



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

EXPERIENCING AND SHARING JESUS



CHRISTMAS

*Celebrate the Birth
of the Savior of the World
Jesus Christ!*

701 East Florida Avenue, Urbana Illinois 61801– Phone: 217-367-8923

Pastor Shawn Boylan – pastorshawn@trinity-urbana.org

Traditional Worship - Saturday - 5:30 p.m.

Traditional Worship - Sunday - 8:30 a.m.

Contemporary Worship - Sunday - 10:45 a.m.

Join us online - Sunday - 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. trinity-urbana.org

Dear friends of Trinity,

Who would have thought that we would not have Holy Week, Easter, Advent and Christmas services as we always have? COVID has truly changed how we do things, and change offers a good opportunity to think about what we do and why we do it to begin with.

Has the coronavirus affected the nearness of God? The Lord is always near. The One who knows the stars by name and spoke the universe into being is always near to us. He invited ancient Israel to come into his presence. The Law made them keep their distance, but even in those days, God said, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV)/Hebrews 13:5). Our sins separate us from God (Isaiah 59:2), but, when Jesus came, he revealed the Father’s will. He bore our sins and urges us to “approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16, NIV). The world needs to sense and know the comfort of God’s presence, and, ironically, God can use even the coronavirus to renew the faith of those who put their hope in Christ.



Has the coronavirus affected the wonder of God’s name? We can still recite, rehearse, celebrate, and demonstrate the acts, works, deeds, promises, character and attributes of our God. Notice the emphasis that King David uses with regard to our heavenly Father’s name: “I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. ² Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. ³ Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom” (Psalm 145:1-3, NIV). We should know and make remembrance of his Name by praising him, admiring him, and ascribing to him all of the great and wonderful things that he has done and continues to do on a daily basis. From generation to generation and from age to age God is near, and his love and mercy cannot be measured nor diminished.

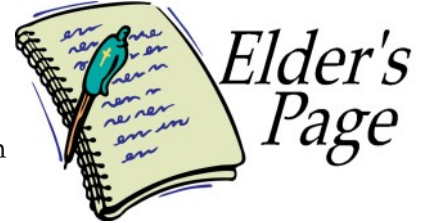
Has the coronavirus affected the power of God? We are too inexperienced in life to be without a guide. God’s Word is that guide. The whole of Psalm 119 unfolds assorted blessings and truths of God’s Word. It shows how God’s Word will assist us in the diversity of life’s circumstances. But no single verse of all the Bible highlights this more clearly than verse 105, which shows how God’s Word lights the way, giving direction for each step (“to my feet”) and giving wisdom to our paths. Do not hasten ahead without it—ever. The power of God is not found in ourselves or in our strength, but in the promises of God, which He never fails to fulfil. What better year or time than now to let God’s Word light our way? Jesus, the Word became flesh, was filled with compassion, healing and hope. The “light” of the Bible provides us a loving direction to Christ our hope.

God’s name is still great. God’s Word directs our way. And God is near. Christmas reminds us that God came near! I think we are left with a choice. We can dwell on what the COVID epidemic has changed for us in terms of how we have always done things. We can lament that it has disrupted our normal routines. But, then again, if we draw near to God, we will see that he is close to us. He will lift our hearts and minds with hope. We will be a witness of who God is in the midst of a world that doesn’t know him, as his holy people have been from generation to generation.

Joy to the World - the Lord has come!



Keep It Real Simple - Love God Love People



The Christmas story never gets old. The story is an account of the greatest gift ever. The gift that keeps on giving, and that same gift which never changes! The Christmas Story and the season of Advent is about the relationship between God and his people. We are his people. He claims us as His own!

Most of this year by nearly all accounts, has been and continues to unfold as the most trying of times. Who knew that a Pandemic would rearrange our lives in so many ways? Work, school, sports, travel, shopping, dining and practically every facet of our daily routines has been impacted in some way. The notion of curtailing our family activities this late in the year wasn't on my radar back in March or April. Family Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations certainly were expected to be "normal" in 2020, weren't they? Not as it turns out.

So much of what has shaped the trajectory of our activities this year was beyond our control. Making it from day to day and week to week, could be stressful and at times, daunting. We however are reminded that we are not alone and that God is always in control (even when it doesn't seem like it). During this time of year, we should remember that we can lean on Jesus and his promises. (see: Mat 11:28) *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

God is good, all the time. (see: Rom 8:28) *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* The gift of Jesus to **ALL OF US** was part of Gods plan, which included his arrival as a helpless infant. Jesus living among us as an example to show us how to live and what to do was also part of Gods plan. The Word revealed to us by the Holy Spirit remains with us today and forever, is also God's gift **to us**.

We're all the beneficiaries of this tremendous gift! So what can we do? We can love God as he (first) loved us, and we can love our neighbors (everyone else) as ourselves. Jesus taught us the most important commandment when he walked this world with His Disciples. (see: Matt 22:36-39) *When asked "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."*

We are chosen to do as he commands, especially now when so many of our neighbors need our love. The words of Singer/Songwriter Danny Gokey from his popular song "Love God Love People" come to mind. "...we're living in a world that keeps breaking, but if we want to find a way to change it, it all comes down to this, Love God Love People..."

While nobody but Jesus can change the world, we can "keep it real simple" and lead by example, and follow some good advice to "Love God Love People".

Dear Heavenly Father,

In these unprecedented times, place your loving embrace around each of us, whisper your words of encouragement to us, fill us with your presence, lift up our weary hearts, lead us to neighbors in need, and reassure us of your constant presence in every part of our lives.

Amen,

Kevin Donoho – Elder Chairman

President's Monthly Report to the Congregation

Thank you for those of you who attended the Regular Voters' Meeting on Sunday, November 22, 2020. Here are some highlights that are based on my notes from the meeting. The official minutes will be ready soon.

To begin, we adopted a flat budget for calendar year 2021 that is based on revenue and spending estimates from the 2020 budget.

In addition, our Treasurer and the chair of the Capital Campaign Committee, David Lange, reported as of November 22, which was the deadline for the campaign, that we had pledges of about \$1.3 million. If you missed the deadline, it is not too late to make your pledge for the building project! If you have questions about how to make your pledge, please contact Mike Campo at the Trinity Office by calling (217) 367-8923.

Based on the encouraging pledge campaign report, the Building Committee will meet on December 3 to restart planning for the building project. The committee, which is chaired by David Kuehn, will report back to the congregation on their recommendations for us no later than the next regular Voters' Assembly in May 2021. If they are ready sooner, then I will call a special Voters' Assembly as soon as possible.

Finally, we elected the following congregation officers and members of the Parish Council:

Secretary -Dee Dee Williams
Treasurer -David Lange
Property Manager -Dan Roney
Member-at-Large -Nina Frank

We also approved the following appointments:

Ministry Council

Jill Boylan
Brenda Donoho
Jessica Strong
Chris Roegge
Hilary Rouse
Julianna Nation

Board of Elders

Adam Rusch
Kevin Donoho
Bryan Holderfield
Randy Niemann
Jim Rossow



In closing, I pray that you are staying healthy and that we continue to take care of each other at Trinity, including our families, our friends, and our community.

Grace and peace,

Rick Winkel, President
(217) 649-7753 cell
rwinkeljr@live.com



Wee Disciples Preschool News

Our preschoolers completed a service project in November. We challenged our students to help at home and earn money to donate to our "Giving Jar". This year we collected \$60 to put toward Trinity's Operation Christmas Child. Our preschool families also donated 7 completed Operation Christmas Child boxes. I am so proud of our Wee Disciples!

To ensure the safety of our preschoolers and staff after Thanksgiving break, the first week in December is a remote learning week at Wee Disciples Preschool. During our remote learning week, the students are invited to a daily Zoom meeting with the class and suggested activities are emailed to families. I pray that we will be able to return to in-person preschool starting the 2nd week of December, but with the rise of COVID-19 cases in Champaign-Urbana our plans for in-person preschool may change. Please keep our preschool in your prayers this month as we make decisions to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.

December brings much excitement to Wee Disciples Preschool. We will spend the first two weeks of December learning about the birth of Jesus. This year we also focus on the animals in the story of Jesus's birth such as the donkey, sheep, cows, and camels. We will celebrate Jesus' Birthday a little different this year with individual class celebrations in the classroom or via Zoom on December 15 & 16. With all the changes that December 2020 may bring to our normal Christmas celebration, we can find comfort and peace with the unchanging story of Jesus' birth and the knowledge that "A Savior has been born to you." (Luke 2:11) God's love for us is great and constant.

Christmas Break begins on December 17, 2020 and preschool will resume on January 4, 2021. Our plan is to have a week of remote learning on January 4-8, and then return to in person learning on January 11. I hope that our preschool and church families have a very Merry Christmas, and my prayers are with everyone for continued good health and safety this month.

God's Blessings to you all,

Karen Rohrer,
Director and Teacher

ALL ARE WELCOME Campaign Ends in Jubilation!

Thanksgiving at Trinity was extraordinary this year. The ALL ARE WELCOME campaign came to a close on Sunday, November 22nd, and we are so pleased to report that the campaign raised a total of \$1,442,000. The result of the campaign ensures that Trinity will immediately move ahead with design and construction. The Building Committee, chaired by Dave Kuhn, is already meeting to proceed.

Thank you to everyone who was able to contribute a pledge. Together we are providing the facility for future generations. God has surely blessed Trinity Lutheran Church! Late arriving pledges are always welcome, and you can send your pledge information to the church office.



**Prepare your hearts
for Christmas!**

- Advent Devotions
- Virtual Worship Details
- Reserve a space at our in-person worship.

www.trinity-urbana.org

**Midweek Advent and
Christmas Eve Services:**

Wednesday, 12/02 at 6PM

Mid-Week Advent Service

Wednesday, 12/09 at 6PM

Mid-Week Advent Service

Wednesday, 12/16 at 6PM

Mid-Week Advent Service

Thursday 12/24 at 4PM

Christmas Eve Service

"MY SOUL GLORIFIES
THE LORD
AND MY SPIRIT
REJOICES IN
GOD MY
SAVIOR."

LUKE 1:46 (NIV)



Thank you to all who packed an **Operation Christmas Child** box this year. The effort was a great success. We had a total of 53 boxes that are now on their way. We have requested tracking information, so we will keep you updated on where our boxes were sent.

Please keep this wonderful outreach in your hearts and prayers! Now is a very important time to pray for Samaritan's Purse and the many 1,000s of people who help coordinate this effort:

- Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 178 million shoebox gifts to children in more than 160 countries and territories
- More than 10.5 million shoebox gifts were collected worldwide in 2019, with more than 8.9 million collected in the U.S.
- In 2020, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect enough shoebox gifts to reach 11 million
- Delivered into the hands of children through local churches, every shoebox gift is an opportunity to share about Jesus Christ and God's love.



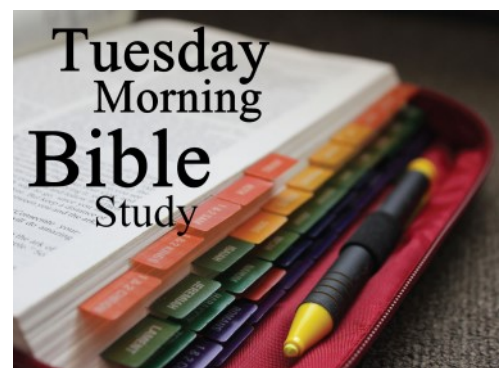


Thank you to everyone who joined us for the **Haiti Hunger Fight** virtual event to benefit **Trinity Hope** Haitian Feeding Program. The event was a great success and it was so nice to hear from our friend Stivenston Jean-Baptiste. Funds raised during the event went towards feeding the precious children of Yahve-Nissi & Institution Olivier. Please visit Trinity's website for additional information regarding Haiti and the Trinity Hope organization.



Poinsettia Order forms are available inside the narthex and can be dropped off at church weekdays from 10am-2pm or during service times. If you would like to order a poinsettia and aren't able to come in please send an email to office@trinity-urbana.org and indicate how many poinsettias that you would like and if you would like to pick up your plant before or after the Christmas Eve service. If you choose to leave the flowers to decorate the church please indicate if they are dedicated in memory or honor of someone or to the Glory of God. The cost is \$7.00 each. **The deadline for ordering is December 14th.**

The Tuesday Bible Class with Pastor Ehlers will be in recess through Tuesday, January 19th. Pastor Ehlers is convalescing from open heart surgery, and we will keep you updated on his recovery and plans for the class. We thank God for bringing him through the surgery, and please keep Pastor Ehlers in your thought and prayers for good recovery.



DECEMBER

Anniversaries

12/06	Owen Albers Samantha Holhubner Maxine Kuehn
12/08	Fredrick Holhubner
12/09	Jill Boylan Dawn Burr Norma Hesterberg
12/10	Ernest Parks Lola Vanetti
12/15	Joyce Cox
12/19	Lelah Dittman
12/20	Samantha Holderfield
12/22	Jennifer Holhubner
12/24	Maurice Knocke
12/28	Diane Gordon
12/30	Brian Kane Anna Witte

DECEMBER

Anniversaries

12/04	Larry & Margaret Seggebruch (54 years)
12/06	Ed & Wanda Werner (35 years)
12/12	Pastor Shawn & Jill Boylan (39 years)
12/22	Dennis & Sharon Daly (25 years)
12/29	Randy & Carol Niemann (47 years)

For the Month of November	
November 1, 2020	\$4,117
November 8, 2020	\$3,834
November 15, 2020	\$1,043
November 22, 2020	\$6,847
November 29, 2020	\$2,360
November total Offerings	\$18,201
YTD Receipts	\$240,627
Copies of Trinity's monthly income, expenses and full budget breakdown are in the Narthex and updated each month.	

Trinity Small Groups and Bible Studies

Please reach out to the individual group leaders for further information about your group.

- Women's Book Group - Monday, December 7, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. (Risë Lange)
- Pieces of Love at church (Jennifer Holhubner)
- Cottage Bible Study at homes (Mary Jo Rott)
- Women in Mission at church - Christmas Party - Tuesday, December 15, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. (Faith Wetzel)
- Tuesday Bible Study (Pastor Ehlers) - bible class in recess through January 19.
- Young Adults Fellowship (Jill Boylan)
- Breakfast Bible Study at Urbana Gardens (Phil or Joyce Bell)
- Couples Bibles Study (Risë Lange)
- Home Bible Study at the Rouse's (Hilary Rouse)
- JOY – will not meet in December

