



Trinity Lutheran Church

504 South Westnedge Avenue

Kalamazoo MI 49007

www.tlckzoo.com T: 269-344-6181

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit # 575
Kalamazoo, MI

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Inside this Issue:

Page 2

Calendar

Page 3

Youth Ministry

Page 4

Family Ministry

Page 5 & 6

Worship and Faith

Page 7

Christian Education

Page 8

Service Ministry

Page 9 & 10

Fellowship Events

Page 11

Volunteer Opportunities

Page 12

Pastor's Letter

Trinity Staff

Pastor
Outreach Pastor
Organist/Director of Music
Director of Family Ministry
Directory of Youth Ministry
Office Administrator
Hospitality Host
Bookkeeper
Custodian
Intern

Rev. Ken Johnson
Rev. Jake Lehman
Nathan Mattson
Heidi Albertson
Lindsay Casey
Katie Grubaugh
Margaret Stevenson
Terri Schmidt
Bob Koenes
Vicar Megan Floyd

Church Council

President
Secretary
Treasurer
Financial Secretary
Christian Education
Congregational Life
Facilities
Service Ministry
Stewardship & Finance
Worship & Music

Jim Magerlein
Keith Peterson
Christina Adams
Jerry Molitor
Ashley Wineland & Sally Morris
Connie Ruch & Paula Sportel
Shaun Wright
Rasma McMullen & Sandy Wallace
Gary Kent-Bracken & Steve Morris
Jennifer Gatz

Trinity's Sunday Schedule:

Worship with Holy Communion
at 8:30 and 11am

Choir at 9:25 in choir loft

All Sunday School classes 9:45

Parent Small Group or Infant/Toddler
Small Group 10am

Christmas Eve Services
December 24, 2023

10am, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm

December 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 Worship w/Holy Communion 8:30 & 11am Choir 9:25 Sunday School 9:45 Confirmation 9:45 Parent small group 10	4 Prayer Shawl 10-12	5 Clothes Closet 10-2 Loaves & Fishes 11-1	6 Advent Service 6pm Evening in Advent 6:30 Soupsalad dinner	7 P.E.O. Scripture and Sandwiches 12-12:30	1	2 Family Ministry Afternoon out 12-5 Youth 5-7
10 Worship w/Holy Communion 8:30 & 11am Choir 9:25 Sunday School 9:45 Confirmation 9:45 Adult Bible Study 9:45 Infant/Toddler sm. Group 10 Cong. Budget Meeting 12 Church Council 12:20 VASA! Sons of Norway St. Lucia Program 2-4	11	12 Clothes Closet 10-2 Loaves & Fishes 11-1 C.F.T. 11am	13 Men's Bible Study 7am Rebecca Circle 10am Ladies Lunch 11:30 Advent Service - Celtic Christmas 6pm	14 Scripture and Sandwiches 12-12:30 Meeting of the Women 6-8	15	16 Advent Beer & Hymns 6-7:30
17 Worship w/Holy Communion 8:30 & 11am Lessons and Carols Choir 9:25 Sunday School 9:45 Confirmation 9:45 Adult Bible Study 9:45 Hot dog Lunch 12 Children's Xmas Program 1 Open Doors 5-8	18	19 Clothes Closet 10-2 Loaves & Fishes 11-1 C.F.T. 11am Center for Transform. 4pm	20	21 Scripture and Sandwiches 12-12:30	22	23
24 Christmas Eve Worship w/Holy Communion 10am No Sunday School! Family Xmas Service 5pm Traditional Xmas Service 7pm Traditional Xmas Service 8pm	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27 Advent Service 6pm	28	29	30
31 Worship w/Holy Communion 8:30 & 11am No Sunday School!	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Please remember that articles for the Newsletters are due by the 16th of each month; articles for the Sunday bulletins are due one week in advance, by end of day Sunday.</p> </div>					



Trinity Lutheran Church sends out weekly emails to update our congregation on upcoming events, ongoing projects, volunteer opportunities, changes to our schedule, and links to our online services. Sign up with our QR code for the most up to date information



DECEMBER

YOUTH NEWS

Lock-in

December 2-3 the youth will have the opportunity to participate in the lock in. The youth will be meeting at Noon on December 2nd! Sign up here if you'd like to attend!



Christmas Pageant and Hot Dog Lunch

Please mark your calendars for December 17th 12-2pm. More info to come!

HOW TO GET CONNECTED

Sign up for youth group remind app to receive text messages and notifications about upcoming events. If you are a congregation member please select "parent" if you are a part of the youth program please select student. Everyone is invited to join! Text @tlc2k23 to 81010



Do you have an event or public service idea for the youth?
Message Lindsay Casey on Remind or email Youth@tickzoo.com



FAMILY MINISTRY

All families with children infant through 5th grade are welcome to join us!

Parents' Afternoon Out

Saturday, December 2nd from 12:00pm-5pm

Drop your kids off at church and enjoy an afternoon for Christmas shopping, chores, relaxing, or lunch out with friends. The kids will be busy with crafts, games, and other fun activities. Lunch and snack will be provided. We will take children who are 1 year through 5th grade. Sign up on our Facebook event page or email Heidi at hmfuerst@aol.com.

This is always a super fun event, so don't be left out in the cold!! ☺



Sunday Morning opportunities coming in December:

Our schedule will be a little different this month, due to all the Christmas holiday activities. Hope you can join us for our two sessions in the Family Ministry room on the 3rd floor!

Parent Small Group: All parents are invited to hang out together, discuss the joys & concerns of raising faith-filled children, and how God helps us with the adventure that is parenting.

Dates: Sunday, Dec. 3rd

Time: 10am-10:40am

Infant & Toddler Small Group: All infants and toddlers (along with their parents) are invited to hang out together and enjoy some fun infant/toddler activities, while their parents discuss the craziness of parenting these amazing and unique individuals.

Dates: Sunday, Dec. 10th

Time: 10am-10:40am

Coming in January...

Winter Break Boredom Buster

Wednesday, January 3rd 4pm-8pm

It's the middle of Winter Break and there's no where to go. The kids are bored and you're ready to get out of the house. Well, come on down to Trinity and join us for our Boredom Buster event! We'll have dinner, play games, and watch a movie. It'll be lots of fun and a great break for your Winter Break!!

Sign up on our Facebook event page or email Heidi at hmfuerst@aol.com if you can come. ☺



Our Family Loves Mosaics Together!

Sunday, January 21st 12:30pm-2pm

We will once again use our hands to create a work of love—making mosaics in memory of my father, Gerhard Fuerst. He loved making mosaics and hopefully you will, too! As usual, lunch will be provided in the Fellowship Hall. Sign up on our Facebook event page or email me.

**Head's Up Announcement: KSO Concert in March

Coming in March 2024, the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra is hosting a special musical event, called Magical Melodies. Trinity has a bunch of seats blocked off and we will watch the orchestra perform music from Harry Potter and many other famous classical tunes. The concert is on Tuesday, March 5th at 7pm at Miller Auditorium. Tickets cost \$5 a piece. **Sign up today on our Facebook event page or email me to reserve your tickets!!**

Worship and Faith Formation

Scripture and Sandwiches Join Pr. Jake each Thursday from 12-12:30 for a short bible study and conversation about scripture over lunch! We'll meet via Zoom to look at the history, purpose, and story of the bible so we can better understand God's activity in the world and our lives. Follow the link in our weekly emails or use the meeting ID and passcode below to join in from wherever you are! *(Please note, there will be no class sessions on Dec. 28 or Jan. 4)*

Meeting ID: 821 5743 3849 Passcode: Lunchtime

Men's Bible Study meets throughout the year, every other week on Wednesday mornings at 7am in the church Fellowship Hall! The dates for December are the 13th and 27th. All are welcome to join them for breakfast and bible study.

Advent Wednesday Services, 6 pm— Starting November 29, each Wednesday in Advent Trinity will have in-person Holden Village Evening Prayer services at 6pm. All are encouraged to join us for these services to pause amid the busy season with these special services that will feature guest musicians and a time of prayer and reflection. These services will be live-streamed for those who cannot join us in person; look for the link in our weekly emails or on our website.

Celtic Christmas Service of Hymns - Join us at Trinity on Wednesday evening **December 13th at 6pm** for a Celtic Christmas service of hymns! We're very happy once again to welcome our friends, the local Irish combo "Whiskey Before Breakfast" as they lead us in singing many of our favorite Christmas and Advent hymns and share a few traditional tunes as well! All are invited to gather at O'Duffy's Irish pub after the service for a time of fellowship and Christmas cheer!

Rebecca Circle Looking for a chance to participate monthly in a women's small group meeting for Bible study? Rebecca Circle is active and welcoming more participants; this is an excellent chance to make some new acquaintances while studying God's word. The next Circle meeting will be at Trinity on Wednesday, December 13 at 10am. Please join us!

***Communion Change for the 8:30 Sunday Service** - *Please note that beginning in December, at the 8:30 Service we will be kneeling as you are able at the rail for Holy Communion by Intinction; follow the direction of pastors.*

Attention, Students! We are in need of middle school and high school music students to play in church! It would be absolutely great if our band, orchestra, and choir students would share your talents with your church family. You could play prelude, postlude, or communion music. You don't have to be a professional musician to offer your talents to God and to your church family on a Sunday morning. We need you! Please call, text or email us to discuss (cellphone: 269.447.0258, email: (nathan_mattson@hotmail.com)). We look forward to hearing from you!

No Wednesday Services on Dec. 27 and Jan 3 The Wednesday Evening worship service will be taking a break for the Christmas holiday so there will be no services those Wednesdays. Virtual services will resume in January and be available to view on our YouTube channel.

Advent Devotional are available in the Fellowship Hall. They include family devotions, books of prayers, children's books and ideas, etc. Trinity's Library is also stocked with seasonal books and DVDs for adults and children. Please help yourself!

Lessons and Carols will be on December 17th this year and will again be led by the Choir and WestMichigan Brassworks. Come and enjoy the beautiful music and readings of the Christmas season!

Worship Assistants

Date	Time	Altar Guild	Welcome Team	Lectors	Acolytes
Dec 3	8:30	Joyce Magerlein	Gary & Marie Belleville	Dave Runstrom	Avner & Jaxon Grubaugh
	11:00	Holy Wohlfert	Rasma McMullen, Greta Decker	Laura Woodruff	Kaitlyn Albertson, Jacob Zimmermann
Dec 10	8:30	Karn Erlandson	Dave & Jeannie Grubaugh	Janet Gullickson	Avery & Nolan Fowler
	11:00	Holly Wohlfert	Julie Peterson, Carolyn Kana'an	Heidi Albertson	Kiley & Calico Morris
Dec 17 Lessons & Carols	8:30		Janet & Arlen Gullickson	Suze Breischaff, Teri Koretsky	Avner & Jaxon Grubaugh
	11:00		Bill & Judy Sherrod	Erin Sutherland, Keith Peterson	Frederick Thurn, Evelyn Sutherland
Dec 24	10am	Julie Peterson	Karen Jachym, Liz Morison	Connie Ruch	Kaitlyn & Elyse Albertson
	5pm	Teri Koretsky	Nancy Diment, Melissa Lehman	Sarah Zimmermann	Kaitlyn & Elyse Albertson, Jaxon & Avner Grubaugh
	7pm	Marianne Fuerst	Sheree Sorensen, Rasma McMullen	Tim Eschelbach	Miryam Greenman, Edith Wright, Avery & Nolan Fowler
	9pm	Liz Morison	Greta Decker, Debbie Harding		Kiley & Calico Morris, Ava Schreiner
Dec 31	8:30	Joyce Magerlein	Julie & Keith Peterson	Carol Knoch	Ava Schreiner
	11:00	Liz Morison		Nancy Diment	Kaitlyn & Elyse Albertson

Please keep these people in your prayers:

Sharon Kokales, Cliff Davidson, Sandy Eschelbach, Sylvia Reekers, Beth Latshaw, Vicky Phillips, Ruth Krueger, Jody Wood, Barb Hogg, Dontrea, Ja'Miha and Skye, Dakota Ramirez and Matt Jaeky.

Christian Education

Sunday School Help - Sunday school attendance continues to grow and we are need of more adults to help in classrooms during the education hour. This doesn't require a weekly commitment! We need substitutes as well as regular volunteers. Please contact the Pastors or our Christian Education team - Ashley Wineland and Sally Morris - if you'd like to get involved teaching our faith to Trinity's youngest members.



Children's Christmas Program, December 17

Mark your calendar for the Sunday school Christmas Program on Sunday, December 17. We will share a hot dog luncheon together at noon. A free-will offering will be collected to benefit youth ministry activities. After lunch, the children will present their Christmas Pageant at 1pm in the Sanctuary. Please plan on joining us!

***There will be no Sunday school on Dec. 24th and Dec. 31st.
Enjoy the holidays and see everyone in the New Year!***

Free Online Learning Opportunity through our Synod! Join Rev. Dr. Joy Schroeder for a six-week study of Christian women through the ages starting on January 16, 2024! Rev. Schroeder is an ELCA pastor, and a Professor of Church History at Capital University, where she teaches in the Department of Religion and Philosophy and at Trinity Lutheran Seminary. The class, titled, *Six Women from Church History that You Need to Know About* is offered online free of charge through the North/West Lower Synod and will delve into the struggles and accomplishments of six exemplary women from church history. The class will meet on six consecutive Tuesday evenings: January 16 through February 20 from 7:00 – 8:15pm ET via Zoom. This course is open to all adults, both laypeople and rostered ministers, and is free of charge. Sessions will be recorded and available to registered participants. Registration is required at the link below and will close on January 5 2024. Additional information, including Zoom links, will be sent via email closer to the start of the course. If you have additional questions, please contact the synod office at communications@mittensynod.org. Register here today! <https://tinyurl.com/2587p3tb>

Service Ministry

News from the SCRIP (gift card) Table The season of gift-giving is upon us, and we want to remind you that many gift cards are available at our SCRIP table. If you don't see what you are looking for, the retailer list is quite long and you can order from it. Using cards already available at Trinity makes giving a gift for the Angel Tree* simple, too. Another possibility is opening a personal online Raise Right account and receiving electronic or plastic cards at your home address for a slight shipping fee. When you purchase these cards you get what you pay for and the Service Ministry can use the profits to support Ministry with Community Bingo, Trinity's Good Samaritan Fund, foster kids and others. Thank you! *Simply choose a tag (or tags) from the Angel Tree, purchase a card (or cards) from the SCRIP table, and leave them in the Angel Tree box.

Bingo at Ministry with Community is looking for prizes to give to our community members. In particular, winter hats, gloves and gear is always needed. If you can donate, please drop your items off at the church office or call Bess Fitzgerald with any questions.

The Salvation Army Angel Tree will be set up in Fellowship Hall to collect toys through **December 5!** The tree has tags with age and sex of a child, with some suggestions for a gift, but you do not have to buy what is listed. We do suggest that for teenagers a gift card to a teenage-friendly store or activity is appropriate. There will be a small box on the SCRIP table for the cards. After selecting a tag from the tree, purchase an appropriate gift, and deliver the UNWRAPPED gift to the box by the tree with the tag attached. The Salvation Army has a "toy store" where parents come and choose an appropriate gift for their child. Any questions, call Rasma McMullen: 349-9429

Express Lane for the Salvation Army Angel Tree

For those who might prefer to give a gift without going shopping, here is an option:

- 1. Choose a card from the Angel Tree*
- 2. Bring it to the SCRIP gift card table in Fellowship Hall*
- 3. Choose the retailer and amount you wish*
- 4. Put both cards in the Angel Tree gift box on the SCRIP Table*

Thanks for supporting this annual event which brings joy to so many!

Personal Care Item Donations Needed As part of our care for our neighbors in need, the Christ Clothes closet is expanding its offerings to include personal care items. Items needed are dish soap, bar soap, body wash, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, laundry detergent (both single and multi load containers), feminine care products, deodorant and other like items. Please consider adding these items to your shopping list as a way to share the love of Christ with our neighbors. Donations can be brought to the church weekdays during office hours or Sunday mornings.



Good Samaritan Fund Need Trinity's Good Samaritan fund is the fund that enables us to meet the needs of those in our community during some of their most difficult moments. This fund is generated entirely through the generosity of our congregation. These funds go toward electric bills, rent, and other essentials when our neighbors are facing utility shut-offs, eviction notices, or seeking to get into housing. Due to a sustained time of high demand this fund balance is running low. If you find yourself in a position to be able to give, any gift is greatly appreciated. Simply designate the gift to the "Good Samaritan Fund" on the memo line of your check or give online under the "giving" tab on our website www.tlckzoo.com.

New Greeting Cards - Don't throw away those "free" greeting cards and envelopes you get in the mail and also calendars this time of year. There is a need among seniors who could not otherwise afford them. Please leave them in the middle drawer outside Fellowship Hall or drop them off at the office for Linda Ward. Also, some of the charities send items which might be used for Bingo prizes at Ministry with Community. Thank you for taking the extra time to help others!

El Sol Elementary Outreach: El Sol Elementary School is just a few blocks away from Trinity and as their partners in serving the neighborhood, we want to show our support for their teachers, students and families! We will be collecting all the items listed below at Trinity; please drop off during the week (M-Th, 9-2) or on a Sunday! Thanks for your help in building a stronger connection with our neighborhood school!

Kids Clothes Needed - It's time to clean out your kids' closets! El Sol Elementary has asked for help with supplying some of their students with winter clothes and gear. They plan to utilize Trinity's Christ Clothes Closet, but to be the most helpful, we need to make sure we have a good supply of clothes. Will you consider helping us spread the word and donating your kids' clothes here?

School Supplies - Backpacks, crayons, standard washable school markers (Crayola) and plastic two pocket folders. These donations will be collected at Trinity.

Teachers Breakroom - non-perishable items like chips, candy, granola bars, microwave popcorn, drinks, ground coffee, and K-cups.

Fellowship and Events

Advent Beer and Hymns! After a break of over three years, Beer and Hymns is back! On **Saturday December 9th from 6-7:30**, we'll celebrate the season at O'Duffy's Pub (804 W. Vine St.) with a time of singing, fellowship, and more singing all in the cozy atmosphere of this wonderful Irish pub! Invite your friends and be sure to join us for this wonderful evening!

An Evening in Advent & St. Nicolas Day, December 6 – All congregants are encouraged to join us on December 6, immediately after the Advent service at 6pm as Trinity hosts an evening meal and short program to help celebrate the season of Advent (with a visit from St. Nicolas!). This will be a soup, salad and dessert dinner, with a seasonal program of music, carols and readings. All congregants are encouraged to come! Sign ups for food contributions will be in the Fellowship Hall or contact the church office (office@tlckzoo.com) if you wish to help in any way.

Ladies Christmas Luncheon - December 13 at 11:30 at The Park Club, 219 W South Street. Cost will be \$25 per person which includes tax and tip. The menu will be soup, salad, beverage and dessert. Please make payment to Joanne Musselman. This is a fine way to meet old friends and make new and celebrate this beautiful season of the year together. Any questions, call Joanne at 344-1433. Hope to see you there.

Meeting of the Women – All women of all ages are invited to join us for a relaxed time of fellowship and friendship. On **December 14 from 6-8** we'll gather at O'Duffy's Pub (804 Vine Street, Kalamazoo). Come as you're able and stay as long as you like!

Holy Land Pilgrimage - interest survey on hold Due to the heightened conflict in Israel/Palestine our consideration of a pilgrimage to the holy land is on hold at this time. Please pray for all of those who are affected by this conflict as well as those who are in positions to bring it to a swift and peaceful conclusion.

Hot Dog Lunch and Children's Christmas Pageant –

Mark your calendar for the Sunday school Christmas Program on **Sunday, December 17**. Our youth group will host a hot dog luncheon at noon. A free-will offering will be collected to benefit the youth ministry activities. After lunch, the children will present their Christmas Pageant at 1pm in the Sanctuary. Please plan on joining us!

St. Lucia Program - There will be a St Lucia program held at 2pm on December 10th at Trinity. It is a joint program sponsored by Vasa and Sons of Norway. Refreshments in the fellowship hall will follow the program. All are welcome to come, and if children would like to participate, there will be a few extra costumes available!

Dungeons & Dragons Group – Trinity has a group of adventurers (highschoolers & adults) that meet at church for ongoing campaigns. If you are interested in joining the group, reach out to the church office for more information. (And if you have a middle-schooler that is interested in learning the game or wants to join a campaign, please let the church office know; if enough interest is shown we can start a middle school group as well)

Chili Cookoff and Homebrew Competition! Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 20 and make plans to join us at Trinity for the "Stews and Brews" chili cookoff and homebrew competition! Bring your favorite chili, homemade cornbread, brew a batch of beer or just come out and enjoy some warmth on a cold winters day! Be on the lookout for more info to come or contact Harry Jachym (hjachym@gmail.com) with any questions!

Volunteer Opportunities

Bicycle Project for El Sol & Trinity - Do you have old bicycles at home that you no longer use or bikes that need repair? Would you consider donating them for a project we're working on for both Trinity and El Sol Elementary? The final goal is to repair and donate bikes for kids at El Sol. We have a few bikes already, and we're looking for more... broken bikes are welcome... because we're going to learn how to fix them!

Fix-a-palooza Workshop! Saturday, January 27, 2024, from 11 AM – 3 PM! Open Roads is going to teach volunteers from Trinity how to repair the donated bicycles. Open to adults and teens who are interested in learning bicycle repair and maintenance and helping get the bikes in shape for El Sol. Contact Vicar Megan if you want to learn more. If we have more people interested than spots available, we'll schedule another Fix-a-palooza Workshop... so also let Vicar Megan know if you are interested but unavailable on Jan 27.

Green Team at Trinity! Are you a person who cares about stewardship of our resources and how we care for creation or are interested in learning more about this? If so, you are invited to be a part of forming a "Green Team" here at Trinity! Throughout scripture, care for creation is a central theme that we encounter over and over again so Pr. Jake is working to gather interested people together to discuss how we might be able to better steward our resources in our congregation and community! The group will plan to meet in January at a time yet to be determined. If you think you might like to be a part of this, please email Pr. Jake at prjake@tlckzoo.com

Fellowship Time and Altar Flowers! Please consider signing in the Fellowship Hall and help share God's love for our community! Individuals, families, and groups are encouraged to host fellowship time for the coming months. This is a great way to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, or other special events. If you enjoy baking, we're always happy for help to stock our freezer for Sundays that might not have a host. But remember, it need not be fancy; store-bought cookies, snacks and other treats are great too!

Thrivent Members! If you have access to a Thrivent Action Grant, please consider applying to use one for Trinity! We are looking for grants to help with several fellowship and outreach opportunities. Let the church office know if you are willing to help.



Holiday Services at Trinity

Sunday Services

December 3 - First Sunday of Advent - 8:30 & 11am

December 10 - Second Sunday of Advent - 8:30 & 11am

December 17 - Third Sunday of Advent
Lessons and Carols 8:30 & 11am
with West Michigan Brassworks and Choir
Lunch at 12pm - all are welcome!
Children's Christmas Program at 1pm

December 24 - Christmas Eve - 10am,
5pm, 7pm & 9pm

December 31 - 8:30 & 11am

Advent Season Wednesday services:

December 6 - 6pm Holden Village
with music provided by
Negar Afazel and Jon Barnes

Dec. 6 An Evening in Advent - 6:30pm
Dinner, program & visit from St.
Nicholas

December 13 - 6pm
Celtic Christmas with music
provided by

"Whiskey Before Breakfast"

December 20 - 6pm Holden Village
Service of Healing with music
provided by Jenny Parnaby

**As our parking lot fills up with snow and on especially busy holidays, our parking spaces become limited and considerations for the elderly, families with very small children, and visitors need to be made. If you are able, please consider parking across the street in Faith Temple's parking lot!*

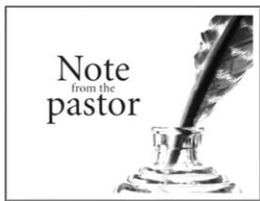
Please note the church building and office will be closed for the holidays December 25 – 30!

Office hours will be limited the week of January 1-6, please call ahead if you need access to the building.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



The staff at Trinity would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas as we enter into this season of Advent! Just as the longest night of the year approaches and we light our four Advent candles, indeed, Christ's light shines in the darkness. May you be touched this season by the sweetness of the Babe of Bethlehem, the profound love of God the Father and the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit.



*"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." " - **Matthew 1:23***

"God is with us". These are some of the most powerful and profound words in the entire canon of scripture. Many religions and faithful people spend a lifetime doing good, or reaching up, and many practices are formed that seek to elevate the individual or the state of the human condition. But in these four words, we hear the profound truth and the promise that we celebrate each year during this season and every Sunday as we gather. "God is with us". We acknowledge in these words that God is not "up there" in some hard-to-reach place, but we proclaim and believe that God has come down, and "God is with us".

As we move into this season of Advent and Christmas, there are ample opportunities to celebrate and experience this truth. You likely have personal and family traditions and gatherings to attend that will enable you to be in the presence of those you love, and at Trinity, the season is packed with opportunities to worship and celebrate together as a community. In all these instances we experience and recognize "God with us" in one another and in the hope and joy of the season. In some cases, of course, this season brings grief at what has been lost or at what has never been. In those cases as well, we are comforted and reassured by those words of promise, knowing that "God is with us" even then, or perhaps especially then.

As you move through this time of year and all that it brings, it is my hope and prayer that you are able to pause in body or in spirit to recognize God in our midst. For we are blessed to serve a God that does not force us to come to him, but rather at Christmas and every day, God comes to us. So, remember, regardless of what this season brings. God is with us!

Merry Christmas!

Pr. Jake

ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

There will be a congregational meeting on December 10th immediately after the 11:00am service where we will vote on the Annual Budget for 2024.

All members are encouraged to be a part of the meeting to voice their vote.

Please make every effort to be at this meeting!

The 2024 Annual Meeting will take place on February 4, 2024 where we will vote in Church Council representatives for the following positions:

President, Secretary, Christian Education, Congregational Life, Facilities, Service Ministry, Stewardship & Finance, Worship & Music, and a Youth Representative. Please prayerfully consider if you would be willing to serve on our Church Council for a two year term, or speak with one of our current Council members to see about opportunities to help serve our community!

We will also vote on the updates to our Constitution and Bylaws. A copy of the updated Constitution for all who wish to read through the updates before February can be found in the church office or linked in our weekly emails.