

CLARION

DECEMBER 2023

FROM PASTOR'S DESK



He Is Coming

“See, I am going to send my messenger, and he will clear the way before me. Then the Lord you seek will suddenly come to his temple, the Messenger of the covenant you delight in — see, he is coming,” says the LORD of Armies. – Malachi 3:1 (CSB)

He is coming!

We launch into the season of Advent with a sense of excitement, of anticipation, of joy! Advent is a time of preparation. We know that the Messiah is coming...*has* come; after all, God promised again and again that He would send us **“a savior, who is Christ the Lord”** (Luke 2:11), and then, **“when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5).

Knowing that all of this has happened, we enter into the season of Advent with the keen desire to try and re-create that sense of anticipation that God’s people had even before Jesus Christ arrived. We think and pray on the reasons that God sent His Son. We repent of our sins and rest in the confidence that *because* God sent His Son, we are fully forgiven, reconciled to God, and **“we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth”** (2 Peter 3:13).

Advent is the lead-up to Christmas, for sure, but it’s much more than that. It is also the lead-up to Christ’s return in glory. Remember, **“this Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven [at His Ascension], will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven”** (Acts 1:11). So, even as we are preparing to remember Jesus’ coming as a baby in Nazareth some 2,000 years ago, we are also preparing for his return at some point in the future. **“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”** (Revelation 22:20).

How do we prepare for *that* coming? Well, we prepare by simply being in God’s Word. By being in worship and receiving the gifts that God has for us. By studying His Word, learning from it, and finding comfort in the promises of forgiveness, life, and salvation that are found there for the sake of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. We prepare by reminding one another that Christ has come, that He died for us, and that we need not fear Satan, or death, or **“anything else in all creation”** (Romans 8:39a), because none of that **“will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Romans 8:39b). After all, Jesus made it clear: **“My Father, who has given [you] to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch [you] out of the Father’s hand”** (John 10:29).

I pray this Advent and Christmas season, amid the gift-giving and parties and gatherings and busy-ness, that your focus remains steady on the One who has come, who does come, and who will come, even Jesus Christ, for he is **“the way, and the truth, and the life”** (John 14:6). A blessed Advent and a very merry **CHRIST**mas to you and yours!



Rev. Eric Longman

Inside this issue:

Pastor’s Message	1
From the Office	2
HTLC News	3-6
1517	7-8
Kid’s Pages	9-10
Feed My Sheep	11
Birthdays/Anniversaries	12
Serving this Month	13
Calendar	14

FROM THE OFFICE

Any information you need put into our weekly **NEWS & NOTES** needs to be submitted to the office by **NOON** on **WEDNESDAY** of each week.

Any information you'd like put into the **CLARION** is due to the office by **NOON** on the **15th** of every month.



The church office will be **closed** in observation of Christmas:

Monday, December 25th



Holy Trinity Office

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Pastor Longman, Senior Pastor

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Pastor Meyer, Associate Pastor

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FOOD PANTRY

Tuesday-Friday
2 pm- 4 pm

PASTOR'S CARE FUND

Thursday & Friday
2 pm- 4 pm

GENERAL OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
9 am - 4 pm



PINOCHLE

Friday, December 8th will be our next date for playing cards. Hopefully you have your calendar marked and will be ready to help set up at 6:00 pm and get cards in your hand for play at 6:30. Don't forget to bring a little something to share for a snack. Looking forward to seeing everyone and perhaps a few new faces!

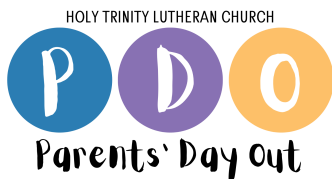
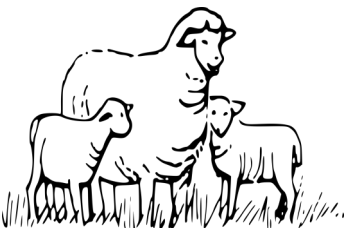


CHURCH BUS

We offer rides to our Sunday services in the church van. The van does **NOT** have wheelchair access so riders will need to be able to get in and out with a hand from the driver. We are looking for drivers to help with this ministry as well. If you could help even one or two Sundays a year it would be greatly appreciated! If you are interested call or text Ted Reinker at (409) 750-9633.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church has an *Endowment Fund* which receives gifts and bequests that are invested in long-term high-quality stocks, bonds, and CD's. The interest, dividends and unrealized long-term gains of which can be used to support Christian Education, Outreach Programs, Scholarships (seminarians), capital Building and Ground improvements, Youth programs, Church Music, Technology and Building Fund(s). The income from these investments can also be used, with Voter approval to support ministry projects such as Grants for world mission projects, Mid-South District projects, Disaster Relief projects and grants to LMCS colleges and affiliated ministries' principle or the original gifts are not used to support the afore mentioned activities but only the capital gains and interest, the principle remains to continue producing additional monies to support Holy Trinity Lutheran Church growth and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



PDO CELEBRATION MONTH

Mark you 2024 calendars for the Celebration month of February recognizing our Parents Day Out Program. There will be singing filled with children's songs and voices, love sugar cookies, pictures of our PDO kids activities, a Giving Tree filled with hearts of the wishes for the PDO program and much much more. Be a part of this blessing God has given to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.



HELPING HANDS

Our next opportunity to volunteer with Helping Hands is **Saturday, December 16th**. Be sure to sign up on the sheet in the Narthex!



ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT

For our annual ladies Christmas event we are changing things up a bit. This year the gathering will be on **Sunday, December 17th** in the Chapel. We are going to have our party earlier in the day beginning at 2:30. We gather together to visit, eat, sing, have a short message and just enjoy some time together. This is a casual event and we encourage you to invite family, friends, and co-workers. We always have a lot of women who are not member attend. The only thing you need to bring is an appetizer to share.

Please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex so we know how many tables and chairs to set up. If you would like to host a table, the details are on a separate sheet. If you have any questions please contact Pam Pickett at (479) 601-2550 or by email at pamsue27@gmail.com.



SUNDAY SCHOOL - GROWING IN GRACE

Have you heard?! Our Sunday School program has been renamed Growing in Grace! We hope your children will join us on Sunday mornings starting at 9:30am in the chapel!

Calling all performers, narrators, and musicians! Christmas program rehearsals are underway. If you missed the first few practices, don't sweat it! We would love to have you be a part of the program! Rehearsals start at 9:30am in the chapel. The Children's Christmas Program will be Wednesday, December 20th.

Blessings,
Kati Evans
kati.evans46@gmail.com

Use this QR Code to register for
2023-24 Sunday School



or visit
<https://holytrin.link/23-24SundaySchoolSignup>



HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH ROGERS

Advent 2023

SERVICE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

8 AM - WORSHIP
9:30 AM - EDUCATION
10 AM - WORSHIP

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

10 AM - WORSHIP
5:30 PM - SOUP SUPPER
7 PM - WORSHIP

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

8 AM - WORSHIP
9:30 AM - EDUCATION
10 AM - WORSHIP

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

10 AM - WORSHIP
5:30 PM - SOUP SUPPER
7 PM - WORSHIP

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

8 AM - WORSHIP
9:30 AM - EDUCATION
10 AM - WORSHIP

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

5:30 PM - SOUP SUPPER
7 PM - CHILDRENS' SERVICE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

10 AM - WORSHIP
7 PM - CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

10 AM - WORSHIP

Join us!



HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

P D O Parents' Day Out

We have been enjoying our Fall so far at Holy Trinity PDO! The Caterpillar Class has been painting leaves and pumpkins and exploring Halloween themed sensory bins, complete with colored rice and plastic spiders! The children of the Butterfly Classroom just enjoyed some egg-related activities, learning about the shape and sound of the letter E, playing an egg math game and finding little bug eggs on a leaf outside. Children in the Firefly room investigated a pumpkin, feeling and smelling its guts and roasting the seeds, making a crunchy snack. All three rooms had a fun Halloween Parade, trick-or-treating in the church offices! We thank God for giving us these opportunities to enjoy these things with the children.

We have some exciting news! We will have a PDO Celebration month in February. More information to come later!

This month we will have a Christmas performance from the PDO children:

"Hello Holy Trinity PDO families! My name is Emma Coulter, and I am so excited to let you know that we will be starting biweekly music classes with the Butterfly and Firefly classes in November. I have a vocal music education degree, and spent four years teaching elementary music in Rogers, AR. I have three children currently enrolled in PDO, and we are so thankful for the community that is being built with their wonderful staff.

I am so excited to help your little one explore music through singing, dancing, storytelling, and body movement. We hope to put together a Christmas and Easter presentation this year."

The Butterfly and Firefly classrooms will perform **Thursday, December 21 at 10am**. You are welcome to come enjoy the performance in the Sanctuary!





Toy Story is indeed a Christmas Story

The polarizing question posed over and over again around this time of year is, “Which Christmas movie is best?” We watch our favorite holiday movies all winter long. We cling to the rich memories that such movies provide. Baking cookies and wrapping gifts with Grandma as you watch *Christmas with the Kranks*, watching your son or daughter take their first steps as they watch Kris Kringle put one foot in front of the other in *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*. Rolling over in side-splitting laughter with your family as young Kevin McCallister once again thwarts Harry and Marv.

There are a plethora of Christmas movies to choose from when picking your favorite. From Rudolph to Scott Calvin to Kevin McCallister to Jim Carey, on any given evening in December, someone can sit down with a glass of eggnog and a Christmas cookie and travel to the Island of Misfit Toys or Mount Crumpit and be filled with joy that only Christmas can bring. We are even at a point now where our streaming services sort the holiday movies and episodes, so they are readily at our fingertips.

One movie (or movie series), however, seems to always sneak into the rotation on cable television’s “25 Days of Christmas.” There is no Santa Claus, no baby Jesus, no wisemen, and no big shining star. This movie also happens to be one of my favorites: Disney Pixar’s *Toy Story*. For as long as I can remember, the television channel, Freeform, has featured the saga that puts Star Wars and the Lord of the Rings to shame (there, I said it!).

Why *Toy Story*? Perhaps it’s because Andy gets his toys on Christmas. Maybe it’s because we have transformed the focal point of Christmas to be toys, gifts, and merchandise. Certainly, the thread of friendship and family is woven throughout the movie. There are a couple Christmas scenes, to be sure, but there is not what I would call a Christmas plot line. I would argue, though, that there is a deeper theological element, which lies deep within all of the *Toy Story* films. And so, I boldly say the following:

Toy Story is indeed a Christmas story.

Think about it. When Andy gets a new toy, what is the first thing that he does? He writes his name on the foot of each of his toys. This is to ensure that no matter what, all other toys know that Woody and Buzz belong to Andy. Nothing can change that. Not even in the second film when the evil chicken man tries to paint over it. Woody rubs the polish off the bottom of his foot, revealing four letters that identify who Woody truly belongs to: A-N-D-Y.

This is what our God does to us in baptism. With the same hand that he writes the law on the tablets for Moses, he writes the gospel on you and in you. When you are bathed in the waters of baptism, God is marking you as his own child and adopting you into his family. Saint Paul speaks to this truth when he writes, “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” ([Gal. 4:4-5](#)). In baptism, he graciously gives you his Holy Spirit. He washes you clean, forgives your sins, and makes you a new creation as he now dwells within you! Paul reiterates this again in his letter to Titus:

(Continued on Page 8...)

In your baptism, God says, “You don’t belong to the world anymore; you belong to me. You are my child, and nothing can change that.” Just as the skies opened when Jesus himself was baptized and the Father spoke over him ([Mark 1:11](#)), God speaks to you the same words: “You are my beloved child; with you I am well pleased.”

Satan is going to try to cover up that name. He is going to exhaust his cupboard and use everything he can to ensure that you believe that you don’t belong to God. He will lie, deceive, and tempt you into thinking that you are not worthy to have God’s name written on you. Just as Jesus is driven into the wilderness after his baptism, so will you be driven into the wilderness of the world to go toe-to-toe with the father of lies. Satan will stop at nothing to distract you from the truth. But in all the struggle, trial, and temptation to believe that you have been rejected by God, the promise of Baptism is that the name of God is always there with you. His name is written on you. You always belong to God.

God wants you to know and believe in that promise so much that he uses elements of his creation so that you can touch, taste, and see salvation. There is nothing special about water, but when he joins it with his Word, God uses it to give you grace, mercy, forgiveness, and salvation through the Holy Spirit. He does the very same with the Lord’s Supper. While there is nothing special about simple bread and wine, he joins them with his word to give you eternal life in his true body and true blood.

In the Sacraments and the many other miracles of Christ, we see that the very nature of God is to be incarnational. And isn’t that what Christmas is all about?

Christmas is God becoming one with his creation, assuming our created human flesh in order that those who believe in him would not receive a baptism of wrath, but a baptism of grace and forgiveness, as water and blood pour out of his side on the cross; the new elements of salvation for you.

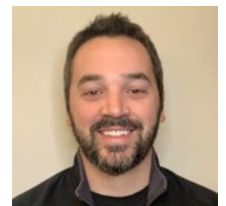
Jesus in the manger is the promise that God is with us ([Matt. 1:23](#)). Jesus in the manger is the tangible means that God uses to redeem you. Jesus in the manger is God writing his holy name on his creation that he will one day soon come and make brand new. Until then, we wait and desperately cling to the promises of God made to us by sending his Son.

This Christmas season, remember Jesus and his unwavering love for you, his friends. Not only has he become one of you, but he has claimed you as his own. And there is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends ([John 15:13-14](#)). A wonderful gift of eternal life, forgiveness, and restoration given to his friends.

It sure does give a different feel to Randy Newman’s “You’ve Got a Friend in Me” doesn’t it?

Contributor | Tyler Cronkright

Tyler Cronkright is the Associate Pastor at Family of God Lutheran Church in Detroit, Michigan. He gets to walk with recovering and active addicts, sharing the good news of Jesus in a very dark neighborhood, alongside the many congregations that support Family of God. He and his wife, Brandi, live just north of Detroit in Clinton Township.



Cronkright, Tyler. “A Toy Story Christmas.” 1517, 29 Dec. 2022, www.1517.org/articles/a-toy-story-christmas.

+ + +
**KIDS IN THE
DIVINE SERVICE**
+ + +



What is The Festival of the Nativity of our Lord?

The Festival of the Nativity of our Lord is the traditional way of saying Christmas Day. December 25 is one of the most important festival days in the Church Year. This is the day that we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus!

Why do we do the things we do at Christmas?



Many of the things that we do at Christmas have their beginnings with the Romans. Early Christians soon saw some of these things as outward reminders of Christmas and began to use them in their own celebrations. For example, when we give and receive presents, we can remember the greatest gift that has ever been given, our Lord Jesus! After all, today we celebrate Jesus' birthday, and He is the real reason for the season!



Parents: What a great way to spend Christmas! Thanks be to God that you have brought your children to hear the wonderful Good News of Jesus today! When you go home, be sure to remind your children that Jesus is the best present we could ever have. He gave up His life so that we might have eternal life. What a great message to share!

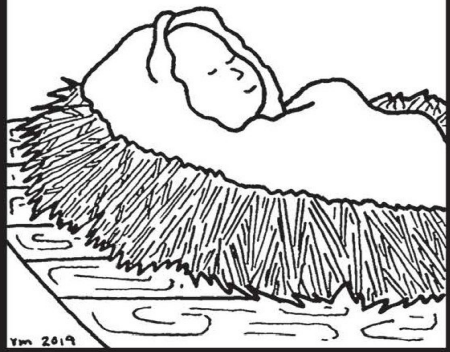


She will
bear a
SON
and you shall

CALL HIS NAME
JESUS

for
HE
will
save
HIS
PEOPLE

FROM
their
SINS.
Matthew 1:21



O COME

LET US

ADDORE

HIM



FEED MY SHEEP

October 2023

Total Households = 47 (147 people total)

Food Pantry Statistics

Adults (18-60) = 39
Children (0-17) = 0
Senior Citizens (61+) = 7
Other (*Unknown*) = 1



PASTOR'S CARE FUND

October 2023

These disbursements are from money designated for the Pastor's Care Fund. Your contributions bring a tremendous relief to your neighbors who are in difficult circumstances.



Total Households = 12

Utility Help = 2
Rent/Mortgage = 1
Motel = 9
Transportation = 0

December Birthdays

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 Gary Black
Natalie Wahl | 11 Jennifer Vojdani
Charles Scott | 21 Marian Venenga
James Stracar-Pinoski |
| 2 Camiran Brockhoff
Jackson Muller
Adalyn Fanning | Kayla Phillips | 22 Lynn Chapman
Erin Reinker |
| 3 Bob Bauer | 12 Reese Lorentz | 23 Tommy Byrd |
| 5 Bettye Platt | 13 Roger Gust | 25 Peter Tang
Cathy Dodge |
| 6 James Sij
Derrick Varble | 14 John Augustine | 26 Christopher Wilken
Chris Reimer |
| 7 Scott Gutche | 15 Mary Hanson
Chase White | 27 Rev. HL Bernthal
Natalie Scott |
| 8 Boone Miller
Charlie Wilken
Vern Schmiegelow | 17 Levi Wright | 30 Dan Martin |
| 9 Donna Spencer
Adrienne Kerr | 18 Jeff Blake
Joanne Byrd
Caleb Wilken | 31 Jenny McCarthy
Gene Kiesel |
| 10 John Jenkins | 19 Jean Gregesich
Matthew Stottlemyer | |
| | 20 Debi Hartwig
Brian Bulin | |

Anniversaries

- | | |
|---|--|
| 6 Bryan & Kati Evans | 22 Chris & Jen Reimers |
| 7 Lee & Elaine Landauer | 28 Rev. Mike & Stacey Meyer
Gary & Marcia Black |
| 14 Jerry & Kathy Lavender | 30 Ron & Gloria Sommers
Marlan & Carol Wahl |
| 15 Alvin & Gayle Brewer | 31 Andrew & Jen Ockinga
Mike & Debi Hartwig |
| 16 Christian & Jennifer Lehenbauer
Paul & Stella Ned | |
| 19 Ben & Melinda Miller | |
| 20 Dan & Laurie Martin | |

SERVING IN DECEMBER 2023



DECEMBER 3
(ADVENT 1)

DECEMBER 10
(ADVENT 2)

DECEMBER 17
(ADVENT 3)

DECEMBER 24
(CHRISTMAS EVE)

DECEMBER 31
(CHRISTMAS 1)

READERS

8:00 AM

KAREN LAUNDERVILLE

JOHN JENKINS

ELAINE LAUNDERVILLE

SABRINA ISBELL

JOHN AUGUSTINE

10:45 AM

SHARON DAVIS

PEGGY JONES

BRENT GARNER

KAREN LAUNDERVILLE

AMY WRIGHT

GREETERS

8:00 AM

VERN SCHMIEGELOW &
ELAINE LAUNDERVILLE

SAM & KATHY
WELBORN

MIKE & LISA
NELSON

DAVE & MARY
FREVERT

DAVE & WENDIE
FERGUSON

10:45 AM

BILL & JEAN
GREGESICH

SHARON DAVIS &
KATHY LAVENDER

PEGGY JONES &
MAXINE REIHMAN

RAY ESCHENBURG &
KAREN LAUNDERVILLE

BRENT & LIBBY
GARNER

MEDIA

8:00 AM

JOHN JENKINS

DONNA WINTERS

BETH KIKOEN

DAVID HEINTZ

JENA EISMA

10:45 AM

JEAN GREGESICH

ZACHARY GUST

JEAN GREGESICH

ZACHARY GUST

STREAMING

MAC MACGOWAN

OWEN WINTERS

MAC MACGOWAN

MAC MACGOWAN

MAC MACGOWAN

LEAD COUNTERS

JAMES HARTMANN &
JUDY JONES

JAME HARTMANN &
JUDY JONES

JAMES HARTMANN &
JUDY JONES

MAC MACGOWAN &
HT MEANS

FRED & SHIRLEY
LEWIS

LAWN CARE

TEAM 5

TEAM 1

TEA,M 2

TEAM 3

TEAM 4

**ALTAR GUILD
ELDERS**

WENDIE FERGUSON & SABRINA ISBELL

8:00 AM – ALLEN WINTERS

10:45 AM – BRENT GARNER

USHERS

8:00 AM – TEAM A

(VERN SCHMIEGELOW, COLBY ISBELL, SAM WELBORN, ZACH SANDERS, LOU HOLTZ, DAVID RAFFLE, LAURIE RAFFLE)

10:45 AM – TEAM C

(FRED LEWIS, PAUL BELVIY, KEVIN BROCKHOFF, DON MAYER, GIL CAMPBELL, STEVE GONZALES)

December 2023

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church | Rogers, Arkansas



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	2
3 ADVENT 1 (FEED MY SHEEP) 8 AM COMMUNION 9:30 AM EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM WORSHIP	4 PASTORS' DAY OFF	5 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 6:30 PM ELDERS	6 10 AM WORSHIP 12 PM NEWS & NOTES DUE 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 5:30 PM CONFIRMATION 5:30 SOUP SUPPER 7 PM WORSHIP	7 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	8 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 6 PM CARDS	9
10 ADVENT 2 8 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM COMMUNION	11 PASTORS' DAY OFF	12 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	13 10 AM WORSHIP 12 PM NEWS & NOTES DUE 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 5:30 PM CONFIRMATION 5:30 PM SOUP SUPPER 7 PM WORSHIP	14 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	15 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 12 PM CLARION DUE	16 HELPING HANDS
17 ADVENT 3 8 AM COMMUNION 9:30 AM EDUCATION/BELLS 10:45 AM COMMUNION 2 PM ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT	18 PASTORS' DAY OFF	19 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	20 12 PM NEWS & NOTES DUE 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY 5:30 PM SOUP SUPPER 7 PM CHILDRENS' SERVICE	21 10 AM PDO PROGRAM 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	22 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	23
24 CHRISTMAS EVE 10 AM WORSHIP 7 PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10 AM COMMUNION OFFICE CLOSED 	26 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	27 12 PM NEWS & NOTES DUE 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	28 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	29 2-4 PM FOOD PANTRY	30
31 CHRISTMAS 1 8 AM & 10 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM EDUCATION/BELLS						