



# TRINITY TIDINGS

## February 2025

Believing in Christ, we are called to grow and sent to serve.

### *Thinking Out Loud With Pastor Josh*

I learned at a very early age that “salad” at a Lutheran meal almost never means lettuce, sprouts, or anything that had leaves. It means jello molds and coleslaw and that stuff that looks kinda like green pistachio dip and is really only served at church potlucks.

For some of us who have grown up in our Midwest Lutheran tradition, or have been to a church potluck in the rural Midwest, this might be familiar. A table full of crock pots and roasting pans straining the very limits of one poor circuit breaker while another table is overflowing with brownies, sheet cakes, cookies, and pies. The coffee is always on, and there’s probably milk for those few (like me!) who prefer it as a meal beverage.

When I visited a friend leading an historic Black Lutheran church, I stayed for their potluck. They had everything they grew up expecting at church. Bountiful trays of chicken pieces, BBQ pork, mac-n-cheese, various prepared greens, rice, black eyed peas, hot sauce, plenty of pop, and enough pies to feed a small city.

Which of these two meals sounds more Lutheran?

This is one, very small reason we acknowledge and lift up Black History Month at Trinity. Each of us, including me, can define expectations by our experiences, like what will be served at a Lutheran potluck. Even the idea of what “Lutheran” is can be shaped by our ethnicity. For many of us, our white northern European heritage becomes the model of church we describe. Even if the oldest Lutheran churches in the US are Black, and one of our growing Lutheran populations in the US is Latine.

We’ll challenge ourselves throughout February to keep remembering that our idea of God’s kingdom (and church potlucks) can be infinitely wider than our experiences in white Midwest churches. This remembering will broaden our vision of who are God’s people. Some of the stories of Black and brown Lutherans will be painful and difficult. Some confession and forgiveness will be required. Yet every story is meant to break us open, shatter our expectations, and give thanks to God that God’s glory is greater than what we know.

Trust in God’s Grace.  
Pr Josh Ehrler

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# The Month of February

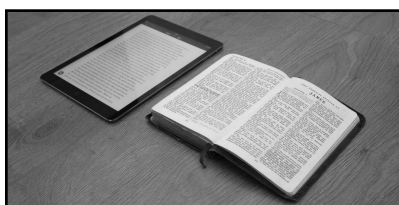
## Worship At Trinity

February continues our theme “Speak Freedom.” The gospel reading each week builds on Jesus’ mission in Luke to proclaim liberation for God’s people. Specifically, any who have been separated from God by the powers of this world. The freedom we speak comes from Jesus and is meant as good news.



## Trinity Reads the Bible

### 2 Corinthians



This month we’re reading Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians. Some Bible scholars believe this one letter could be two or three letters combined and edited, which simply means Paul

needed to stay in contact with that wild bunch. Paul gets a little honest about his personal struggles, and names a few temptations of his young church that might sound familiar in 2025. A good letter to share and study together as our “young” church moves through February on our way to Lent.

**Pastor’s Bible Study is Sunday, Feb 16, at 10:45 a.m.**

## Black History Month

Trinity has honored Black History Month through adjustments in our worship language, making resources available, and intentional study. Pastor Josh is seeking interest in renewing a study group to read and discuss books on racial justice. The first book we’ll read is [A Rumor of Black Lutherans](#) by Rev. Dr. James Thomas. It’s a quick look at ten Black church leaders from American Lutheran history who followed Christ’s call amidst slavery, Jim Crow, and significant resistance from the wider Lutheran church. It’s an important set of stories to remind us that being Lutheran is not as linear, or narrowly ethnic, as we have often assumed.

## Trinity’s Core Values

1. We believe Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord.
2. We are a faith community striving to create a safe space inclusive and accepting of God’s people, regardless of race, gender, orientation, age, or status.
3. We learn as we teach, sharing our faith and being an example of Christ in our community.
4. In partnership with our Lutheran synod, neighboring congregations, and civic organizations, we enrich the quality of life of God’s people through our resources, time, and skills.
5. We offer worship experiences centered on God’s Word and the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.
6. We remain open to new opportunities and to experiencing new perspectives.



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God’s work. Our hands.



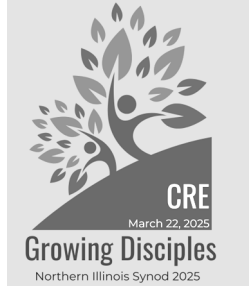
# News And Learning

## CRE/Congregational Resourcing

**Event:** *Saturday, March 22,  
Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon*

Congregations and members of the Northern Illinois Synod will gather March 22 under the theme: "Growing Disciples."

This event will run 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. with opening prayer beginning at 9:30. We will have time to hear from Bishop Stacie Fidler. Our guest speakers are from ELCA Innovation. They will provide an engaging presentation titled, "Innovation Starts with Empathy." Together, we will explore how cultivating empathy can transform ministry and help leaders grow as disciples who make disciples. Using real-world examples and practical insights, we will:



- Illustrate how getting to know your community and actively listening to their needs lays a foundation for new ministry experiments.
- Highlight how connecting with others builds trust and opens pathways for collaboration.
- Discuss how reflecting on vitality and aligning our capacity and assets with community needs fosters sustainable and meaningful engagement.

Participants will leave inspired and equipped to approach their ministries with fresh perspectives rooted in empathy and connection.

Following lunch, we will have time for two workshops hosted by both lay and rostered members of our synod. Many presenters are here on behalf of a synod committee or a ministry of the ELCA. Others are providing innovative ideas that they have practiced in their context. These workshops will be experiential and a time for sharing resources.

## CRE/Congregational Resourcing

**Event:** *Saturday, March 22,  
Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon Cont'd*

Along with the description for each workshops, this year we have added an intended audience and the discipleship practice the workshop fits.

Anyone from Trinity, or connected to Trinity, is welcome to attend. **Contact the office by March 9 to register.** The fee will be covered by Trinity and include lunch, and coffee breaks.

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## Looking Ahead—Northern IL Synod Assembly, June 13/14 at Augustana College in Rock Island

Would you like to represent Trinity as a voting member at the 2025 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly? Congregation voting members are asked to be equally divided among genders and from different households. Each congregation may register one additional voting member who is a youth (confirmed and under 18) or young adult (under 30).

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## Spend a Cozy Trinity Night Together, February 5

*First Wednesday of each Month*

Join us for a cuddly, warm Trinity Night on February 5th! We will enjoy breakfast for dinner at 5:30 p.m. (pancakes, sausage, and fruit). We will have a short devotion and then finish our blankets for college students and have games to play. You can even wear your pajamas! Plan to come and bring a friend!



## REFLECT – PRAY – GIVE

### *Care for the Earth*

Caring for Creation, or the planet, or the small plot of land closest to where we live, is always an overwhelming thought. In the church, when we speak in broad terms about the Earth, plants, water, and critters, it's a series of nice thoughts without many concrete suggestions. It's made more disconnected when we don't own any land, only move in short circles, and consider the overwhelming topics of pollution, climate change, and even recycling. Which numbers of plastic will they take again?

Yet, the Earth is our home, the soil is the source of our food, the water is what we drink and need for existence. The Bible reminds us that all we are comes from God, including all we see, walk on, and consume. What comes from God is sacred, making the Earth sacred. This is where we can begin as stewards of the land given to us by God, with an assumption that it is from God. From there, we can pray for the Earth and all its creatures. We can center our thoughts on how we see God's holiness around us. We can change a practice, or add one, that is meant for the good of the earth. We can do our best, pending our abilities and limitations, to get outside. Or simply be near an open window and listen, smell, and witness life buzzing and swaying.

REFLECT on the many ways the Earth shapes your daily life.

PRAY for the health of the soil, water, and air, and for all of us responsible for them.

GIVE a moment every day or week enjoying your corner of Creation. Offer your appreciation.

Use this QR code for electronic giving to Trinity's ministry.



Trinity's Christmas program told the story of Christ's birth using everyone! Our narrators (Kelly and Ed Handschuh) spoke the words as we progressively made our way from the pews to the front, where we sang out "Joy to the World." Some of our cast haven't been in a Christmas pageant in at least 50 years, so it was time to fix that. The story of Christ is the story of every person seeking a word of hope and love.



# Works of Trinity

## Ministry in Focus:

*Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center*

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) has been a vibrant ministry for over 50 years, and Trinity has been a proud supporting congregation for most of those years. Besides summer camp, LOMC is open all year for retreats, gatherings, meetings, and time to be in nature. Your coins and designated gifts go toward the ongoing development of programs and opportunities to connect all ages with the beauty of Creation.

Use this QR code for electronic Giving to Trinity's ministry.



Thank you for your generosity.

**Welcome LOMC Executive Director Clyde Walter on Sunday, February 9, during and after worship.**

## Thank You From Pastor Josh

On behalf of myself and my family, thank you for the cards and gifts given to us for Christmas. They were deeply appreciated.

## January Council Highlights

- The property committee reported that a new pump has been ordered for the boiler. This will replace the pump that has been making a noise.
- A discussion was held on possibly financially supporting Lutheran churches in the California wildfire area. This will be investigated.
- The council discussed final preparation for the upcoming annual meeting.
- Rob Urish made the council aware of a program being developed at the junior high school to help less fortunate children succeed academically and socially. Rob presented this as a possible ministry for Trinity to be involved in much like the Lot 12 ministry in past years.

## Trinity's Funds Dispersed for the Quarter Ending Dec. 31, 2024

### From the Operating Budget

Northern Ill. Synod Benevolence \$4,000.00

### From the Offering Envelope Donations

Northern Ill. Synod World Hunger \$ 445.00  
 Loaves & Fish Food Pantry \$ 630.00  
 Lifeline \$ 145.00  
 Family Assistance Fund \$ 1,950.00  
 TELC Pajama Project \$ 310.00  
 LWR School Kits \$ 25.00  
 TELC Youth \$ 90.00

### From Other Resources

Hiteman Scholarship Awards \$ 3,335.00  
 Kable Concert Band  
 (Sunday Aft. Concert Fund) \$ 401.67  
 Kable Concert Band  
 (Cantata Expense Fund) \$ 958.77  
 LOMC (TWELCA) \$ 100.00  
 Our Savior's Lutheran Church-  
 Rocky Boy (TWELCA) \$ 50.00  
 TELC Strong Girls 2 Women Camp  
 (TWELCA) \$ 80.00  
 HOPE of Ogle County (TWELCA) \$ 100.00  
 WELCA (TWELCA) \$ 100.00  
 Family Assistance Fund  
 (Thrivent Choice Funds) \$1,000.00

## Financial Report: December 2024

Total Monthly Budget Income	\$ 25,553.11
Total Monthly Budget Expense	\$ 21,860.00
Year-to-date Budget Income	\$242,988.30
Year-to-date Budget Expense	\$241,711.83
Year-to-date Income Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 1,276.47

Trinity offers electronic giving free for members who wish to have their contribution debited automatically from a checking or savings account. Forms are available in the office.





Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
308 East Brayton Road  
Mount Morris, IL 61054

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## Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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### FEBRUARY 2025



### Important Dates to Note

- Trinity Night—February 5
- Conversation with LOMC—February 9
- Pastor Bible study—February 16
- Ash Wednesday—March 5
- Soup Supper—March 5
- Lent Season begins—March 5
- CRE Registration due—March 9
- CRE/Congregational Resourcing Event—March 22

### Loaves & Fish Food Pantry

409 W. Brayton Rd., Mt. Morris, IL 61054.  
(Lower level of the Church of the Brethren.)

Hours: 1st & 3rd Thur. 3:30 – 6 p.m.  
2nd & 4th Mon. 2 – 4:30 p.m.

Anyone in Mt. Morris or Leaf River experiencing food insecurity is eligible. Do not need a referral or proof of income. If questions, contact 815-613-8776 or www.facebook.com/LFpantryMM.

### Lifeline Food Pantry

201 N. 3rd St., Suite 6, Oregon, IL 61061. Contact them at 815-732-7891. (Oregon residents only.)

Hours: Mon. & Wed. closed  
Tue. 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. (food only)  
Thur. 1:00 - 4:30 p.m. (food & clothing)  
Fri. 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. (food & clothing)  
Sat. 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (clothing only)