



# THE TORCH

TrinityLCPV.com  
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December 2023  
Sunday Worship  
9:00 AM

Trinity Lutheran Church • 18137 Criswell Street • Bettendorf, Iowa 52722 • 563-332-5188  
Pastor Stephen Nilsen 563-332-6432 (office) 319-540-1172 (cell) snilsen@trinitylcpv.com (email)

Welcome to the time of Waiting, fellow Walkers on the Way!

Most years, December always feels like a time of expectant waiting: we're awaiting different packages as gifts are delivered, awaiting the end-of-year crunch in many different workplaces, awaiting the end of the semester when we're in school, and yes, in our new church year turning to Advent, we're awaiting the Newborn King – Jesus Christ.

When I was growing up, I found decorating the tree to be one of the more tedious tasks involved with all this waiting. "We're just gonna put all this up, wait a few days, and then there will be gifts under here. But do we *have* to put *all* these ornaments on the tree?" I would whine to my parents. While the answer from my dad was usually something along the line of "Yes, we're going to because your mom says so." In recent years I have grown to get a bit more excited about the annual decorating of the Christmas tree in our house.

Sure, there's still the long trudge up the stairs to the attic to find the boxes filled with their various knick-knacks. On top of that, this year we learned that decorating a Christmas tree with a very curious baby, who has recently learned the joys of crawling, makes all of the day a bit more exciting. However, that realization of this being Leslie's first Christmas, even if she doesn't remember it, has been the key point in what has caused such great joy in what I used to find so tedious.

Leah and I have what I like to call a "hand-me-down" tree. Almost all of our ornaments and lights on our tree came from our parents or in a few cases a couple of friends from seminary exchanged some one year. With each item that we pull out of the totes, there are stories associated with where we were at that point in our life: there's cute homemade ones from our childhood, ones with little pictures from our wedding or other big life events, and ornaments that remind us of people who are no longer with us. In that precious time of assembling the ornaments, lights, garland, and ribbons in just the right way, Leah and I smiled and told our little Leslie some of those stories.

Each of you has stories like those as well: memories of the Christmases gone by, maybe a recipe or two that someone tried and will never try again (because it didn't go well), or times when you have missed someone on that first Christmas without them. In the coming weeks, we will spend time getting our expectations high for the one who is promised, the one whom John the Baptist proclaims to "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!" (Mark 1:3). We all know the story that is to come: a newborn baby, wrapped in swaddling cloth, surrounded by the animals gathered in the manger, with young parents who have traveled far under the rule of an outside empire, with shepherds nearby amazed by this utterly stupendous sight of angels, wisemen from further away following a star, and all the rest of it. We know this story, and we share it with so many others. Just like sharing the stories of each of our ornaments with the new family members in our lives, we share this basic story of the birth of Christ, even as we wait again to celebrate it this year.

What would it be like if we found some joy in that waiting this year? What if rather than getting upset by another of the many logistical details going "wrong," we shared in the joy of the people we are sharing *this* time *with* this year? I invite you to share your favorite Christmas memories with each other and me as we head into the festive season around the corner. When we remember those stories and share the story of Jesus' birth again, we join in a long line of generations joyously waiting for the peace only Christ can bring.

Sharing in the joy of waiting,

*Pastor Stephen Nilsen*



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

## LETTER FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The November council meeting focused heavily on the budget for 2024. In 2023 we approved total budgeted expenses of \$172,639. Also in crafting the 2023 budget, we estimated that church collections would be \$140,000. The 2023 budget was approved with a deficit of \$14,039. I am very happy to announce that as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, church collections are \$136,930.81 and our total expenses are \$115,130.17. Thanks to everyone's generous contributions, we are now in a position heading into 2024 with the ability to grow some programs. One of those growth areas will be in the "Intergenerational, Youth and Educational" line item. That line item has been increased significantly and the main reason is to bring back youth counselors from Camp Ewalu to run Vacation Bible School. This was done a number of years ago and was a huge success. It is exciting that we will be able to bring this back in 2024. Another large bump was made in the "Social Ministry" line item. This will allow for a true budget to fund causes like Share-A-Meal and the Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Assistance (previously known as food baskets) programs. None of this is possible without the generous donations and giving that Trinity Lutheran Church receives. Your financial giving and time/talent giving is forever appreciated and not taken for granted.

Speaking of time/talent giving, Council also had a spin-off conversation on how to appropriately express gratitude for all those that donate their time and talents to Trinity. The list of those that volunteer to maintain the physical building that is Trinity, the grounds, the variety of ministries that Trinity takes part in; the list goes on and on. Then we wrestle with how to appropriately express our gratitude. Is it through a financial gift like a stipend? If we go there, who do we give them to and how much? That then takes us down a road of possible hurt feelings from those that also donate hours, but are possibly overlooked. There is no right solution for this, so I will try to communicate this as best as I can to everyone. The Trinity Church Council appreciates everyone that helps lend their precious hours in service to Trinity. We know that there are only so many hours in a day, and always appreciate any that are spent in beautifying Trinity. There are many of you that put in "unseen hours," and we want you to know that the "unseen hours" aren't forgotten or taken for granted. Every little bit contributes to keeping Trinity a vibrant, loving community that is a place for each and every person to grow in their own spiritual life.

As we approach the birth of Jesus, my hope for you is that you are able to feel a sense of peace within the walls of Trinity Lutheran Church and that it helps shield you from some of the craziness that the month of December can bring!

Justin

### YEAR TO DATE THROUGH OCTOBER 2023

|                                                                        |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Collections to date                                                    | \$161,081.22 |
| Expenses to date                                                       | \$124,289.70 |
| Net to date                                                            | \$ 36,791.52 |
| No funds have been transferred from Stewardship Reserves year to date. |              |

### ATTENDANCE TOTALS FOR NOVEMBER

|          |    |    |
|----------|----|----|
| November | 5  | 67 |
| November | 12 | 58 |
| November | 19 | 56 |
| November | 26 | 54 |

### WANT TO CONNECT THE WITH WEEKLY HAPPENINGS AT TRINITY?

Sign up for our weekly email bulletin that will let you know what's happening in the week ahead and have other great upcoming announcements, as well as the weekly bulletin for worship. Call (332-5188) or email ([office@trinitylcpv.com](mailto:office@trinitylcpv.com)) Paula in the office to sign up!

## BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Rudie Eberlein
- 3 Debra Anderson
- 5 Henry Marquard
- 6 Annabelle Denain
- 9 Helen Stubbe
- 11 Ed Kaufmann
- 13 Neil Baker
- 16 Paula McIntosh
- 18 Adrienne Picchiotti
- 21 Susan Varilek
- 24 Judy Rutledge



# DECEMBER

## ANNIVERSARY

- 2 Randy & Claudia Neumann
- 29 Travis & Marcia Brunsvold



|                     | December 3                     | December 10                       | December 17                     | December 24                      | December 31                  |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Altar Guild         | Diane Holst                    | Diane Kaufmann                    | Connie Short                    | Randy Goslin                     | Diane Holst                  |
| Communion Assistant | Lois Schurr                    | Diana Mayes                       | Michelle Crist                  | Claudia Neumann                  | Lois Schurr                  |
| Lector              | Diane Noll                     | Henry Marquard                    | Ellen Opperman                  | Claudia Neumann                  | Justin Paul                  |
| Usher Greeter       | Travis Brunsvold<br>Don Cordts | Sharon Marquard<br>Debra Anderson | Sally Morrow<br>Jo Ann Hogenson | Diane Cook<br>Connie Short       | Judy Rutledge<br>Al McIlrath |
| Fellowship          | John & Cathy Newman            | HOT TEAM<br>Christmas Cookies     |                                 | No Fellowship<br>Merry Christmas | Tom & Mary Shelton           |

If you would like to help us in our Sunday Gathering by doing any of the above tasks, please contact the church office to be added to the list of volunteers.



**Pastor Stephen will be Out of the Office**

*Monday, December 25 - Saturday, December 30.*

Paula will be in the office during the usual times:

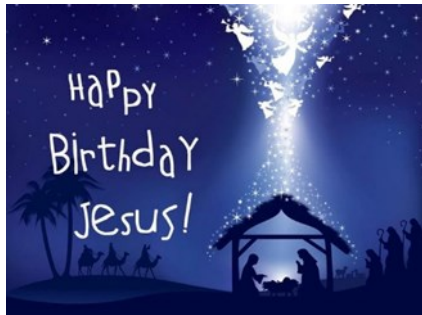
Tues-Thursday, 9am-1pm

If you have a pastoral emergency, please call his cell phone (319-540-1172) or email [snilsen@trinitylcpv.com](mailto:snilsen@trinitylcpv.com)

**Annual Reports Due December 31**

With the end of year approaching quickly, and our annual congregational meeting just around the corner, if you lead a committee or group here at Trinity, please make sure to send your annual report to Paula in the office by December 31!

Email: [office@trinitylcpv.com](mailto:office@trinitylcpv.com)



**Sunday School Update**

*No Sunday School*

*Christmas Eve Day (12/24) or New Year's Eve Day (12/31)*

Join us when Sunday School resumes after worship again on Sunday, January 7th! Lots of fun and learning for all ages!



**DECEMBER'S FUN BIBLE FACT**

The baby Jesus was wrapped in Swaddling clothes. This was a practice in Roman times when clothing and strips of fabric were wrapped about a baby to hold its arms and legs immobile, straightening and strengthening the body.

*Altar Flowers*



Do you have a birthday or anniversary you'd like to commemorate? Starting in January, we will have Altar Flowers that you can sign-up to sponsor for any of the worship services throughout the year. The bulletin board will be by the door between the narthex and hallway.

Questions?

Call or Email Paula at 563-332-5188 or [office@trinitylcpv.com](mailto:office@trinitylcpv.com)

### TRINITY CARD MINISTRY

Trinity Card Ministry has been revived. We will meet December 6 at 2 PM to make Christmas cards. January 2024 we will begin meeting downstairs twice a month in the craft room. We will be making greeting cards for our college students, our home bound, our ill members and to sell to church members in fellowship hall. Contact any of us if you are interested: Chris Kaul, Marcia Brunsvold, or Claudia Neumann



### AMITIE

Amitie will meet December 11 at 12:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Bring your sack lunch and drink. Dessert will be provided. We will be tying another baby quilt for the Edgerton Clinic. Please come and enjoy this time of fellowship and worship.

Rudella Eberlein,  
Convenor



### MEETINGS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

|          |    |                       |       |    |
|----------|----|-----------------------|-------|----|
| December | 5  | Education             | 2:30  | PM |
| December | 5  | Worship & Music       | 4:30  | PM |
| December | 6  | Trinity Card Ministry | 2:00  | PM |
| December | 7  | Property              | 11:30 | AM |
| December | 11 | Amitie                | 12:00 | PM |
| December | 11 | Council               | 6:30  | PM |
| December | 18 | Stewardship           | 6:00  | PM |

### WEEKLY READINGS

**12/3** Isaiah 64:1-9, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, 1 Corinthians 2:9-13, Mark 13:24-37

**12/10** Isaiah 40: 1-11, Psalm 85 1-2, 8-13, 2 Peter 3:8-13, Mark 1:1-8

**12/17** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, Psalm 126, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, John 1:25:6-8, 19-28

**12/24** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16, Psalm 89:1-4, Romans 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-38

**12/31** Isaiah 61:10—62:3, Psalm 148, Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:22-40

### BIBLE Study

WEDNESDAYS AT 10 AM  
Join us for a **weekly** Bible study centered around the texts for the upcoming week's worship service as we find what God is up to in the text and our lives this week

ALL ARE WELCOME

HOLY BIBLE

### Food Assistance Gift Cards (Formerly Food Baskets)

Families in need are most appreciative by the generosity of TLC with our food assistance program. Please be sure to note on your check that it is for food assistance. Any contribution is greatly appreciated as we help our neighbors in the holiday seasons ahead.

Any questions call Lolita Baker (563) 570-3936, email [Lnbaker7014@gmail.com](mailto:Lnbaker7014@gmail.com) or Lanette Lane (563) 359-4196, email [laal@mchsi.com](mailto:laal@mchsi.com).



### FALL & WINTER COAT & BOOT DRIVE

Help our community in need by bringing any new or lightly used coats, jackets, boots, or shoes for people who are served by either Central Community Circle Food Pantry or Humility of Mary's Outlet Center. There's a shopping cart in the narthex to drop off donations for those in need. Hats, gloves and scarves are also appreciated!



**Southeastern Iowa Synod**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### SERVE THE BROADER CHURCH AT NEXT YEAR'S SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Each year, our congregation is represented by two voting members at the Southeastern Iowa Synod's Assembly. This upcoming year, the assembly will be held in Coralville, likely at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and Conference Center. The 2024 Assembly will be held Friday, May 17 through Saturday, May 18 (likely just the first part of the Saturday). Travel and Hotel Costs would be covered by the congregation, and this is a great opportunity to see what broader ministry our congregation is a part of in our area around Southeastern Iowa. We're seeking interest in this now so that we can try to have these names ready for nomination at January's Annual Congregation Meeting. If you have any questions, you can speak to Pastor Stephen or ask last year's voting members, Barb and Darrell Paul.

### SCOTT COUNTY LIBRARY'S BOOKMOBILE COMES ONE MORE TIME!

The Scott County Library Bookmobile will stop by the Church parking lot through the fall and into the winter Tuesday afternoons every three weeks. December 5 at 4:15-4:45PM is the last time until spring.

Anyone with a library card from a library in Scott County can check out books and other media. there! We will have snacks and drinks available in the Fellowship Hall We would love to see you there.



PPALS MINISTRY PARTNERSHIP

# LESSONS & CAROLS

## *Worship Service*

A FESTIVE JOINT WORSHIP SERVICE SHARING IN  
EXPECTANT JOY OF THE ADVENT SEASON AS WE  
WAIT FOR THE CHRIST CHILD TO COME



**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20 AT 6 PM**

Trinity Lutheran Church - Pleasant Valley  
18137 Criswell St, Bettendorf, IA 52729

**Cookies & Treats Following the Service**



### **Angel Tree Gifting Opportunities**

Your Angel Tree gifts need to be under the tree by Sunday December 10. Please bring all gifts wrapped with the Angel tag attached.



### **Choir Rehearsal THIS SUNDAY at 8 AM**

We're extra thankful to our accompanist Laura for volunteering to direct the Trinity choir at our special 7 pm Christmas Eve service. If you're interested in singing in our choir, whether you have before or not, please join for a brief rehearsal this Sunday before worship at 8 AM.



### **December 2023, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story**

#### **Merry Christmas from LSI!**

At LSI, we recognize that the holiday season can be a challenging time for many, especially for the populations we serve throughout the year.

We know parents who feel hopeless, with few resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know immigrants and refugees working to become U.S. citizens, with little community support or help along the way. We know teens who are aging out of foster care, fearing they will never have a forever home.

In the spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, let us stand with them and lift them up this Christmas season.

As we reflect on the past year, we thank you — our generous supporters and community partners — for stepping up to give and help the people LSI is privileged to serve. We are grateful for your contribution in bringing the light of Christ to your neighbors who rely on these essential services. LSI wishes you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

LSI's annual matching gift campaign is currently active, and those making a new or increased financial gift can double their impact through the end of the year. If you would like to learn more about how you can support Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Senior Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org) or 563-676-2065.

*Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [LSIowa.org](http://LSIowa.org) and [Facebook.com/LSI.Iowa](https://Facebook.com/LSI.Iowa).*

#### **Adult Education After Worship - Lutheran Services in Iowa Presentation**

*Sunday, December 3*

Lutheran Services in Iowa, one of the many organizations our congregation supports through endowment giving and other collections, will share a special presentation after worship on Sunday, December 3 with Deb Whitford, Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations. She'll have lots of information about the programs LSI does here in the Quad Cities and around Iowa. Find out more at [LSIowa.org](http://LSIowa.org)



### Christmas in Le Claire

*Saturday, December 2*

TLC will be partnering with others from our PPALs ministry partnership to help kids make crafts and bring cheer for LeClaire's annual Christmas event. Our simple crafts are open to kids of all ages, and we'll need volunteers from 10AM-Noon and Noon-2PM to join at the Masonic Lodge in LeClaire. *Sign-up in the Narthex or contact Deb Goslin for more info.*

To see a full list of events happening at Christmas in LeClaire, visit [www.visitleclaire.com/events/christmas-in-leclaire/](http://www.visitleclaire.com/events/christmas-in-leclaire/)



### Christmas Eve worship will be at 7 PM

Trinity Lutheran Choir will be singing! If you're interested in lifting your voice in the choir, please attend rehearsal before worship Sunday, December 3 at 8 AM. We'd love to have you join us!



### POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

If you would like to dedicate a poinsettia for the altar at Christmas Eve, please fill out the order form on the right and return to the church office by December 10th. Cost for each poinsettia is \$12.00. Poinsettias may be picked up after Christmas Eve Service or the following Sunday.

**\$12.00 EACH**



**POINSETTIA \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMORY/HONOR  
OF** \_\_\_\_\_

## SEEKING HELP WITH LIVESTREAMING WORSHIP

For the past few months, Randy Goslin, Dane Crist, Travis Brunsvold, Jerry Short, and Pastor Stephen along with the Worship & Music Committee and Property Committee have been working on getting our sanctuary ready to livestream our worship services. This ministry will help to reach out to both our homebound members and others exploring what worship is like at Trinity.

We now have the equipment in place, and you can see a sample of what the livestream would look like from our recorded service from August 27 and September 10. You can see the service at our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/@trinitylcpv](https://youtube.com/@trinitylcpv).

In the coming month, we would love to hear from **YOU** if you are interested in serving during worship to record our livestream. Please contact Pastor Stephen or Randy Goslin ([rgoslin@mchsi.com](mailto:rgoslin@mchsi.com)) if you would like to help.



### New Trinity Lutheran T-Shirts Available to Order

Trinity's Council has goals to make our congregation more visible in the years ahead, and one part of that is a new T-shirt promoting our congregation that we can wear to events like the CROP Walk and other outings in the community! Order forms are available in the weekly email, worship bulletin inserts, just below here on this page, in the narthex, or online at <https://bit.ly/TLCPV-tshirts>

The new t-shirts will be powder blue and costs will be as follows:

Youth sizes - \$8 each  
Adult S, M, L, XL - \$8 each  
Adult 2XL - \$10 each

### HEY! I'd Like One (or More) of Those New T-Shirts!

Name(s):

Phone:

T-Shirt Size(s):

*Sample T-Shirts are available in the narthex if you would like to see how they fit*