



TRINITY TIDINGS

January 2025

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

Thinking Out Loud With Pastor Josh

Happy New Year!

I hope the Christmas season was an opportunity to be with people who give you love and reflect Christ's mercy and peace. I hope, even if the season was difficult, that you heard Christ's promise of life spoken for you. Because the story of Jesus born in this world is the story of you being created and loved so dearly that God is willing to become you. So that you can know forgiveness, love, and freedom.

During January, we're going to be reflecting on, and talking together about, that very loaded word, "freedom." It's a loaded word for us Americans because freedom is embedded in our constitution and some of our founding documents. Which means, it's easy for us to confuse the freedoms we are given in this nation with the freedom that Christ declares in the gospel of Luke. Sometimes, most tragically, is the assumption that our American freedoms are evidence of Christ's promise of freedom, implying that Jesus has set our nation apart as somehow different or uniquely loved by God.

The Gospel of Luke will be our guide through the first two months of this brand new year, and we'll hear Jesus speak of freedom more than once. Fun fact: His mom, Mary, sang of freedom before Jesus was even born, leading some to believe his vision of freedom may come from her.

Anyway, Jesus will proclaim freedom for those who are in prison, as one example. Already this is a challenge for us, since we believe in incarceration for conviction of crimes. Jesus is declaring that prisoners will be free. Freedom, for Christ, is clearly different from what we expect.

This is what we'll wrestle with, our ideas of how we think God is supposed to work versus what Christ declares and lives out. Freedom, it turns out, is probably from the powers of this world that take life. Or disregard the humanity of others. Or decide who is worthy of mercy and grace, and who isn't. Christ's freedom declares these ideas powerless through the cross, which sets all of Creation free. Curious about all this? See ya' in worship.

Trust in God's Grace.

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The Month of January

Worship At Trinity

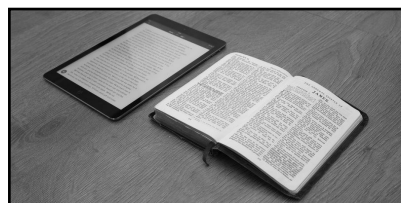
On the worship calendar, January is called the “Epiphany season.” It’s a time of reflection and growing awareness of who Jesus is in our lives and community. This season our theme is Speak Freedom, which comes out of the gospel readings in which Jesus proclaims freedom for the suffering, imprisoned, and oppressed. Each week we’ll hear Jesus declare God’s people liberated from the devastating powers of this world, and we’ll consider together how we can live into this freedom while speaking it for our neighbors.



Trinity Reads the Bible

Gospel of Luke

Luke is the gospel that frames our worship throughout the year 2025. In December, we read Luke listening and watching for the many women who appear.



This month we’ll read Luke to find some of the wider themes, such as serving our neighbors, healing, and freedom. It is a book so good, we are reading it for two months.

Pastor’s Bible Study Sunday, Jan 19, 10:45 a.m.

Pastor’s Bible Study

Gospel of Luke

Every gospel is different and every one is the same. They are all about Jesus, and each one is quite different. Luke’s gospel was not the first written, yet it was made an official document of faith as early as 200 CE. Luke is the only gospel to focus on Mary, and his stories emphasize healing and social action. In Luke you’ll hear several times, “what do we do,” implying a response to the forgiveness and freedom that Jesus declares in chapter 4. In our Bible study, we’ll see how these ideas of faithful action appear through the disciples and faithful followers. Bring your Bible, bring a friend. Our conversations are always wonderful.

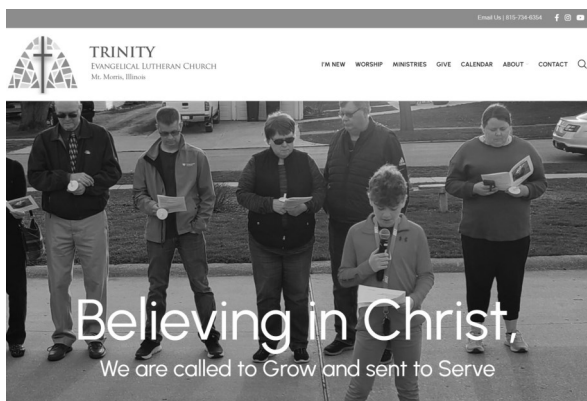
Trinity’s Core Values

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.

www.trinitymil.net



Which Sunday is blood pressure checks? What is this month's Bible Study? How do I find Pastor Josh's podcast or our worship service? How do I tell people about Trinity?

The answer to those questions – and more – is www.trinitymil.net, our new website.

After 24 years, it was time for a complete redo of how www.trinitymil.net looked online. So, we formed a web team, modeled our new site after the best practices of favorite churches, and the top pages from our old site, and started creating. The new website is clear, simple, and easy to use, whether you're on a watch, phone, iPad, or desktop computer. And, it's the same URL, [trinitymil.net](http://www.trinitymil.net).

Members will especially love the Calendar page with an up-to-date online calendar and featured activities and events.

We will walk through it at an Adult Forum on January 12. In the meantime, take a stroll through [trinitymil.net](http://www.trinitymil.net) and bookmark it so you can return easily. Then, tell us what you think.

Thanks to the web team, Rob Gieraltowski, Ed Handschuh, Jackie Heather, Pastor Josh, K-Rae Knowles, and Sandra Stengel. Special thanks to our webmaster, Diane Palmer, who created our first website in 2000 and continues to manage [trinitymil.net](http://www.trinitymil.net) so faithfully.

Trinity Night Highlights!

Our most recent Trinity Night was the biggest yet! We had to get out more plates, and we still had plenty of food to share. Our projects were: making costumes for our Christmas Program Dec 22, tying blankets for our college students, and doing dishes. Some of our friends simply sat and had a visit, others played in the playroom. Be watching for our next Trinity Night or any activity at Trinity, and know that you are always welcome. Check social media and the bulletin board to the left of the chapel for more pictures.

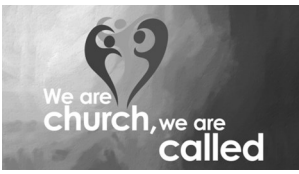
There will not be a Trinity Night in January.



Notice of Annual Meeting of the Congregation, January 26, 2025.

All members are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, January 26, 2025, following the 9:30 a.m. worship service. At the meeting we will:

- Receive annual reports from Trinity committees and groups, and hear plans for 2025;
- Review and vote on a proposed 2025 budget;
- Elect new members to the Council.



Works of Trinity

Ministry in Focus:

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center



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 all 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.



Thank You for the Christmas Poinsettias

We appreciated the large number of plants shared with everyone for the services.

To the Glory of God and in thankfulness to God for:

- Our many blessings, from Tom and Jan Champley;
- My good health, from Marcia Mongan;
- Our grandchildren Lennon, Sterling, Will and Fiona, from Hollie and Anne Guist;
- Always being there when we need Him, good times and bad, from Jack and Val Glotfelty;
- My son Seth and grandchildren, from Salley Wessels.

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of:

- Ray and Ed Husser, from Dorothy Husser;
- My sweet husband, Jimmie Mongan, from Marcia Mongan;
- Our parents, from Dennis and Shirley Hoffmeister;
- Our grandson A.J. Robinson and our parents John and Mary Lee Condit, and Dick and Ethel Robinson, from Rick and Julie Robinson;
- Our parents Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Schultz, Mr. and Mrs. Hollie Guist, Sr., from Hollie and Anne Guist;
- Our parents and our son Scott, from Jack and Val Glotfelty;
- Ida Sances and Belle Heather, from Jackie, James and Lena Heather;
- Emerson and Helen Borneman, Charles and Phyllis Dilbeck, from Dan, Mary Jo and Carolyn Dilbeck;
- My husband Philip, sons James and Thaddeus Wessels and my brother Steve, from Salley Wessels.

To the Glory of God and in honor of:

- My parents, Leone and Al Larson, from Marcia Mongan;
- Our children and grandchildren, from Stan and Connie Seavey.



Works of Trinity

Reflect — Pray — Give

Serving the Church

Giving is often attached to money. Stewardship, a very churchy word, becomes code for financial giving. See how that works? It seems like everything boils down to money. Which is too bad, because how we give is so much more than dollars and cents.

Stewardship is caring for what we have been given while responding to Christ’s call to follow. It’s everything we do after we’ve been encountered by Christ (which is more than giving cash). And one of the easiest and most wonderful ways to respond to the grace we’ve been given is to share it with our people in our faith community. At Trinity, we sing together, pray together, share stories together, support each other, and welcome each other—and the stranger—every week.

Have you thought about being a greeter in worship? Do you sing? Do you like making things beautiful? How are you with turning on a computer? All of these questions are connected to roles in worship, and the church. And none of them require giving a single cent. They are about giving a small part of our lives to support, care for, and be with the lives of others who are stewarding the grace we’ve all been given.

REFLECT on how you already give thanks for God’s forgiveness and love.

PRAY for the inspiration to envision how your gifts could serve the community.

GIVE by signing up for a week or two. Just one or two, see how it goes. You’ll be awesome.

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



Oh, the Weather Outside is Frightful!



If you are not sure whether we are having services, the annual meeting, etc., please see the notification options on the calendar insert in this newsletter.

When in doubt, please stay home and stay safe!

December Council Highlights

- The council viewed a demonstration of the new church website. The council approved the web site to go live on December 10th.
- The council approved the proposed 2025 budget. The budget will be presented to the congregation at the January annual meeting.
- The December Trinity night was attended by a record setting 38 people.
- It was reported that 30 kids signed up for the Pajama Project. The pajama packages are currently being distributed.

Financial Report: November 2024

Total Monthly Budget Income	\$ 28,668.87
Total Monthly Budget Expense	\$ 24,073.43
Year-to-date Budget Income	\$217,435.19
Year-to-date Budget Expense	\$219,851.83
Year-to-date Income Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (2,416.64)

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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JANUARY 2025



Important Dates to Note

- Church closed—January 1
- No Trinity Night in January
- Adult Forum/new website—January 12
- Pastor Bible study—January 19
- Annual Meeting after worship—January 26
- Trinity Night—February 5
- Conversation with LOMC—February 9
- Ash Wednesday—March 5

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)