



# THE TORCH

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January 2025  
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)

Greetings to you, Graciously Gathered,

The end of the calendar year rolls around, and like most years, lots of people look to the year ahead and plan for the next year and look back at 2024 behind us, whether breathing a sigh of relief that it's over or giving thanks for the blessings that have come throughout. Maybe you're even making some resolutions to read more, exercise more, eat healthier, or something else along those lines. New years always seem to give us a convenient time to take stock of what was and what will be. For myself, I began a more serious commitment to getting physically healthier towards the end of 2024 and plan to do more of that in 2025.

When we look to Scripture for things to give thanks, there are many passages we could look to, but as I look back at the blessings of 2024, I have come to think about the things Jesus blesses in the Beatitudes, part of the Sermon on the Mount, from chapters 5-7 of the Gospel according to Matthew:

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

*(Matthew 5:3-10, NRSVUE)*

In seven short verses, Christ turns the world upside down with the expectations of who receives blessings from God and what that might mean for how we who call ourselves Christians might live out our lives. As we consider the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, peacemakers, and those who are persecuted are blessed, many of those categories may seem counter-intuitive to think about in a year-end wrap-up of blessings to give thanks.

What if, however, our thankfulness was for what God continues to do? For the Greek nerds out there, this work of God is in the past perfect tense: one that explains an action that has happened and continues to happen. God continues to bless those within the scope of the Beatitudes and Christ explains the things that will happen in the future in God's ongoing unfurling of the Kingdom of Heaven.

No matter what type of year you've had or what your hopes are for the one ahead, let us give thanks in the faith of trusting a God who has done and continues to do great things worthy of our thanksgiving for this and every year!

See you next year!

Pastor Stephen Nilsen

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

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 26 after worship



Annual Congregation Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 26, 2025 after the 9:00 AM Worship Service.

If your committee does not have your report turned in, please get it to Paula as soon as possible. It takes a lot of time to put the report together and have it ready for all to review before the meeting. At the meeting, we'll elect council members, endowment committee members, voting members for Synod Assembly and the Luther Property annual meeting, as well as hear about a proposal for an updated front wall of the Fellowship Hall. Email: [office@trinitylcpv.com](mailto:office@trinitylcpv.com) with questions.



**WORDS**  
FOR THE **BEGINNING**  
ADVENT REMINDER FOR NEW SEASON!

## Words for the Beginning: A Sunday School for All Ages from Advent Through Epiphany

*Sundays after worship in the Fellowship Hall*

Join Pastor Stephen and others as we see how our stories are part of God's story. There will be simple lessons that provide for intergenerational learning. Whether you've crafted a quilt in the past or not, everyone will be able to join in week-by-week to see God's work in the world.

See Pastor Stephen if you have any questions or would like one of the week's materials sent home to you.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025!

### YEAR TO DATE THROUGH NOVEMBER 2024

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Collections to date | \$163753.07 |
| Expenses to date    | \$165328.10 |
| Net to date         | (\$1575.03) |

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

### ATTENDANCE TOTALS FOR DECEMBER 2024

|          |    |    |
|----------|----|----|
| December | 1  | 56 |
| December | 8  | 67 |
| December | 15 | 62 |
| December | 22 | 74 |
| December | 24 | 75 |
| December | 29 | 43 |

### Birthdays

|    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| 3  | Hannah Schnack     |
| 4  | Mary Shelton       |
| 4  | Joshua McBride     |
| 5  | Tonia Kennedy      |
| 6  | Kathy Naslund      |
| 6  | Cassie West        |
| 7  | Ken Kaul           |
| 9  | Vicki Engler       |
| 10 | Pam Schroder       |
| 12 | Don Cook           |
| 19 | Luke Prather       |
| 19 | Luke Ven Horst     |
| 20 | Paxton Heidenreich |
| 22 | Dani Dexter        |
| 24 | Melissa Aguilar    |
| 25 | Glenna Sbertoli    |
| 30 | Janet Riedesel     |
| 31 | Aiden Engler       |



## Worship & Fellowship Volunteers

|                                          | January 5                 | January 12              | January 19              | January 26              | February 2              |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Altar Guild</i>                       | Linda Busch               | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |
| <i>Communion Assistant</i>               | Susan Varilek             | Diane Holst             | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |
| <i>Lector</i>                            | Susan Varilek             | Henry Marquard          | Ellen Opperman          | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |
| <i>Usher Greeter</i>                     | Lois Schurr<br>Ron Morrow | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | Paul Opperman           | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |
| <i>Worship Video Livestream Producer</i> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b>   | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |
| <i>Fellowship</i>                        | Mary & Tom Shelton        | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> | <b>Volunteer Needed</b> |

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.

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



## Trinity Card Crafting Ministry Meeting

Thursday, January 9 - 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Trinity's card ministry meets monthly on the second Thursday of the month at 1:00 PM in the lower level of the church. The next meeting will be January 9 from 1:00-3:00 PM. All are welcome to join us- no experience necessary!

Each month we make and deliver cards to the residents of Aspire of Pleasant Valley Nursing and Rehab (Formerly River Manor). We also make and mail greetings to members and friends of Trinity. In addition, the committee has been working to replenish the supply of greeting cards for sale in the Fellowship Hall. All cards are \$2.00.

Thank you for your support of this ministry. If you have any questions, please contact Chris Kaul, Linda Busch, Claudia Neumann, Cathy Newman, Marcia Brunsvold or Pastor Stephen.

## 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)

## Seeking Help with Livestreaming Worship

Our worship services are available to view on both our Facebook page ([facebook.com/TrinityLCPV](https://facebook.com/TrinityLCPV)) and our YouTube channel ([youtube.com/@TrinityLCPV](https://youtube.com/@TrinityLCPV)). As we continue to provide this ministry for those who are unable to join us in worship in-person, please consider helping with the livestreams. After much work from dedicated volunteers, our live-stream set-up is very easy to operate. Please contact Pastor Stephen or Randy Goslin ([rgoslin@mchsi.com](mailto:rgoslin@mchsi.com)) if you would like to help.



## Paula will be Out of the Office

January 14, 15, 16.



Luther Properties' mission is to provide housing assistance to low-income elderly or disabled persons in Scott County, Iowa.



**Did you know...LUTHER PROPERTIES** provides affordable, independent housing for seniors? This ELCA organization consists of 5 complexes, 2 in Davenport and 3 in Bettendorf. These apartments provide safe homes for those seniors who struggle financially. Rent is based on income, with electricity and water costs included. If you know of someone who could benefit from such assistance, please contact John Newman (563-949-7375) for information.

### Choir Rehearsal Dates for November

The Trinity Lutheran Choir will have practice on Wednesday January 8 and 22, at 6:30 PM. Sunday dates are January 12 and 26 at 10:00 AM. Practices to follow every other Wednesday with a practice and performance every other Sunday.

New singers are always welcome! Make a joyful noise to the Lord!



### WEEKLY READINGS

**01/05** Jeremiah 31:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14, John 1:[1-9] 10-18

**01/12** Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

**01/19** Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5-10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, John 2:1-11

**01/26** Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21



## Shared Youth Group Diving in to Faith and Fun with Food

*Sundays, 5:00-6:30 PM*

*January meetings here at Trinity Lutheran Church*

*February meetings at First Pres. Church in LeClaire*

TLC youth from 6<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades will be joining together with First Presbyterian Church's youth (and any friends that the youth would like to bring along) for a fun, faith-filled youth group meeting each Sunday through the school year. Each meeting will include a simple dinner, games, and discussion of the developing faith of the youth. In January, we will re-start the group after our month off in December, and we may have a special outing later in the month.

The Sunday night youth program will be at Trinity for the months of January, March, and May. TLC will be providing simple meals. If anyone would like to donate money or buy food, snacks, and drinks, please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex and you will be contacted as to what is needed. Further questions or looking for other ways to help? Contact Pastor Stephen or Deb Goslin.

## Trinity Lutheran Church Food Pantry Serving the Community

*Mondays from 9 AM to 11 AM and*

*Thursdays from 4 PM to 6 PM.*

A dedicated group of volunteers from around TLC and others in our community has continue to serve our community by distributing food, sharing in the love of Christ through donated and rescued food staples to all who come to our pantry in need. Our pantry is assisted by a number of congregations in our area, partnering together to help feed our community. If you are interested in helping with this exciting new ministry opportunity, please contact Dane Crist ([pantry@trinitylcpv.com](mailto:pantry@trinitylcpv.com)) or Pastor Stephen. Keep an eye out in the weekly emails and bulletins for other upcoming meetings and help needed



## Winter Scott County Library's Bookmobile Stops

The Scott County Library Bookmobile will stop by the church parking lot through the winter on Tuesday afternoons every three weeks. Anyone with a library card from a library in Scott County can check out books and other media. We'll have snacks and drinks available in Fellowship Hall.

We hope to see you there! Tuesdays 4:40-5:10 PM, January 21, February 11, March 4.

For more info, visit: [Scottcountyia.gov/library/bookmobile](http://Scottcountyia.gov/library/bookmobile)

# Seeking the Sacred

Finding Holy Ground Near and Far

**Saturday, January 11 | 9am-Noon**

@ Grace Lutheran Church | 1140 E High St, Davenport, IA

What is it about the crossroads of travel and spirituality that calls us? Do we have to travel far or even travel at all to discover sacred sites and gain insight from them? And how can these experiences enhance our spiritual journeys?

Join us at "Seeking the sacred: Finding holy ground near and far," a free retreat featuring Lori Erickson, an Iowa City-based author of several books that highlight the intersection of travel and spirituality.



**Register online at [bit.ly/SeekingSacred](https://bit.ly/SeekingSacred), by scanning the QR code, or call 563-322-0769**



## **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!



## Southeastern Iowa Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### Interested in the Work of the Church More Broadly? Serve as a Voting Member at 2025'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 Des Moines on the campus of Grandview University. The 2025 Assembly will be held Sunday, May 18 from 10 AM to 6 PM. 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, Dane and Michelle Crist.

# Women of the ELCA

Calling all women of the church. Would you like to join a monthly Women's group? Rudie will no longer be leading Amitie, but some women have expressed continuing a women's group at TLC but at a different time or day. You could be a part of a new women's group at TLC. Focus (missions, book study, community outreach, etc.) can be determined at our first meeting. It will be a group to support each other.

WELCA is the Women's Group across the ELCA, and each congregation's group has some flexibility to work within the WELCA purpose statement: "As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world."

If you are interested in a monthly women's meeting, please indicate the day of the week and times you may be available by circling them below. Comment if you have a suggestion for the group's purpose. Remember, it is only once a month, but we want to have the meeting on the day/at the time most convenient. There will be a box in the narthex to submit your available times and days and suggestions or email them to the church.

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### WELCA GROUP DATES AND TIMES

Circle your preferences

| DAYS AVAILABLE:         | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT |
|-------------------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| <b>TIMES AVAILABLE:</b> |     |      |     |       |     |     |
| <b>MORNINGS</b>         | 8   | 9    | 10  | 11    |     |     |
| <b>AFTERNOONS</b>       | 12  | 1    | 2   | 3     | 4   | 5   |
| <b>EVENINGS</b>         | 6   | 7    |     |       |     |     |

Comments:



### **January 2025, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article**

*The new year brings new beginnings. At LSI, we walk alongside Iowans for all sorts of beginnings. We walk alongside parents-to-be as they prepare for the birth of their child. We welcome immigrants and refugees as they begin their new lives in Iowa. We train parents looking to adopt a child and create a new beginning for their family.*

*This January, we offer Thomas's story of his new beginning.*

In 1996, Congolese civil war broke out in the present-day countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Republic of the Congo, forcing then two-year-old Thomas Mbuthu into exile in a refugee camp in neighboring Zambia. After growing up in a refugee camp, now 27-year-old Thomas applied to come to the United States.

When Thomas landed at the Des Moines airport in an entirely foreign land in a state called Iowa, LSI caseworker Patrick Karemera greeted him.

**"I said, 'Welcome! This is your new home now! I am your brother. This is a new life. Feel free and feel safe,'" shared Patrick, recounting his initial meeting with his client Thomas.**

Thomas thanked him, explaining he had not expected to see someone like Patrick welcome him – someone who looked like himself and spoke his native languages of Lingala and Swahili. "As a refugee, I wanted a better life. But I didn't know where I was going. 'What is going to happen to me?'" wondered Thomas aloud.

**"When Patrick came to me, I could see the future."**

Patrick is from the same country as Thomas, coming to America just a few years prior. He works as a caseworker to welcome refugees to Iowa and helps them resettle, pursue their goals, and navigate the challenges of an entirely foreign place.

"I immigrated here, like Thomas. It's rewarding to welcome somebody like me to come here to Iowa. This is my second home," said Patrick.

Patrick admires how courageous, open-minded, and curious Thomas is. He encourages his client to dream big and work hard to achieve his goals.

"Life is about helping each other," shared Patrick.

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org) or 563-676-2065.

*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).*

# January-2025

| Sun                                                                                   | Mon                                               | Tue                       | Wed                                                                            | Thu                                                   | Fri                                 | Sat |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
|                                                                                       |                                                   |                           | 1<br>Office Closed<br>New Year's Day                                           | 2<br>4 PM - 6 PM<br>Food Pantry<br>6:00 Personnel     | 3<br>10:00 Helen<br>Thune's funeral | 4   |
| 5<br>9:00 Worship<br>10:00 Sunday School<br>10:00 Property<br>5:00 Youth Group        | 6<br>9 AM - 11 AM<br>Food Pantry                  | 7<br>4:00 Worship & Music | 8<br>10:00 Bible Study<br>3:30 Social Ministry<br>6:30 Choir<br>6:30 Education | 9<br>1:00 Card Ministry<br>4 PM - 6 PM<br>Food Pantry | 10<br>Pastor's Sabbath              | 11  |
| 12<br>8:00 Choir<br>9:00 Worship<br>10:00 Sunday School<br>5:00 Youth Group           | 13<br>9 AM - 11 AM<br>Food Pantry<br>6:30 Council | 14                        | 15<br>10:00 Bible Study                                                        | 16<br>4 PM - 6 PM<br>Food Pantry                      | 17<br>Pastor's Sabbath              | 18  |
| 19<br>9:00 Worship<br>10:00 Sunday School<br>5:00 Youth Group                         | 20<br>9 AM - 11 AM<br>Food Pantry                 | 21                        | 22<br>10:00 Bible Study<br>6:30 Choir                                          | 23<br>4 PM - 6 PM<br>Food Pantry                      | 24<br>Pastor's Sabbath              | 25  |
| 26<br>9:00 Worship<br>10:00 Sunday School<br>10:00 Annual Meeting<br>5:00 Youth Group | 27<br>9 AM - 11 AM<br>Food Pantry                 | 28<br>6:00 Stewardship    | 29<br>Bible Study                                                              | 30<br>4 PM - 6 PM<br>Food Pantry                      | 31<br>Pastor's Sabbath              |     |