridge store. As a team we receive a monthly stipend for the Outreach program at Trinity. If you are interested in helping out beginning in January, contact Julie, Carol Gustafson or Connie Deminsky. Carpooling may be an option. It is fun and it is rewarding!



To outdoor maintenance in memory of Glen Boyce from Lorraine Wenzel, Bonnie Nelson, Yvonne Johnson, Diane & Mark Johnson, Ann Tanko, JoAnn Dolezalek

To Outreach in memory of Glen Boyce and Helen Lindhart from Bev Otterness

To the EDGE Mission Trip in memory of Glen Boyce from Mike & Barb Nelson, Sharon Fairbanks

Undesignated in memory of Glen Boyce from Duane & Eileen Fisk

To Viking Vittles in memory of Glen Boyce from Tom & Candi Hals

To the Cemetery Fund in memory of Helen Lindhart from Vonna Humble



Non-Profit Org.
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38460 Lincoln Trail

PO Box 447

North Branch, MN 55056

Return Service Requested

Mailing Label

December, 2023

Partners in Ministry: The People of Trinity

Church Office: 651-674-7047 Church Fax: 651-674-7048

Church Office Hours: 8:00 am-3:00 pm Monday-Thursday

Sunday Worship: 8a & 10 am in person worship
 livestreamed on YouTube.

Available on facebook later. See our website for links.

Church email: office@trinitynorthbranch.org

Church website: www.trinitynorthbranch.org

Pastor Paul Cannon ext. 12

Sue Danielzuk, Church Administrator ext 37

Marie Ray, Director of Youth & Family Ministries ext. 13

Courtney Fairbanks, Sunday School Coordinator ext. 15

Director of Worship and Arts
 open ext. 14

Julie Morgan, Church Office Manager ext. 10

Christopher Dehen, Financial Recorder

Lucas Starr, Audio Visual Manager

Roger Anderson & Jeff Hill, Custodians

Rick Olson & Luke Meyer, Cemetery Staff

Outreach Committee:

Outreach@trinitynorthbranch.org

Todd Fisk, Church Treasurer

Missionaries: Dr. Stephen Swanson family –
 Tanzania

Our Sister Congregation in Tanzania—Pawaga

Church Council Members:

Tom Hals, Council Chair

Linda Born, Jeremy Edson, Rosanne Johnson,
 Barb Nelson, Aaron Nysse, Stan Sjodahl,
 Ann Tanko, Vicky Trampe



**(No morning
 worship on
 Christmas Eve)**

2:30 p.m.

4:00 p.m.

7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 31 one service at 9:00 a.m.