

trinitynews

December 2020

volume 26 ■ issue 12

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

203 East Main Street • PO Box 188
Spring Grove, MN 55974
507.498.5291 • www.trinitysg.org



Trinity Lutheran Church Spring Grove



Instagram
[trinitylutheransg](https://www.instagram.com/trinitylutheransg)
[trinityyouth203](https://www.instagram.com/trinityyouth203)



YouTube

Trinity Lutheran: Spring Grove

Office hours:

Mon - Fri: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Sundays at Trinity

9:15 a.m. Worship
10:15 a.m. Fellowship Suspended
8:45 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sunday School
via At Home packets

Listen live Sundays on KVIK 104.7 FM
www.kvikradio.com
and Facebook

Saturday Worship 5:00 p.m.
1st and 3rd Saturdays each month
Suspended

STAFF

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trinitysr@springgrove.coop

Lane Zaffke, Visitation Pastor
lane.zaffke@gmail.com

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Rachel Storlie, Organist/Pianist
Willy Leafblad, Handbell Director
Jean Ellingson, Pianist/Organist
Linda Gjerdrum, Pianist
Mark Udstuen, Praise Band Leader
Rick Sundet, Technology Lead
Scott Solberg, Music Coordinator

LEADING BY EXAMPLE AND WITH LOVE

Worship through January 10

“While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” Luke 2:6-7

The Trinity COVID-19 Response Team* met on Wednesday, November 17, via Zoom and agreed that it was best that worship and most other Trinity activities remain virtual through the second Sunday in January. This shows our love to God, our families, and our community during this time.

What will Christmas be like without the crowded sanctuary, the live Sunday School program, the lights, the hymns, and the candlelight? I believe it will be filled with hope. **Hope** that a vaccine will be available in the new year, and we'll begin to see an end to the pandemic. **Hope** that we can spend “cozy” time with our families at home, watching or listening to Christmas services in our pajamas.

Hope fulfilled in a savior who came to be with us, as one of us.

No, Christmas will not be the traditional Christmas. But Christ came down at Christmas to experience everything we experience. Including loneliness and isolation. Including sorrow and grief. As part of a small family. Christ came down in Christmas in hope and love.

Turn the page to see how we're staying connected during this time. —————>

***Response Team:** Congregation President Saundy Solum, Pr. Elizabeth Hermeier, Pr. Lane Zaffke, CYF Director Bekah Leafblad, Marlene Deschler, Jean Ellingson, Gary Wilhelmson, Mary Zaffke, Rick Sundet, Anne Scheetz, and Rachel Udstuen



ADVENT CALENDARS

Reverse Advent Calendar — Behind each day's door there is a suggestion of a way that you can thoughtfully be celebrating Advent with acts of kindness, hospitality, and generosity. Items gathered can be brought to the church in early January. There are paper calendars near the east church entrance closest to the parking lot or in the office.

Digital Advent Calendar — A link to this calendar can be found on our website. A link was also sent out to all subscribers of our Friday email (didn't receive the link? Let us know and we can email it). Each day a door is available to be clicked upon and opened. There are photos, sometimes a prompt to do something, and sometimes a short video. Another way to celebrate this Advent season.

IN-PERSON WORSHIP AND ACTIVITIES MAY BE ON A PAUSE FOR NOW, BUT THERE ARE STILL MANY WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED TO TRINITY:

DURING DECEMBER:

- Call 498-HOPE or watch Facebook Live at 5 p.m. every day for Advent devotions.
- Interact with Trinity's digital Advent Calendar. A link to the calendar was emailed on December 1 to all those who subscribe to our weekly email, or go to our website and find the link on the home page.
- Pick up a paper Reverse Advent Calendar ...instead of receiving a treat each day before Christmas, you'll be giving something each day instead.
- Purchase gifts through our Thankful Gifts catalog that benefit others globally and locally. See more information on later in this newsletter.
- Look for Advent meditations on Facebook Live at 7:30 p.m. each Wednesday in December. (December 2, 9, 16, 23)
- "Attend" regular worship on Sunday, December 6 and 13, and January 3 and 10, on KVIK 104.7 FM and Facebook Live at 9:15 a.m.
- Come to Drive-Thru Communion on Sunday, December 6 and 20 following worship, around 10:00 a.m.
- Attend the virtual Trinity Christmas Concert on Saturday, December 19, at 7:30 p.m. on KVIK and Facebook Live.
- Watch the virtual Sunday School program, "'B' is for Bethlehem," on Sunday, December 20, at 9:15 a.m. on KVIK and Facebook Live.
- Join us for a drive-thru Nativity experience on Christmas Eve beginning at 4:30 p.m.
- Attend Christmas Day worship at 10:00 a.m. on KVIK and Facebook Live.
- Listen to the Lessons and Carols service at 9:15 a.m. on December 27 on KVIK and Facebook Live.
- Bekah has prepared "take-home" Sunday School materials for families for December. 3:16s and Middle School Game Night are virtual during this time.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES:

- The Wednesday Release Time program is suspended for the time being.
- Session 2 of our Confirmation program will begin via Zoom Wednesday, January 6, at 6:00 p.m.
- We will continue to host small family funerals in the sanctuary, with no visitation or fellowship. It is very important that COVID guidelines regarding masks and distancing be maintained at funerals.
- The AA group will continue to meet on Tuesdays and Saturdays to accommodate this crucial ministry during this time.
- The Cub Scouts will meet Tuesday afternoons when it's too cold to meet outdoors.
- The Response Team will meet again in early January to evaluate current conditions in the surrounding community and make decisions about early 2021 Trinity activities. Check 498-HOPE and the trinitysg.org website for updates.

Thank you for your continued prayers for all those affected by COVID and for your ongoing support of all of Trinity's ministries.

CHRISTMAS EVE LUMINARY CANDLES ...THE LIGHT WILL LEAD YOU TO THE MANAGER

In lieu of poinsettias, this year we're offering the opportunity to sponsor a luminary candle for our drive-thru Christmas Eve Nativity experience. We hope to line both sides of the driveway (from Maple Drive to the parking lot) with luminaries to lead you to the manager.

A luminary candle can be sponsored for a suggested donation of \$10 (or more as you desire). Sponsorship forms are available in the church office, at the end of this newsletter, or on our website. Donations can be designated to the 2020 General Fund or the Houston County Food Shelf. Gifts may be given in memory, honor, or appreciation of someone.

To have your gift listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin, please return the form to the church office by Mon., Dec. 21. Thank you!



"Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones." 1 Thessalonians 3:7-13

Christmas Blessings to You, Beloved Body of Christ,

Paul's first letter to the young church in Thessalonica is likely one of the first letters he wrote during his ministry. The members of this church were anxious about their circumstances – they were under Roman law and feared persecution because of their faith in Christ – but they were unified in their faith. Paul sought to reassure them, to encourage them, and to remind them about how they were called to live in anticipation of Christ's return.

How were they to live? They were to "rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances ... and hold fast to what is good (5:16-18a, 21b)."

Paul's advice is good for us as well.

Certainly, we are anxious and uneasy about the COVID pandemic, economic uncertainty, and political divisions in our country. But as the Body of Christ, we are set apart. We are called to respond in all circumstances with hope and love.

We are called to be unified in our love for one-another, for our neighbor in need, and for God.

I, like Paul, look forward to the time when I can see you again. I know you're out there! I see your "Amens" and "Peace to you" responses on Facebook, and you have been tremendously generous to the church during this time.

The church has endured war and hardship and pandemic before, and the church is still here. The church is still here because we are the church, wherever we are and however we gather.

For more than 2,000 years, Christians around the world have celebrated the birth of Jesus in all kinds of circumstances. This year is different. But it is also the same. Because all we really need at Christmas is a manger and a Christ child. And we always have that.

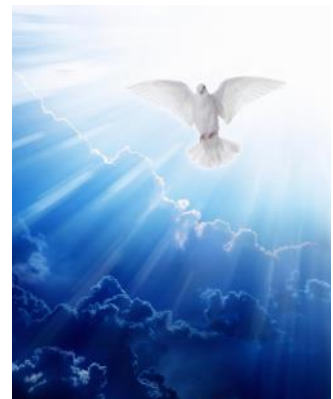
I pray that you may celebrate this blessed season safely. I pray that you know you are loved. I pray for our church. And I pray that you feel the love of Christ in your heart.

The peace of Christ be with you all. ~ Pr. Elizabeth



Mark 1:9-12 ⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." ¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

Throughout this year I have been recounting different Bible stories of God speaking to different Bible characters. I have saved this one for last because it is perhaps the most important. Scholars debate whether the voice that came down from heaven was heard by just Jesus, or Jesus and John, or by all the people that were there. Regardless, for us it is read by us, now 2,000 plus years later. If we believe these words, we conform our lives to their truth. If you don't believe them, that they weren't spoken to us, well, I'm not sure that bodes well for the world.



~ Pr. Lane

YOUR NOMINATING COMMITTEE IS HARD AT WORK

Our Congregation Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, January 31, 2021, after worship. We are working on a plan to meet safely to accomplish all agenda items. The meeting will likely take place in a hybrid fashion, that is some will attend in person and some remotely. Details will be available in early January.

One thing on the agenda is the election of new Congregation Council members, who are team leaders; as well as team members; Synod Assembly attendees; and next year's Nominating Committee. This year's Nominating Committee – Jacque Wennes, Willy Leafblad, Milly Halverson, Jessi Strinmoen, and Lori Wilhelmson – has already identified new Team Leaders and a Council Secretary. Other positions are still available!

Our teams include Care Ministry, Education, Outreach, Mission in the World, Worship, Finance, Stewardship, Communications, Property, and Staffing. Team members typically serve a term of two years and may serve a second term if they desire. Nominating Committee and Synod Assembly members typically serve a single year.

If you feel called to serve Trinity on one of the above teams, or if you'd like more information about any of these teams, please contact a member of this year's Nominating Committee or call the church office. Thank you for your gifts!

TRINITY'S MUSIC EXPLORERS



Martin Luther regarded music as essential to worship. He wrote, "next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." Trinity has embraced those words... we are a 'singing church.' It is our tradition and as people visit our congregation, you hear comments as a variety of music is integrated into our worship service. Visitors turn to others in the pew and say, "you don't know how lucky you are" or "I wish our church sounded just a little like yours."

Trinity has indeed been blessed with individuals with considerable musical gifts and these gifts have enriched our worship services. We miss the full expression of those gifts due to restrictions with COVID and we look forward to the time that restrictions are lifted and we can once again hear musical gifts in person. In this in-between time, we have a great opportunity to explore Trinity's music ministry — its rich past, current offerings and possibilities for the future. To do this a committee will be formed. It will be comprised of six individuals: three from our Leadership Teams and three from members of the congregation. This group will begin their work in January and conclude with a report to the Council in April.

Are you willing to assist with this exploratory review? Would like more information on the process? If so, please contact the church office. Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve.

THANKFUL GIFTS....Give Hope. Create Change. Transform Lives.

Looking for a unique gift that also makes a difference in the life of someone? Check out Trinity's Thankful Gifts catalog and you'll find gifts such as outdoor education in India during COVID-19, vaccinations for a child in India, a week of environmental education for a student in Guatemala, an irrigation system, or feed a refugee family in Syria for a week, and many more options!

Catalogs will be available December 7 in the office, at the east Main Street entrance (nearest to the parking lot), and on our website. With each gift given, you can pick up a greeting card that you can give to the recipient that will tell of the gift you gave in their honor. *Thank you!*

*Make Your List.
Check It Once.*

- Won't collect dust
- No batteries required
- No wrong sizes or colors
- Makes a difference in the world

The Perfect Gift.

LOOKING FOR A SWEET CHRISTMAS GIFT?

Maple syrup harvested from Zaffke's maple woods makes a delicious gift! It's not just for pancakes and waffles... drizzle it on yogurt, stir it into coffee, make ice cream with it, mix it into oatmeal, make salad dressing; the recipes are endless! A pint is \$10. Syrup is available for purchase in the church office. Proceeds go to Trinity Youth.



THANKSGIVING BLESSINGS Trinity's Outreach Team partnered with Good Times Restaurant & Bar, Houston County Public Health & Social Services, and several area churches to provide 283 Thanksgiving meals to Houston County people in need. "In-need" looks a little different this year. Tickets were given out to families with financial challenges, those who are home-bound or isolated, and to families in quarantine or otherwise affected by COVID-19. Church volunteers delivered over 125 meals. The remaining meals were picked up curb-side at Good Times. The Outreach Team extends our gratitude to those that provided generous donations in support of this meal, volunteer delivery drivers, and especially Sarah Glasrud and her team at Good Times.



"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you."

1 Thessalonians 3:12

► Two of the staff at Good Times that helped make this meal possible — Sam Meyer (left) and Jordan Anderson (right).



COZY GIFT OPTIONS These beautiful hand-made quilts were done by some of the ladies that belong to WELCA here at Trinity. They would keep someone nice and cozy warm this winter. Both are available for purchase and payment can be made in the church office.

▼70" x 90," fits a twin-size bed with a 15" drop or a full-size bed with an 8" drop.
\$175. Payable to Trinity WELCA.



▼62" x 89," fits a twin-size bed with an 11" drop. Great for a dorm room!
\$175. Payable to Trinity WELCA.



AT-HOME SUNDAY SCHOOL Sunday School will not meet in person in December. Bekah sent out packets to Sunday School families with activities and stories to prepare for and celebrate Christmas!

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM This year's Christmas Program will look a little different than years past. It will be on Sunday, December 20 at 9:15 a.m. however, it will be pre-recorded. Our Sunday School students are recording different parts of the Christmas story through narration and song and Bekah will put the video together as one complete program. How wonderful to still be able to have a Christmas program that so many can contribute to!

YOUTH "ACTIVITIES" 3:16s youth group continues to meet Wednesday nights at 8:00 p.m. on Zoom. Middle School Game Nights also are continuing to meet every other Friday night at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom; they meet on December 4 and 18. We are very thankful for the ability to continue this fellowship in this electronic way.

SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT Each year Trinity's Scholarship Endowment awards scholarships to Trinity members that are just graduating from high school through their fourth year of college. Students reapply each year. This fund has helped many, many students throughout the years.

An anonymous donor has offered to match all donations 1:1 to the Scholarship Endowment through December 28, 2020! What a generous blessing! Usually the Endowment holds a fall fundraiser, but due to the COVID situation, the fundraiser is postponed until sometime in 2021.

The Endowment is grateful for donations made at this time so that they can continue their mission to help our students. If making a donation, please make checks out to Trinity Scholarship Endowment. Thank you!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING 2019! Your financial support helps us do great things in God's ministry for the church. **Please have any year-end gifts into the office by 4:00 p.m. Monday, December 28, 2020.** Thank you for all your support this year! ~ The Finance Team

LITTLE FREE PANTRY Do you know someone that needs a little help with food or toiletries? Please let them know that Trinity has a Little Free Pantry in the lower level — enter using the east door (on Main Street, closest to the parking lot), head down the stairs and the pantry is directly ahead. Please remember to use hand sanitizer prior to picking up items. A hand sanitizer dispenser is directly inside the door. Take what you need. ❤️ Give when you can.

LOOKING FOR A DELICIOUS HEALTHY MEAL?

CHECK OUT SENIOR DINING! Carry-out meals are available Monday-Friday. Call Annette at the Legion, 498-3385, from 10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. to sign-up for a meal, please give 24 hours notice. A donation between \$3.75-\$7.00 is requested, whatever you can pay. Delicious meals include such things as chili, enchilada casserole, chicken pot pie, vegetable soup, porcupine meatballs, and more sides and dessert. Yum! You can also contact the Rushford SEMCAC office to sign up for meals, (507) 864-2786.



NEED HELP WITH ENERGY BILLS? SEMCAC OFFERS AN ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Eligibility based on household income. Call SEMCAC at (800)944-3281. Applications can also be picked up from Annette at the Legion from 10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. on Tuesdays-Fridays.

NOVEMBER 11, 2020 CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- On November 8, Pr. Elizabeth did a pulpit exchange with Pr. Elliott Malm of Mabel First Lutheran.
- First 5-week session of Confirmation is complete. The next session begins in January; Pr. Elizabeth and Bekah will be working with parents and mentors as to what the best way is to meet.
- The Care Ministry Team is preparing for Christmas Cheer baskets. They have 29 names and will include \$10 gift certificates for each basket along with food items.
- A houseboat youth trip is being planned for July 19-25, 2021.
- Staffing Team completed staff reviews.
- Discussion on the equity ad hoc committee. At this time, no one has volunteered. Suggestion to collaborate with the school as they have already started equity discussions.

Motions passed:

- to establish a temporary Handbell Director position
- to hire Willy Leafblad as a temporary Handbell Director with responsibilities for worship service and mid-week services as scheduled.
- to create a task force to explore the music ministry within Trinity
- to bring the presented budget to the Annual Meeting
- to pull monies from Celebration accounts in Special Accounts for a gift for Bishop Arends, up to \$200. Gift will be Spring Grove items; Bishop Arends was a pastor at Trinity for many years.

Next Meeting: December 9 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. Complete minutes are on Trinity's website.

DOING HOLIDAY SHOPPING? REMEMBER...TRINITY IS PART OF AMAZON SMILE

AmazonSmile is a simple way to support a favorite charity (Trinity!) every time you shop on Amazon, at no cost to you! When you shop at AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices and selection just like on Amazon.com with the added benefit that Amazon donates 0.5% of eligible purchases to the charitable organization of the shopper's choice. There is no cost to the shopper for shopping through AmazonSmile and there is no cost to the charitable organization.

Here's how to shop through AmazonSmile...

- 1) Visit this website and it will automatically put Trinity as the charity that will receive the AmazonSmile donation: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-0724052>. Or you can simply go to: **smile.amazon.com** and search for "Trinity Lutheran Church" as the charitable organization you want to select.....make sure to look for Trinity from Spring Grove, MN.
- 2) Shop as usual! Tens of millions of products are eligible for donations. These products will be marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail page.

Please note.....if you have previously chosen a charitable organization through AmazonSmile, you can easily change it to Trinity....you can take turns selecting your favorite organizations to receive the donation!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF TRINITY AND ITS MINISTRIES

Thank you so much for your continued support of Trinity and our ministries during this time when we can't be together. We have options to receive your offering when we will not be gathering at the Trinity building:

- **ELECTRONICALLY:** via our website, www.trinitysg.org. Click on the "Contribute" link on the ride-side of the page.
- **BY MAIL:** Trinity Lutheran Church, 203 E. Main St., Spring Grove, MN 55974.

Remember — **sponsorships for the radio broadcast** (\$100) or **Missionary for a Day candle** (\$40) are also still available. Do you have a certain date in mind? Give us a call, 498-5291, or send us an email, trinity@springgrove.coop.

Thank You
FOR
GIVING
GENEROUSLY

CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH PETER MAYER

In the first-ever ELCA event of its kind, [ELCA World Hunger](#) presents an online Christmas benefit concert featuring Peter Mayer, a longtime Lutheran and the lead guitarist for singer Jimmy Buffett. The concert will premiere on the [ELCA Facebook page](#) (<https://www.facebook.com/Lutherans>) on December 9 at 7:00 p.m. (central time).

The concert is a gift to you this Advent season, a way for us [the ELCA] to thank you and provide a place for you to gather online with the church community as we prepare for the birth of our Savior. Donations to ELCA World Hunger are encouraged and will support our church's work to respond to hunger and poverty in more than 60 countries. Register now to receive a free Peter Mayer Christmas album download, created just for this event! [Click here](#) for registration or visit: <https://community.elca.org/online-registration/peter-mayer-benefit-concert-2020>

HOW OUR GIFTS TO THE SEMN SYNOD ARE USED Trinity is one of 167 congregations of faith in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. Together we are extending the love of Jesus and proclaiming the good news! The congregations of the synod have responded to the pandemic in faithful, creative ways. Thank you for your courage and willingness to adapt. Thanks also for your continued generosity. That generosity makes ministry possible.

The 2020 mission support has made possible:

- monthly Zoom calls for council leaders and rostered ministers to collaborate and connect with one another
- consistent pastoral care and support for pastors, deacons, and church staffs
- the shepherding of rostered ministers and congregations during the pandemic with special resources, online gatherings and worship services
- opportunities to creatively engage in accompaniment ministry locally, globally and glocally (global + local)
- the productive continuation of congregation call process
- synod staff presence walking alongside congregations to support the ways the Holy Spirit is at work among them
- daily online devotional videos on Facebook and YouTube
- a network of support and care for people training to become ministers (candidacy) and for those in the early years of ministry (first call theological education)

May you continue to sense the Spirit's guiding presence as you serve as the hands and feet of Jesus in your community.

DIVERSITY TEAM During the summer, the Trinity's Congregation Council was reading and discussing "Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.," by Pr. Lenny Duncan. They were also updating the congregation's constitution, which could result in updating the makeup of the council itself after the Annual Meeting next year.

**your
input is
needed!**

That's when the question arose: Should Trinity create a new team whose mission is all about diversity and inclusion? What would the team look like? What would be its focus? Who would like to be a member?

The Congregation Council would like to hear from you! If you have ideas about this team, if you'd like to be a member of this team, please email Pr. Elizabeth at trinitysr@springgrove.coop or Congregation President Saundy Solum at

saundra.solum@wisc.edu.

Let's continue the conversation together!

FRIDAY EMAILS On Fridays we send an email with news about the weekend and upcoming week. We've been trying a new method of delivery — through MailChimp. Please check your spam/junk/promotions folders to see if the email is "stuck" there. Once you "approve" the message (indicate that it is not spam), it should come directly to your inbox without a problem. If you would like to be added to the Friday email list, please let us know in the office.





November 24, 2020

I have been reading the late Eugene Peterson's book *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*. It is a collection of sermons from his over thirty years as a parish pastor in one place. I have long been a student of Peterson's, ever since I read his memoir *The Pastor* and saw so much of my own experiences reflected in his.

In the sermon entitled, "You Have Done Nothing but Bless," exploring the story of Balaam and his talking donkey (that can be read in Numbers 22) Peterson writes,

Balaam had been so full of his plans, his mind so full of the reward he had been promised for working for Balak, **that he had been blind to the presence of God**. The dumb donkey was more alert to God than the famous prophet. Balaam, for all his fame as a spiritual powerhouse, was dumber than his donkey, **his heart so full of himself and his plans that he couldn't see the most obvious signs of God's presence.**[1] (emphasis mine)

This perspective of Balaam struck me as so timely in the midst of our pandemic reality. A reality that is causing many of us to remain or move back to digital-only gatherings just as Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas approach.

I am lamenting, along with so many of you, the ways we will not gather in the coming weeks.

There will be no large family meals. There will be no pie to share after the Thanksgiving Eve service. We will not gather in our sanctuaries for a Christmas Eve singing of Silent Night as we so often do.

I love those things. I love those traditions. I love that worship.

I know there are other ways of gathering, other ways we'll honor the traditions of our past and ways we'll make new ones. I am thankful for all of this. I am deeply grateful.

There is also an ache in my heart – for things that cannot or will not be – though I wish they were.

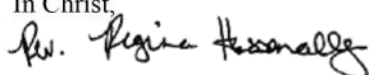
And then, crashing into my heart, came Eugene Peterson's faithful words, "*Balaam had been so full of his plans...that he had been blind to the presence of God.*"

We may be tempted to see only what we have lost. We may be tempted to see only what we want (whether or not we can have it). We may be tempted to be so set on our plans, we too, become blind to "*the most obvious signs of God's presence.*"

Dear church, we are about to enter the season of Advent – an entire season of the church year dedicated to preparing our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits, to see the presence of God anew.

I am praying for myself, and for you, that the Holy Spirit would give us open eyes. Eyes open wide enough to see beyond what we have lost, beyond what we long for, beyond our own plans, demands, or expectations and instead to see the presence of God.

Jesus is here. And Jesus is coming. This Advent let us practice having eyes open to see him...in all the places, expected and not, that God shows up.

In Christ,


Bishop Regina Hassanally
Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA

[1] Peterson, Eugene. *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*. WaterBrook, 2017. p 45.



Technological upgrades — Through gifts and grants we have been able to purchase equipment so that we can broadcast our services on Facebook Live, YouTube, and on KVIK 104.7 FM with even better sound. We now have multiple cameras, audio/video mixer, a dedicated laptop and tablet, upgraded microphones/sound equipment, and more. We feel very blessed to have been able to offer online worship services during this time so that we can continue to worship together even though we are apart. Rick Sundet, Lee Hoekstra, and Gary Wilhelmson have done a lot of work in this process that has evolved over the past months. There is now a permanent broadcast area in the balcony so that we can continue to record services even when we are back to in-person worship. What a wonderful opportunity to continue to share the Word of Christ.

▲ First pews had to be removed.

▶▼ Then a desk and shelving was built and equipment installed.

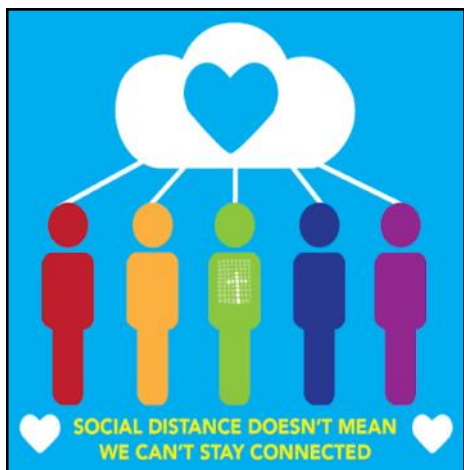




Clockwise from upper left....

- Bekah prepared At-Home Sunday School packets for all of our Sunday School children and families.
- On All Saints Day (Nov. 1), people were invited to light a candle in a luminary as they remembered saints that have gone before us.
- Drive-Thru Communion was a chilly day in November. We will be having it again on December 6 & 20 about 10 a.m.
- Baptism of Ava and Nolan Olson, parents Ashley & Nathan Olson.





WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED TO TRINITY

- **498-HOPE (4673)**
-short daily messages and updates
- **498-AMEN (2636)**
-daily devotions
- **www.trinitysg.org**
-news, updates, info
- **Facebook: Trinity Lutheran Church Spring Grove**
-updates, music, worship, info
- **YouTube:**
Trinity Lutheran: Spring Grove
-video recordings of worship, Bible Stories with Bekah
- **Instagram**
-photos, updates
- **KVIK 104.7FM**
- Sunday worship service,
- www.kvikradio.com

This is how we care for ourselves and our neighbors.

Friendly reminder on how to wear a mask.

And remember....they need washing, too!



Yes!
nose, mouth, chin covered.

No...
nose not covered.

No...
nose, mouth, chin not covered.

Christmas Eve Luminary Candles

On Christmas Eve we will line the path to the Drive-Thru Nativity with luminaries. We welcome you to sponsor a luminary in memory / honor / celebration of someone special. Please fill out this form and return it to the church office by Monday, December 21. All checks can be made out to Trinity. A suggested donation of \$10/candle. Fill out more forms as needed for multiple candles. Forms also available in the office and on our website. Thank you!

My candle is....

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

In appreciation of _____

Please designate my gift of \$ _____ to: Trinity's General Fund Houston County Food Shelf

My name: _____

Please note: Your name is not listed in the bulletin, only the in memory/honor/appreciation name. We ask for your name so that your General Fund gift may be included in your giving record.



December happenings at Trinity

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 5pm AA	2 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 7:30 pm Advent Meditation, on Facebook	3 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	4 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	5 10:30am AA 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook
6 2nd Sunday of Advent 9:15am Worship, Facebook Live 10:00am Drive- thru Communion 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	7 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	8 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 5pm AA	9 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 6:30pm Council, Zoom 7:30 pm Advent Meditation, on Facebook	10 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	11 newsletter info due 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	12 10:30am AA 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook
13 3rd Sunday of Advent 9:15am Worship, Facebook Live 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	14 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	15 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 5pm AA	16 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 7:30 pm Advent Meditation, on Facebook	17 newsletter mailed 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	18 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook Team reports for Annual Report due	19 10:30am AA 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 7:30pm Virtual Music Celebration, Facebook & YouTube
20 4th Sunday of Advent 9:15am Worship with Sunday School program, Facebook Live 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	21 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook	22 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 5pm AA	23 5pm Live @ 5 meditation on Facebook 7:30 pm Advent Meditation, on Facebook	24 Christmas Eve 4:30pm Drive-Thru Nativity	25 Christmas Day 10am Christmas Worship, Facebook and YouTube office closed	26 10:30am AA
27 Lessons & Carols 9:15am Worship, Facebook Live	28	29 5pm AA	30	31 New Year's Eve		

FH = Fellowship Hall (large room in basement)
GR = Gathering Room (in basement near men's bathroom)

MR = Middle Room (upstairs by offices)
TC = Trinity Center

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