



Church Newsletter December 2021

The Parish Messenger

Mission Statement

We are a Christian community rooted in God's love growing in Christ through reaching out and serving.

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
TRINITY AND GEORGETOWN LUTHERAN CHURCHES

Worship Times

Georgetown

Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Sept.-May

Trinity

Worship 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School 10:15
a.m. Sept.-May



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Contact Information

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Christmas Candlelight Services

Join us to celebrate Christmas at any of the following worship times and places:

Candlelight Service December 23rd at 7 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran

Candlelight Service December 24th at 4 p.m. at Georgetown Lutheran

A Service of Lessons and Carols: Sunday, December 26th at 9:00 a.m. at Trinity and at 10:30
a.m. at Georgetown

Joy to the World, the Lord has Come! Let Earth receive her King!

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

by Pastor Diane House

Hymn Number 253 in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book, "He Came Down"

He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have (light, peace, joy)...hallelujah forevermore.

There is a lot of music in the air this time of year. Radio stations start playing Christmas music 24/7 the day after Thanksgiving. Every store and place of business has Christmas music playing, too. We plan Christmas caroling trips and Christmas music is part of the score of holiday movies and television/streaming specials.

Hymn Number 253 in our hymnal is one of my favorites, but you won't hear this carol in public as it is not widely known or popular. The text is simple and the tune is a traditional song from Cameroon, Africa. Scottish theologian and musician John Bell is credited with the arrangement in the hymnal. I love it because it's simple message easily communicates the "reason for the season" you might say.

Jesus "came down" that we may have love, light, peace and joy. That is the reason we can praise God with the phrase "Hallelujah forevermore!" God came to live among God's people born like every ordinary human being. God took on human flesh as the person, Jesus of Nazareth, to live among us and to teach us the way to everlasting love, light, peace, and joy with his humble and obedient example of following God's will.

Jesus fulfilled the promise of scripture that God would write a new law on our hearts, that God's dwelling place would be among mortals and God would be our God and we would be God's people. Hallelujah, forevermore!

As we spend December longing for Jesus' presence among us. As we pray for Jesus to come, may we remember that Jesus came long ago as that baby born in the stable in Bethlehem. He comes each day in the way that God's Holy Spirit helps us follow Jesus' humble and obedient example of following God's will to live in relationship with God and with each other. May we look forward to that ultimate day that Jesus will come down again bringing everlasting love, light, peace, joy, and the healing of all creation. Hallelujah, forevermore!

Blessed Christmas!
Pastor Diane



Psalm 137:4 *How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?*

Christmas Message to the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

In 1926, my maternal grandmother left Germany and immigrated to the United States. One of my earliest memories is singing *Silent Night (Stille Nacht)* in German by the Christmas tree in her small house in Jackson, MN. I wonder what it was like for her to move to a foreign land not speaking the language. I wonder how difficult it must have been for her to sing her song in a foreign land.

Last Christmas most of us couldn't gather inside our church buildings to sing *Silent Night* on Christmas Eve. Some of us sang to our computer screens, some sang in their cars in the parking lot, some sang with masks. We were all trying to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land, the land of COVID. It has been difficult. Our song has been muted.

Psalm 137 is a lament Psalm. The writer of Psalm 137 is describing the pain of the people who were forced to live in a foreign land after witnessing the destruction of their homeland and their temple. They are grieving the losses, lamenting, crying, and finding it impossible to "sing the Lord's song in a foreign land."

My heart goes out to the Afghan Refugees¹ who are experiencing their first winter at Fort McCoy. I wonder how difficult it will be for them to sing their songs of faith in a foreign land. Many know that they will never go home again.

In Luke 1 Mary sings her song in unknown territory. She has received the message from Gabriel that she will bear God's son and his name is to be Jesus, and he will reign as king forever. This incomprehensible message is confirmed by her relative Elizabeth and changes Mary's life's circumstances. Mary is asked to do what no one has ever done before. This is uncharted and foreign territory for a young girl. She sings her song in a foreign land like her sisters before her Miriam, Ruth, and Hannah. She sings a song of courage, faith, hope, and love.

Luke 1:46-49 And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

This Advent/Christmas/Epiphany season I invite you to reflect on Mary's song as an old song sung in new circumstances. Many of us and our churches find ourselves dealing with circumstances we might not have chosen for ourselves and wish were different, circumstances that might cause us to lament and grieve. We are here now. Sing. Join Mary and the faithful of every time and place, that great cloud of witnesses, and sing of courage, faith, hope, and love. Sing. Sing an old song of trust in unfamiliar territory, and sing a new song of hope in a new land. We are here now.

May the Hope of Advent, Joy of Christmas and Light of Epiphany bring you Peace. Bishop Laurie

¹ For more information about helping Afghan refugees
Volunteering at Fort McCoy contact Wisconsin Council of Churches volunteer@wichurches.org.
Resettling families contact LSSWI [Refugee Resettlement - Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan \(Lsswis.org\)](https://www.lsswi.org/). Sarah Halstad
Donations contact Catholic Charities in La Crosse <https://cclse.org/afghanistan-refugee-assistance/>

Announcements

SEASON OF HOPE

Advent Theme for Worship and Bible Study

This advent join Trinity and Georgetown Lutheran congregations as we travel around the world to discover the powerful ways that Christ brings new hope to us all. On Sundays we will journey in worship and on Mondays we will journey in Bible Study. The weekly destinations are:

Advent Week One: Nov. 28 and 29, Waiting in Hope; Recovering from Hurricanes ETA and Iota in Honduras. The bible text is Luke 21: 25-36 "Be Alert."

Advent Week Two: December 5 and 6, Singing in Hope: COVID relief in Nepal. The bible text is Luke 1: 68-79 "the Tender Mercy of God."

Advent Week Three: December 12 and 13, Sharing Hope: How cooking in hope helps refugees in Lebanon. The bible text is Luke 3: 7-18 "Whoever has, Must share."

Advent Week Four: December 19 and 20, Running to Hope: A Mother's song in Uganda. The bible text is Luke 1: 39-55 "The Magnificat."

The Lutheran World Federation shares these free resources including videos of people from each destination telling their individual stories. We will utilize these resources in worship and bible study. Please join us in worship on Sundays at 9:00 am at Trinity and 10:30 am at Georgetown and also at bible study on Mondays at 9:30 am at Georgetown and 7:00 pm at Trinity.



Wednesday night Christian Education in December:

December 1, 5:45-7:30 p.m. WOW/Godly Play at Georgetown

December 8, 6:45-7:30 p.m. CONFIRMATION at Trinity

December 15, 6:45-7:30 p.m. CONFIRMATION at Georgetown

December 22: week of Christmas so no meeting

December 29, (5:45) or 6:00-7:30 YOUTH/FAMILY NIGHT

Trinity Church Special Meeting November 7, 2021

Opening prayer was led by Pastor Diane House.

Meeting was called to order by Council President, Steven Anderson. A quorum was established with 28 active members present.

Meeting Purpose: The purpose of the meeting was explained by Steven Anderson. The church constitution requires the council to get approval from the congregation to spend more than \$1000 for items not included in the budget. **The council is seeking approval to spend \$1900 for guano clean up and sanitizing of the attic area by Prompt Action Pest Control.**

The bats have damaged items in storage in the attic. Christmas program, summer carnival and other items needed to be thrown away. The council has already paid for the bat exclusion which included installing one-way doors and sealing potential bat entry points. This was completed on September 20th. The bat clean up can be done any time 30 days after the bat exclusion.

Discussion:

- Concern that the cost is excessive. There is not a lot of bat guano there and removal could be completed by someone in the congregation. Norman Anderson volunteered to do this.
 - Several responses were given to this concern. Thanks for the generous offer, but bat guano is a health risk and we should have people with proper equipment complete it.
 - Removal requires protective coverings, face masks, etc.
 - Guano turns to dust particles which can get into lungs and brain.
- Did we get any other quotes?
 - Answer—contacted other companies but this was the only local one we found to do it.
- Do they use a ventilation system when removing guano? The quote doesn't indicate.
- Do we have the money?
 - Yes, we have over \$33,000 in MIF savings as well as just under \$10,000 in savings.

Motion: A motion was made by Sam Grenquist to approve the spending of \$1900 for bat guano clean up and sanitation. Seconded by Emilee Springsteen. No further discussion. Vote by show of hands and voice, 26 in favor, 2 opposed. Motion carried.

Annual meeting announcements:

- **Further bat prevention** measures include installing a ridge guard on the roof to prevent entry. This is expensive and the exclusion is guaranteed for 2 years from this coming spring. We have time to consider this, it may be a topic at the annual meeting.
- We are planning to hold **Palt dinner** this spring. We hope to have a date set by the annual meeting.
- **Nitrate in our water.** The signs posted remind children under 6 months and women who may be pregnant to drink the bottled water from the refrigerator. A proposal for filtration of the drinking water will be discussed at the annual meeting.
- We need **new council members.** Please consider serving our congregation as a leader on the

council.

- Please bring any topics for the Annual Meeting or feedback for how we're doing to a council member.

Motion to adjourn was made by Deedra Wagner and seconded by Robin Denver. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Christine Anderson



Endowment Fund of Trinity Lutheran Church

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

The Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Gurine Gall, Chair. Present were Committee Members Christine Anderson (Council Representative) and elected members Gurine Gall, and Wayne Kendrick. Also present was Pastor House, Advisory Member. Elected member Steve Kelch was excused.

Wayne Kendrick led devotions using four Scripture texts: Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 6:1-4; Mark 12:41-44 and Revelation 7:13-17.

The minutes of the Thursday, September 28, 2021, meeting were approved as printed.

As a follow up to those minutes, Trinity's Church Council discussed at its meeting the Committee's request to purchase a printer for the congregation, but took no action.

A report from the 3rd Quarter ZOOM meeting of the ELCA Endowment Fund was shared. These were the main points:

- + The Fund has a new name: ELCA Ministry Growth Fund, with the tag line: Supporting Ministry for Generations to Come

- + Fell just short of reaching \$1 Billion in assets at end of September

- + One year (September 30, 2020-September 30, 2021) growth of 19.7 %

- + Fees currently running at 1.06 %

- + Next report: January 28, 2022 by ZOOM

The meeting then turned to its main item of business: discussing and acting on the one Initial Gift Application. It was unanimously voted to recommend to the Church Council the disbursement of the maximum amount available of \$2,500 to Jim Springsteen for expenses incurred during student teaching. If the Council concurs in that recommendation, it will be presented to the Congregation's Annual Meeting in January for final approval. Disbursement of the \$2,500 would take place in late January or early February.

The Committee expressed its amazement and joy that such a significant gift could be given in the short time that the Fund has existed.

Conversation was held on several items of the Fund's operation:

- + Updating the Initial Gift Application that is on the congregation's website

- + Designation of gifts to the four categories of the Fund and wording in the congregation's gift policy:

- # Trinity Congregation and its members

- # Affiliated agencies, institutions or ministries of the Northwest Synod of

Wisconsin

- # Affiliated agencies, institutions or ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church of America

- # Local non-profit or charitable organization serving the McKinley, Wisconsin

area

- + Maintaining the record(s) of designations while the gifts are being accumulated to meet the ELCA Ministry Growth Fund's minimum deposit amount of \$2,000

- + The need for additional language in the Fund's Bylaws concerning funds designated for its four categories

- + Steve Kelch's term is ending and Gurine will seek his consent for election to a three-year term

- + Gurine was tasked with speaking to the Treasurer concerning the Fund's Financial Report for the Annual Meeting

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be at the call of the Chair, Gurine.

Respectfully submitted, *Wayne Kendrick*

Georgetown/Trinity Joint Council Meeting

November 16, 2021

Meeting was held at Georgetown Lutheran Church.

Members present: Steve Anderson (TL President), Kathy Grenquist (TL Treasurer), Christine Anderson, Lacy Sellent, Robin Denver, Debbie Wickstrom, Chris Wetzel, Judy Gammel (GT Secretary), Roberta Hansen, (GT Treasurer), Bruce Peper, Felicia Braastad, Ryan Braastad, Stephanie Fansler, Sherry Doornink, Gretchen Frenndt, Tim Frenndt, Pastor Diane House. Absent: Keith Ward (GT President).

Devotion/ Dwelling in the Word/Discernment Exercise: Pastor Diane led the group in a discussion of a faithful innovations program called “Empathy Map” to help us understand what others are experiencing. We were asked to consider the following 5 questions:

1. What are people in your congregation feeling?
2. What are people in your congregation spending the majority of their time doing?
3. What are people in your congregation yearning for?
4. What are some of the challenges people are facing?
5. What do people in your congregation need to focus on, in your opinion, in order for the church to move into a faithful future?

Pastor Diane invited us to read “Dwelling in the Word” from Acts 11: 1-18. Pastor read the text for the group and then asked Bruce to read the text again. We were then asked to consider what stood out to us and what God is saying to us.

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order by Steve Anderson, Trinity President.

Approve minutes from Joint Meeting on June 8, 2021.

A correction was made to the minutes under New Business regarding bug spraying at Trinity.

The sentence should read as follows: Trinity has been contracting with a company that sprays the church and parsonage ~~and parking lot~~ for bugs and feels that it has been very effective.

A motion was made to approve the minutes as corrected. Motion carried.

Pastor’s Report: The Candidacy Committee will be meeting at Trinity to interview two candidates. Pastor will officiate on Thursday at a funeral home in Cumberland. World Federation Materials will be used in the planning for Advent. Bible study of the Book of Revelations ended this past week and was well attended. There will be a week break and will resume on Monday morning at Georgetown and Monday evening at Trinity to study Advent. Christmas worship will be similar to last year with Christmas services at Trinity on December 23 and Georgetown on December 24. There will be no service on Christmas Day, Saturday, December 25. Services will be held at both churches on Sunday, December 26 and will be primarily Christmas carols.

Old Business

COVID 19: Because COVID is still an issue in the area, we need to continue to be vigilant about serving food after church and continue to follow local guidelines regarding quarantine and isolation when exposed. Pastor Diane was happy to feel a little freedom about moving around behind the altar. Communion practices will continue at each church as they have been doing. Pastor thanked both churches for how they have handled the difficult issues surrounding COVID.

Joint Activities: Some of our past joint activities such as Vacation Bible School, WOW Wednesdays, BFF at local churches and a joint service at Hunky Dory were mentioned as positive experiences. Pastor mentioned that there has been discussion to cooperate with local

churches during Lent for each Pastor to create a Lenten sermon and then share that sermon with local churches. There has been discussion to create a softball field at Trinity Church with the possibility of organizing a softball team. Gretchen mentioned the Superbowl Sunday soup contest that was held last year at Georgetown and invited Trinity to join that contest this year. Gretchen will create an invitation for individuals from both churches to make a crockpot of soup and bring it to Georgetown on Superbowl Sunday, after church, along with the recipe. Members will then pay a fee to sample the different soups and vote for their favorite. It was also mentioned that both churches may want to participate in a sing along at Triangle Park in Luck the first weekend in December. More information will follow.

External maintenance: Pastor mentioned that the screens on the porch at the parsonage will be need to be replaced.

Windowsill at parsonage: Thanks to Roberta and Steve Hansen and Jeanne Johnson for the work they did refinishing the windowsills at the parsonage.

Performance Review: The following positives were discussed by committee members as to the performance review for Pastor Diane:

- *works hard to come up with new things and is willing to try new things
- *brings new worship styles and ideas to each church
- *responds and listens well
- *has good ideas and follow through with activities such as WOW Wednesdays
- *shows concern and makes herself available
- *encourages and conducts Bible Study
- *connects well with the youth

Bruce Peper and Steve Anderson also met with Pastor in private to finish the review after the meeting.

Shared Budget Expenses: The following shared expenses between the two churches include office supplies, confirmation materials, mileage reimbursement and the parsonage. The two Treasurers thought that the sharing was going well. The adjustment to the Pastor's salary was discussed at length considering the years of experience and the recommended salary schedule from the Synod. We were also reminded that Pastor Diane chose to decline a salary adjustment for the past year. A motion was made and seconded to increase the Pastor's salary by 2%.

Motion carried.

New Business:

Discussion took place as to changing the cycle of the joint Council meetings to better meet the need to discuss Portico benefits for the Pastor during the month of September. Therefore, the next joint Council meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 26 at 6:00 pm at Trinity. The suggestion was also made that we might want to have an additional meeting in February to review and discuss joint activities and help new council members understand their new roll/position/responsibilities.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 at 6:00 pm at Trinity

Minutes respectfully submitted by Judy Gammel

Georgetown Lutheran Church			
Treasurer's Report			
October 1 - 31, 2021			
<u>Opeining Balance October 1, 2021</u>		\$45,677.04	
<u>October Income</u>			
Offering	\$4,166.00		
Memorial Fund	\$100.00		
Fall Dinner	\$5,267.66		
Good Samaritian Auxiliary	\$1,000.00		
TOTAL INCOME	\$10,533.66		
		\$56,210.70	
<u>October Expenses</u>	\$5,524.10		
<i>TRANSFERRED TO SAVINGS</i>	<u>\$32,366.40</u>		
	\$37,890.50		
<u>Closing Balance October 31, 2021</u>		\$18,320.20	
Budget 2021	\$67,060.64		
Needed Weekly	\$1,289.63		
Offering Through October 31, 2021	\$46,779.78		
Budgeted offering to date	\$56,743.72		
Ahead/Behind Budget	-\$9,963.94		
<u>Offering:</u>			
	3-Oct	\$995.00	
	10-Oct	\$690.00	
	17-Oct	\$895.00	
	24-Oct	\$440.00	
	31-Oct	\$1,146.00	
		\$4,166.00	
<u>Fund Balances</u>			
Youth Activities Fund	\$3,332.19		
Memorial Fund	\$3,496.69		
Blacktop Fund	\$0.00	Transferred to savings 10/27/2021	
Blessing Bucket Fund	\$488.12		10/31/21
Funds totals		\$7,316.90	
<u>NET OPERATING FUNDS</u>	<u>\$11,003.30</u>		