



THE TORCH

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August 2022
Sunday Worship
9:00 AM

Trinity Lutheran Church • 18137 Criswell Street • P.O. Box 23 • Pleasant Valley, Iowa 52767 • 563-332-5188
Pastor Stephen Nilsen 563-332-6432 (office) 319-540-1172 (cell) snilsen@trinitylcpv.com (email)

On one of my first few days serving as pastor here at Trinity, I got a phone call from someone a few of you may remember: Pastor Joanne Adrian. She was calling to pass along some prayer requests and an update about herself, and she also found out that I was brand new in this first call serving in ministry. After sharing many stories about her time here in Pleasant Valley (back in the late 80s and early 90s), she passed along this piece of wisdom:

Remember, as a pastor, you're like a sheepdog: Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and you are there to help the Good Shepherd.

It was relevant in that moment. It was relevant for Pastor Joanne when she was here. And Pastor Julie, Pastor John most recently, and all pastors who serve in ministry among God's people. We all know those readings, like Psalm 23, that provide words of comfort:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake." (v. 1-3, NRSV)

Or one of the more famous times that Jesus proclaims similar words of comfort:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:11, 14-15)

These well-known passages from scripture bring comfort to those reading it in a variety of situations, but for a newly-ordained pastor, it brings a certain amount of comfort to know that I am not the one here who will save lives or shepherd this flock solely on my own: I turn to Christ for that, just as each of you turn to God in times of need.

But why does that sheepdog reference feel so relevant to me? For one, my wife Leah and I have a Shetland Sheepdog (commonly known as a sheltie) named Chauncey. Chauncey is about a year and a half old, and full of energy. Like a lot of herding dogs, he's great with people, eager to help, and passionate for making sure everyone in his herd are safe and cared for. The sheepdog analogy for a pastor feels great for what I'd like to be like among the people here at Trinity: helping the shepherd with the flock, great with people, ensuring that the people are cared for and loved. It may not be the glamorous thing to want to compare oneself to a dog, but like an excited puppy, as a new pastor, I take that reminder with a great deal of pride, knowing that Jesus Christ will be our good shepherd, and we can all walk alongside in the time we will spend together.

Please know that you are always welcome to stop by the office during office hours, call, text, or email me with concerns or questions. And I love hearing your stories – the holy memories you carry with you.

Eagerly serving as your sheepdog,
Pastor Stephen



Trinity Office Hours + Tues, Wed, Thurs + 9AM-1PM
Pastor Stephen's Office Hours Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs + 10AM - 2PM

LETTER FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The July meeting was a transitional one for the council. Pastor John has completed his service with Trinity and Pastor Stephen is just beginning. His first council meeting will be in August. Updates for the month include:

Offerings were lower than expenses for June, but for the year our offerings are ahead of expenses. June income was \$9315.00 and expenses were \$11,587.75 for a shortage of \$2257.13. Fortunately, thanks to generous donations throughout the year we are ahead of expenses by \$14,946.04. Judy noted that there was \$3819.89 in the Endowment Trinity Ministry Support Special Fund. Endowment and Treasurer were unable to track where that originated. Council voted to create a new Special Fund entitled "Future Pastoral Benefits Offset" and move those funds there. The intention would be to use this fund to offset the cost of benefits should (when) they spike in a future year.

Council received feedback from over thirty members regarding outdoor or indoor service preference. The response was overwhelming to move indoors. So, after a vote was taken the majority agreed that services moving forward will be indoors. Thank you to everyone who spoke to a council member or put a note in the box communicating your preference!

Monthly Covid discussion occurred and the result was no changes at this time.

We discussed a celebration event for Pastor John. By the time you read this that event will have already occurred!

We are very excited to begin building a relationship with Pastor Stephen and hope that you are also!

Justin



YEAR TO DATE THROUGH JUNE 2022

Collections to date	\$93,337.13
Expenses to date:	\$78,391.09
Net to date:	\$14,946.04

No funds have been transferred from the Stewardship Reserves year to date.



MEETINGS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

August 8	Amitie	1:00 PM
August 8	Church Council	6:30 PM
August 9	Worship + Music	4:30 PM
August 31	Endowment	4:00 PM

If you have a meeting scheduled, please let me know so I can add to this list.
Paula

ATTENDANCE TOTALS FOR JULY

July 3	42
July 10	58
July 17	48
July 24	62

FINANCIAL SECRETARY NEWS

Trinity is looking for someone willing to act as backup financial secretary and be prepared to handle routine duties in case of absence of the financial secretary. Routine duties consist of taking the weekly contributions report from the tellers who count the money and transfer the information to the ICON church management computer program. Then summarize the results to an excel spreadsheet and email to the treasurer. The amount of time required generally amounts to less than an hour per week.

Requirements for this job include computer access, comfort with computer programs such as Excel and willingness to learn the needed ICON skills. Of course, the contributions information is extremely confidential and must be handled very discreetly and accurately.

If you are interested, please see Don Cordts, the financial secretary with any questions. Don will provide the necessary training.



ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

The Endowment Committee will be distributing \$19,000 from the Endowment Fund this fall. We have already sent \$2,000 to Lutheran Disaster Relief to help those affected by the war in Ukraine. We have received several suggestions for distribution from the congregation, but would like to encourage more input from you. There are forms posted in the Narthex and on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. The committee will be meeting in mid August to make the final decisions so we need the forms returned by August 15. You can leave them in the office or give them to a committee member—Susan Varilek, Diana Mayes, Alan Diers, Mitch Sussex, or Marcia Brunsvold.



AMITIE NEWS

Amitie will meet on August 8 at 1:00PM at Deb Goslin's home, 517 Walnut CT, Le Claire. Please bring your own sack lunch. Hostess will provide the drink and dessert. The Amitie group will tie another fleece blanket to donate to the Edgerton Clinic.

BIRTHDAYS

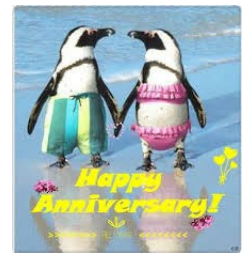
1 Michelle Wetterow
 2 Carol Diers
 4 Ron Leiby
 9 Sheila Vining
 13 Justin Paul
 14 Alan Diers
 22 John Newman
 22 Tim Trelstad
 23 Julie Trelstad
 26 Ann Criswell

*Happy
 Birthday!*



ANNIVERSARIES

6 Mike + Cindi Ven Horst
 13 Steve + Melissa Aguilar
 21 Neal + Pam Schroder
 21 Alan + Carol Diers
 28 Jason + Keri Walter



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS and FELLOWSHIP

If you are unable to fulfill your duties, please find a replacement and call the church office (332-5188) with your replacement. Thank you.

	August 7	August 14	August 21	August 28	Sept. 4
Altar Guild	Alice Cordts	Maggie Wright	Lois Schurr	Linda Busch	Carol Kaufmann
Communion Assistant	Carol Kaufmann	Diane Kaufmann	Marcia Brunsvold	Barb Paul	Diana Mayes
Lector	Susan Varilek	Bryan West	John Newman	Justin Paul	Ellen Opperman
Usher/Greeter	Justin Paul Darrell Paul	Barb Paul Claudia Neumann	Travis Brunsvold Dane Crist	Ed Kaufmann Arnie Kaufmann	John Newman Don Cordts
Fellowship	Linda Busch	Dawn Brick Andi Naab	Ed + Carol Kaufmann	Ellen + Paul Opperman	

A huge thank-you to everyone who attended my ordination service on Saturday July 23rd-whether or that was in-person, online (the video is now shared on the Trinity Facebook page), or simply kept me in your prayers that day. Your support was felt and deeply appreciated.

My family and I were so thrilled to see the table that gathered in the fellowship hall of my home congregation, St. Andrew Lutheran in Cedar Rapids. To share in that fellowship after sharing the Holy Communion and the rest of the wonderful worship service was truly special.

A special note of thanks to the call committee here at Trinity for all their work in Spirit-led discernment throughout that entire process and for working with the council and the synod to extend the first call to ministry of Word and Sacrament that I will always cherish. Thanks as well to Justin Paul for helping in the service as the Presenter of the Ordinand.

Pastor Stephen

