

TRINITY CHURCH TIDINGS

DECEMBER 2024

Trinity Lutheran Church & School
146 Reserve Road, West Seneca, New York 14224
Church: (716) 674-9188, School: (716) 674-5353



Rev. Nycholas Greig, Pastor, 674-9188 / C: (716) 336-1767
Mrs. Sarah Gabel / Mrs. Katie Willert, School Co-Principals, 674-5353

Church Website: trinitywestseneca.com
Church Office E-mail: trinitylutheranchurch146@verizon.net

WORSHIP TIMES

Saturday @ 5:00 pm

Sunday @ 10:30 am



Dear Trinity Family,

This Advent and Christmas season we are once more reminded that Jesus came to us in the flesh. This year we are exploring how Jesus revealed his divine nature to us through the description of physical substances we experience on earth. He wanted to make this vast concept more concrete so we could begin to comprehend it. The theme tying this entire season together is found in John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Jesus taught this truth by using tangible substances which we will discuss each week:

- Week 1: Bread of Life – Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, to nourish and strengthen us in our faith and feed us with his Word of truth to fill our lives. *Theme verse: "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." John 6:35*
- Week 2: Salt of the Earth – Jesus calls us to flavor the earth and to savor the good things that come from him through his birth. *Theme verse: "You are the salt of the earth." Matthew 5:13*
- Week 3: Rock of Ages – Jesus is our rock, a solid foundation on which to build a life of joy. *Theme verse: "Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug." Isaiah 51:1*
- Week 4: Light of the World – Jesus brightens our lives through his birth, dispelling the darkness of sin to bring forgiveness to light. *Theme verse: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12*
- Christmas Eve: Born in a Manger – We celebrate and ponder the humble birth of Jesus as he rests in a manger bed of straw, though he is the Son of God. *Theme verse: "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger." Luke 2:7*
- Christmas Day: Crowned with Glory – We rejoice that the little Lord Jesus asleep in our hay is our King of Kings forevermore. *Theme Verse: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." Philippians 2:10*

Join us this advent and Christmas season to discover or discover anew the fullness of God dwelling among us as the Word Made Flesh.

God's Blessings,
Pastor Nyck Greig

Holiday Worship Schedule

<i>December 22nd @ 10:30am:</i>	<i>Sunday School Christmas Pageant & Service</i>
<i>December 24th @ 5:00pm:</i>	<i>Family Christmas Eve Service (Communion)</i>
<i>December 24th @ 9:00pm:</i>	<i>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (Communion)</i>
<i>December 25th @ 10:00am:</i>	<i>Christmas Day Service (Communion)</i>
<i>December 31st @ 7:00pm:</i>	<i>New Years Eve Service (Communion)</i>



Cookie Walk December 21 & 22



Calling all bakers and cookie tasters ... it's time for a cookie walk! We would love your help by baking a plate /container of cookies. You can bring them in with you to church or drop them off earlier in the week (Monday-Thursday 8am-3pm). Please use disposable containers. We will have 2 walks, one Saturday evening and one Sunday morning, both following the worship service. Come and fill a tray and sample the goodness from all of our talented bakers. This fundraiser will support upcoming youth group events. Thank you!



Parents Night Out Saturday, December 14, 2024 5:00pm - 9:30pm

On Saturday, December 14th Trinity's Youth Group will host a babysitting fundraiser to help finance upcoming events. Potty-trained children ages 3 and up may register for a fun-filled evening at the school which will include games, dinner (hot dogs and mac & cheese), crafts, and a movie. Enjoy this opportunity for peaceful shopping or a special date night! Cost is \$25 per child. Scan the below code or email our Youth Director, Nathan Thomack, at youthministry@trinitywny.org by December 11th to register.



Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 15 at 1:30pm

All youth and adults are invited to join us on Dec. 15 to go caroling. We will meet at the church at 1:30pm to begin our journey. Please sign up in the narthex or youth can let Nathan Thomack know so we can arrange to have enough drivers. Whole families are a bonus! What a wonderful chance to brighten someone's Christmas by singing about Jesus' coming!



We will once again be sponsoring an Angel Tree for the young men and women at the Renaissance House Campus. Please watch for the Angel Tree to be put up in the church entry. Pick an angel tag and purchase the item listed. The due date for all gifts will be **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH**. Please place the item in a gift bag only (not wrapped) with the angel tag attached. Thank you!



Sunday School Pageant

Our Sunday School children will be leading worship with their annual Christmas pageant on **December 22nd at the 10:30am service**. Please join us!

Urgent Immediate Need: **Head of Property and Grounds**

After several years of service, Linda Meissner is stepping down as Head of Property and Grounds. We thank her for her service! We need someone to take over this important ministry position. Please contact Brian Makey at (716) 923-3880 if you have any questions and are able and willing to take this position.

Trinity School News

Happy (almost) Advent!

We are starting to plan for Advent over at the school. Please consider joining us as we celebrate the coming of our Savior!

- Grades K-8 Christmas Celebration Concert - December 18th at 7:00pm in the church
- Christmas Chapel, with PreK singing - December 18th at 9:20am in the church

Giving Tuesday

December 3rd, the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, is known as "Giving Tuesday" - a chance for all of us to be generous and share the treasures that God has given us. Please consider donating to Trinity Christian School. You can go to our Facebook page on 12/3 for a digital link, or mail your gift directly. Thank you for your support!

Thankful for YOU!

This is the time of year where we take time to reflect and be thankful. I feel it is so important to let you know that all of us at Trinity Christian School are thankful for the support we get from the members of Trinity Lutheran Church! We could not do what we do at the school without the actions of the church members. So many of you volunteer in the school! You help serve hot lunch, listen to students read, copy papers, paint classrooms, mow the grass, kill bees, aid in preschool, coach sports and so much more. You are truly the hands and feet of Christ as you help us bring Jesus to the students and families at Trinity Christian School. We are also thankful for your prayers and financial support. It says in Ephesians 6:18, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." Your prayers are powerful, so please keep remembering us in your prayers. Together, Trinity Church and School are being used as God's tools to bring His word to West Seneca and beyond. We are thankful today and every day for this amazing partnership.



Christmas Gift Cards

Do you give gift cards as Christmas presents? Here's an easy way to get them and help the school raise money at the same time! The school is fundraising with RaiseRight: just scan the QR code to download the app. Then you can buy gift cards (or e-gift cards) right from your phone. You get the full value, and the brand donates to our school. Win win! Orders for physical gift cards will be placed on the 10th of each month. Paper order forms are also available on the table in the narthex.



Recycle Greeting Cards

Please save and donate your cards. Cut off just the front cover (no personal notes on the backside). Hallmark, Disney, and American Greetings cards **cannot** be recycled. Place in cards Linda Rowsell's message center box in the coat room. Religious Christmas cards are used to make booklets for shut-ins. All others are sent to St. Jude Ranch for Children. Thank you!



Installation & Pot Luck December 15, 2024

Nathan Thomack's installation as Trinity's Youth & Family Director will be held during the 10:30am service on Sunday, December 15. There will be a potluck to follow. Please come celebrate with us and bring a dish to share! This is a great opportunity to introduce (or re-introduce) yourself to him and meet his wife Kimberly. We are excited to have them here and hope to see you there!

Altar Guild Meeting Monday, December 2 at 6:00pm

There will be a meeting for all Altar Guild members on December 2 at 6:00pm in the church narthex. Refreshments will be served.

New members are always welcome!!! Are you interested in joining the Altar Guild or would like to know more information about what we do? If so, please plan to attend this meeting or you can contact Ruth Zawadzki or Gerry Swart.



Hope Willert Fundraising Pancake Breakfast

There will be a pancake breakfast for a free will donation in the school gym on **December 8 from 8:30am-12:30pm** to help Hope Willert raise funds for her missionary work in Zambia. Please save the date and plan on attending!



2025 Altar Flowers & Candles

The 2025 sign-up charts are on the bulletin board in the church coatroom. Sign up for your special occasion today!

Flowers: \$10 per vase and you get to take them home after the Sunday service! We are asking that 2 families sign up for each week. Payments should be placed in the **Church Office's message center** - make checks payable to "**Trinity Lutheran Church**" (*memo: Altar Flowers*).

Altar Candles: \$25 per month (per family). Two families should sign-up each month to cover the total cost. Checks should be made payable to: "**Trinity Lutheran Church**" and placed in the Church Office message center.

**Please make sure to include your name and special intentions on the sign-up sheets.*

My Stewardship Through the Years

TIME - Raising children and still giving time to the Lord can be a tough balance. What worked for me was getting involved with ministries that included my children, Sunday School, Youth Groups and the Board of Education. God blessed me with great young people to spend time with, including my children, that have become awesome, active mature Christians. We share great memories of laughter, tears, youth events, church services, service projects and prayers. I'm very thankful that God has also given me the time, talent and health to serve on missions work through Eight Days of Hope and the Christian Appalachian Project.

TALENT - I can't sing, play musical instruments or draw anything more complex than stick people. I inherited a sense of humor from my parents and use that in the preparation of children's talks with a message for kids, and their parents. My job duties included budgeting and forecasting. This learned talent prepared me for helping with the Finance Committee. I don't particularly like heights. Repairing the water damage in the front of the church, on the scaffolding, gave me an opportunity to pray continuously for a couple of days. I think that was more perseverance, with God's help, than talent. Now that I am officially old, and retired, I have more time to address property and grounds especially at the school. I've learned to use YouTube to learn new skills and have a lot of willing people to help.

TREASURE - For me this was just a natural result that came through the use of my time and talents. I became involved, saw the need for funding, and cheerfully supported God's work.

God blessed me with a much more talented, faith filled spouse that shared in all my stewardship. He also blessed me with love and fellowship with my immediate family and the Trinity Church and School family. God rewarded my giving of time, talent, and treasure with joy and contentment. He made it clear when I was on the right track (or the wrong track).

I pray that God continues to bless my efforts as I continue to do His will.

God's blessings,

Dave Sirgey

YOUTH SCOOP

Youth Night Fun

Two Youth Nights were held in November. On 11/6 we played Stephanie's favorite card and dice game called "Snoop". It's a fast paced game and everyone won a prize! On 11/20 we played Dare Base. Fun was had by all!



December Youth Events

- **Youth Night:** Wednesday, 12/4 from 6:30pm-8:00pm
- **White Elephant Christmas Party:** Wednesday, 12/11 from 6:00pm-8:00pm
All 5th-12th graders invited! Bring a "white elephant" gift (\$12 limit) and a snack to share.
- **Parent's Night Out Babysitting Fundraiser:** Saturday, 12/14 from 5:00pm-9:30pm
- **Cookie Walk Fundraiser:** Saturday, 12/21 after the 5:00pm worship service and Sunday, 12/22 after the 10:30am worship service

2025 Youth Nights

Starting in January, Junior and Senior High will have their own Youth Nights!

- 1/8: Junior High Youth Night 6:30pm-8pm
- 1/15: Senior High Youth Night 6:30pm-8pm
- 1/22: Junior High Youth Night 6:30pm-8pm
- 1/29: Senior High Youth Night 6:30pm-8pm

Fundraiser News

The Youth Group sold hot cocoa at the Trunk or Treat event held at Trinity on October 30. \$132.85 was raised for upcoming youth events!!! Thank you to everyone for your support!

Youth Contact Info

We are looking into updating the contact information for our Youth Group members. Please scan the below code and fill out the form with the most current information to help us with this. If there are any questions, feel free to email Nathan Thomack at youthministry@trinitywny.org. Thank you!



“How Do I Pray With Someone?”

By Mark Willert

In one of my last articles, I mentioned offering to praying for someone is a great way to connect with them. It builds relationship and trust, and obviously takes that person directly to God who can help them in their situation. This could lead to opportunity for more God conversations or inviting them to church.

I remember it really used to make me nervous praying out loud, with another person or in a group. I never knew what to say or how to structure my thoughts. Over time, and the more you do something, the more comfortable you become because you settle into it and have naturally figured out a way that works for you.

So here's what works for me ... First I start with addressing God. Then I move into a line or two of thanks - and I think God appreciates that too as we're not just going right into the request or what we're asking for. Then, I ask God specifically to help with what ever the issue is that I or my friend needs help with. Then a line or two of more thanks or focus on who God is or his attributes.

Here's what it could sound like: "You mind if I pray for you? (Friend says "sure")...

Gracious father, thank you for the friendship that I have with Sergey. I always appreciate how you give us time together to talk and interact. And Lord, as you've heard in our conversation, he needs Your help. As his surgery is coming up in a few days, I ask that You would give him a sense of peace and calmness. Help him to know that however this goes You are still in control. And You want what is best for him in the long run. Please guide the doctors through the operation, and bring Sergey back to good health. You are an awesome God. And we know that You can do all things. In Your name, Amen."

It's so very worth it. Yes, practice and the more you do it makes it more comfortable and natural feeling. Here's a few pointers ... Ask your friend if you can pray for them. Take a breath and a brief pause before beginning. Sometimes you just have to stumble through it and that's ok. God will really honor your effort and it also shows the person your praying for, your sincerity and concern. At rare times, and depending on what the subject is, I've gotten emotional and that's ok too. Feel free to take brief moments to wipe the tears, take a breath or two and gain composure. Imagine you're God's child, going to the Father who deeply cares and wants to help. And this is absolutely true.

These are some of the things we talk about in our "Reaching Out" small group that gets together every other week. The simple goal of this group is to encourage each other and to learn ways to become more comfortable having God conversations with people and inviting them to church. We're a no pressure group. There's currently 6 of us and you can join any time so see or contact me, Mark Willert, if you're interested (716) 601-8570.

68th Annual

Christmas Candlelight Vespers

Sunday, December 15, 2024

4:30pm Carol Sing / 5:00pm Vespers

First Trinity Lutheran Church

(1570 Niagara Falls Blvd.)



All are invited! This year's service theme is "Go Tell it on the Mountain", inspired by the beloved carol of the same name, along with Luther's sermon for Christmas Day and Matthew 28:19-20 (the Great Commission). Contact David Werth at dwerth@FirstTrinity.com / (716) 276-8263 with any questions.

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone who donated gift filled shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. We were able to collect 60 boxes this year, Please continue to pray for the children who will receive these boxes.

Memorial Plaques

You can remember deceased loved ones who were members of Trinity in a special way by purchasing a small engraved tab plaque to go on our Memorial Plaque located in the church's fellowship area. They're only \$25! Order forms can be obtained from the church office. **Order deadline for this quarter will be January 5th.**



Do you have someone that you would like to add onto Trinity's prayer chain? If so, please contact Judy Schmidt at judyschmidt349@roadrunner.com / (716) 926-9054 with your request.

Naples Daily News
NEOPOLITAN

FAITH & VALUES

Earth Angels

Stephen Ministers Offer Emotional and Spiritual Support in Times of Trouble

by Beth Francis
emfrancis@naplesnews.com

Mary Larrabee's life was a mess. Her marriage had just ended in divorce, she underwent two major surgeries, and then her grown son was murdered.

"As a friend of mine put it, the manure truck just kept backing up and dumping on me," Larrabee said.

Then she heard about Stephen Ministry at her church.

The ministry matches specially trained members of a congregation with people going through a tough time. Nationwide, more than 10,000 churches representing more than 150 different Christian denominations offer Stephen Ministry.

"It enriches the church to have this consistent outreach available to anyone in the community who needs help."

Larrabee was matched with Stephen Minister Kathy Ames, a fellow member of North Naples United Methodist Church, and the two met once a week for more than a year.



"I'm stronger and I know how precious every day is," says Mary Larrabee, right, who was helped with a life crisis by her Stephen Minister Kathy Ames. "She would hold my hand and let me spill out my heart. I call her my earth angel."

"She would hold my hand and let me spill out my heart," Larrabee said of Ames. "I call her my earth angel. She really helped me through a hard time in my life. She didn't give me specific advice as much as she just listened to me and validated my pain."

Now that the formal Stephen Ministry relationship has ended, the two remain friends.

"I will always be grateful to her for all of her prayers and all that she did to help me," Larrabee said.

Stephen Ministry began in St. Louis in 1975 when the Rev. Kenneth Haugk, a pastor and clinical psychologist, found he was unable to meet the needs of all the people in his congregation. He trained nine laypeople in his church to assist him in providing Christian care to people who needed encouragement.

It went so well that Haugk began training Stephen Ministers in other congregations. That, in turn, led to the establishment of the Stephen Se-

ries Leader's Training Course, which trains pastors and lay leaders to go back to their congregations and train others to become Stephen Ministers.

"We train the trainers," said Joel Bretscher, Director of Communications at the Stephen Ministries headquarters in St. Louis. "We train the Stephen Leaders who then go home to train the Stephen Ministers in the congregation." Stephen Ministers then provide one-to-one emotional and spiritual care to people in need.

The name Stephen comes from St. Stephen, who was the first layperson commissioned by the Apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need, Bretscher said.

"Ordained pastors often find there are more needs for care than they can provide, so Stephen Ministers are there to supplement, but not replace, pastoral care," Bretscher said.

In Stephen Ministry, women are matched with women and men are

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Earth Angels—Stephen Ministers Offer Emotional and Spiritual Support in Times of Trouble

matched with men. It is also important to note that Stephen Ministers are available to care for anyone in the community who is hurting, not just church members, said Becky Jarrell, Director of Congregational Care at North Naples United Methodist Church.

“We are here for anyone experiencing a life crisis, whether it’s death, divorce, illness, relocation, financial difficulty or whatever the need,” Jarrell said. “It enriches the church to have this consistent outreach available to anyone in the community who needs help.”

“It’s a wonderful thing to see God working in people’s lives.”

Over the past eight years, North Naples United Methodist Church has trained more than 60 people to become Stephen Ministers, she said.

At Community Congregational

Church in Naples, there are more than 20 active Stephen Ministers, said Gini Reinhold, Director of Congregational Care.

“The Stephen Minister is there to walk with you throughout your crisis and to help you see that, with God’s love, you will be okay,” Reinhold said.

Stephen Ministers go through 50 hours of training and commit to serving for two years. Most choose to serve much longer after they find they get as much out of the ministry as they give, Reinhold said.

“It’s a wonderful thing to see God working in people’s lives,” she said. “There’s something special about knowing that God has put you in a certain place at a certain time to help a certain person. Stephen Ministers grow a lot as a result.”

Patty Lengemann knows what it’s like to be on both sides of the fence. She had her own Stephen Minister about five years ago when she went through a divorce.

“I know how wonderful it is to give and receive,” Lengemann said.

“My Stephen Minister gave me the courage to start over again. Now I want to give something back.”

“The Stephen Minister is there to walk with you through your crisis and to help you see that, with God’s love, you will be okay.”

Lengemann, a member at Community Congregational, has had two care receivers since she became a Stephen Minister.

“So far, I’ve been matched with people going through the same kind of pain I experienced, so I’m able to identify with what they’re going through,” she said. “I’m able to share my experience with them and help them to see that, when God closes one door, he opens another.”

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Trinity Lutheran Church Memories



Back in the 1980's and 90's, Trinity had a choir numbering up to 30 singers. At Christmastime, there were cantata performances and special late evening services with both bell and vocal choirs.

In the 1950-60's, boxes of candy were gifted to the Sunday School children after the Christmas pageant.



The Ladies Bible Study will meet on **Monday, December 9 at 7:00pm** for a Christmas movie and project. We will also be caroling on:

- **Monday, Dec. 9 at 3:15pm** at Elderwood on Orchard Park Road; meet in the parking lot at 3pm.
- **Sunday, Dec. 15 at 2pm** at Elderwood in Lancaster; meet in the parking lot at 1:45pm.

All are welcome to join us!!!

Happy Birthday

12/1	Logan Cosandier	12/11	Peter Schueler	12/21	Sandra Gertis
12/2	Michele Baun	12/12	Bradley Ringle	12/22	Kevin Kot Lisa Cislo
12/3	Helen Boldt Luci Zarbo	12/13	Nancy Stevens	12/23	Noel Anderson Chris Kotowski
12/5	Jonah LoVullo	12/14	Anna Eising	12/28	Judith Boersch Carolyn Lehsten
12/6	Delaney Colson	12/16	Vince Zarbo Gianna Conti	12/29	Nick Gatto
12/7	Joan Sullivan Justin Smith Emma Hope	12/17	Noell McKernan Katelyn Barnas	12/30	Eve LoVullo Cecilia Colson
12/8	Steve Makosy	12/18	Branson Gabel Gavin Courteau	12/31	Donna Yox
12/9	Matthew Wrobel	12/19	Jerry Meissner Evan McCoy		
12/10	Aliza Haas Hannah Haas	12/20	Karen McCoy		

Happy Anniversary

12/23 Dan & Joan Sullivan

12/27 Brian & Ellen Makey

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

- Rev. David Belasic, 92 W. Cavalier Dr., Cheektowaga, NY 14227
- Helen Boldt, Elderwood - Rm 233, 1313 Como Park Blvd., Lancaster, NY 14086
- David Brown, Mary Agnes Manor - Rm 514, 307 Porter Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201
- Marjorie Doan, Elderwood - Rm 326, 5775 Maelou Dr., Hamburg, NY 14075
- Charlie Gass, 5115 Parker Road, Hamburg, NY 14075
- Mary Havens, 26 Eaglebrook, West Seneca, NY 14224
- Judy Jaeckle, Elderwood - Rm 110, 1818 Como Park Blvd., Lancaster, NY 14086
- Mary Ann & Bob Moeller, 27 Greenmeadow Dr., West Seneca, NY 14224
- Judy Schmidt, 4647 Southwestern Blvd. - Apt. 132, Hamburg, NY 14075
- Dick Schultz, Greenfield Court - Apt. 147, 5951 Broadway, Lancaster, NY 14086
- Fred & Thea Schultz, 120 Shawnee Place, West Seneca, NY 14224



Ministers: The People of Trinity Church & School

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
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School Co-Principals	Sarah Gabel / Katie Willert	674-5353 / principal@trinitywny.org
Youth Director	Nathan Thomack	(715) 938-6225 / youthministry@trinitywny.org
Church Office Administrator	Teresa Lynch	674-9188 / trinitylutheranchurch146@verizon.net
School Office Administrator	Judeen Babcock	674-5353 / jbabcock@trinitywny.org