TRINITY TIDINGS

October 2026

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

Thinking Out Loud With Pastor Josh

"Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." – Matthew 22.21

October is an excellent month to remind ourselves of how the church stands in a political election process. Correction: how we as a Lutheran church stand.

Here's the IRS law: No church is to advocate for or against, or encourage anyone in or on their property to vote for or against any party or candidate. Its called the Johnson Amendment.

I am fully aware that this law is lived out in many ways and interpreted widely by all sorts of houses of worship.

I also realize that the ELCA-our church-has been accused of being political. Often by voices and groups who are challenged by Christ's generosity of grace, mercy and love for humanity. Jesus has clear words about how to care for the hungry (John 6), the impoverished (Luke 4), the sick (Mark 2), the oppressed (Luke 6), the mourning (Luke 7), and the immigrant (Matthew 25).

Our call as disciples is to regularly engage scripture and our faith community in order to be shaped by Christ. How we read Christ's words, and all of scripture, is up to us. This is the freedom that Christ gives, assuming our interpretation is not centered on ourselves.

It is also our call as a church-this church-to engage our world by publicly advocating for Christ's kingdom. As faithful witnesses to God's grace, we live out Christ's words of caring for the sick, serving the impoverished and homeless, and supporting immigrants. As we are loved, we have a responsibility to love on another.

Our world is imperfect; we long for Christ's perfect kingdom. The church can not and will not tell anyone how to vote. That is your freedom. This church will hold up Christ's words as a lens through which to see this world, ourselves and our neighbors, that we may work tirelessly for God's promises to be known.

Trust in God's Grace.

Pr Josh Ehrler

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The Month of October

Worship At Trinity

Gifts of Baptism



Across the month of October, we're remembering the gifts of baptism through the five promises made: Community, Worship, Service, Generosity and Peace. These are given to every person who is baptized, and they are what we commit to offering God and our world in response to new life. What do these promises mean for you? How do you experience them and live them out?

Trinity Reads the Bible

Ezekiel



Ezekiel is exactly what you imagine when you think "biblical prophet." He carries and breaks sticks, lays on his side for long periods of time, and has wild visions, all meant to stir our imaginations and get our attention. His goal is simple: pay attention to God and turn back. Ezekiel's book has powerful stories and strange ones. It's robust, so we'll break it out across two months. Enjoy as you read and wonder how his experiences remind us of the nearness of God.

Monthly Bible Study

Sunday, October 25, 10:45 a.m.



One of the goals of our monthly study is to ask questions and learn from each other. For October, we'll look at the first half of the book of Ezekiel. Our bible studies last about 45 minutes after worship and are open to everyone. Pastor Josh leads the conversation.

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

Trinity Night - Oct. 7

First Wednesday of each Month



We will gather at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a shared meal, followed by activity, clean-up, and done by 7 p.m. For the **October 7th Trinity Night**, we are going to have a Fall Potluck, make Scarecrow Treat Bags to give away, and have a Scarecrow Challenge! Bring your favorite dish to pass. Drinks and table service are provided. All ages are welcome for this fun fellowship as we gather monthly on the first Wednesday for Trinity Night.

The next Trinity Night will be on Wednesday, November 4. Watch for details.

Camp Trinity Block Party Highlights!

Despite the rain, 75 people enjoyed crafts, Bingo, face painting, and a hot dog meal at the Camp Trinity Block Party held on Sunday, September 20th in the Fellowship Hall. This took place following the joint worship service. The wet weather couldn't dampen the spirits of all who attended to enjoy some fellowship time and s'more time with God. Many community organizations were also present to share information and connect with the block party participants. Rain or shine, God is good all the time!



Newsletter Changes

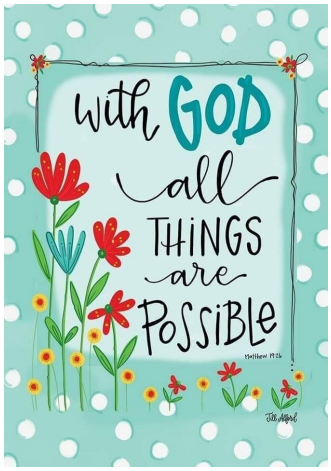


We're using new software to create our newsletter, which is an opportunity to adjust the format and style. Our newsletter is read primarily online with a wider audience than members, so our edits and layout will reflect that viewing. We've made a couple small changes this month (did you notice?) and we'll be making several more beginning with our November Tidings. A reminder that you can have the Tidings emailed to you as soon as it's published, and it can be found on our church's website.

Do Lutherans Actually Believe That?

Tuesday, October 6, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 20, 6:30 p.m.



A new adult learning group launches this month. We'll meet every other Tuesday night at 6:30 p.m. at the Oregon Library, plan to hang out for 1-1 ½ hours. The goal is simple: to tackle the question that titles the group. What makes Lutherans unique and what (if anything) do we believe?

Our first session will be a very quick sprint through the history of the Lutheran church to help us figure out how we got here. From there, it's up to the people who show up. Topics can include: the death penalty, sexism, abortion, separation of church and state, Christian Nationalism, how "we" read the Bible, raising families, what Grace and Forgiveness mean.

Works of Trinity

Reflect – Pray – Give

Giving After the Gift

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus begins building his community with a crew of fishermen. First he comes to Simon (Peter) and Andrew and says to them, "Follow me." Nearby are James and John, doing the same work. Jesus says to them, "Follow me." In both cases the fishermen drop their nets and follow Jesus. This is the fundamental vision of stewardship for our church. Anything we give, do, or offer comes after Jesus invites us into community. We give because we are given. We serve because Christ first serves. We offer what we have because Jesus first offers his life for ours. Trinity can't compel anyone to give, do, or offer anything. We know, with great guilt we could and unfortunately, some spaces will use that style. But, we are invited, thus we invite. All we can do with any measure of faith is invite. Without judgment or expectation, because Christ gives grace freely. Jesus never said to Pete and Andy, "Follow me or else…" Obviously they followed him, yet we only have the story because it happened. There are plenty of examples in the gospels of Jesus inviting people and they refuse. Or, they follow for a while and drop out (which all the disciples eventually do). Or, they take grace and run off immediately (9 of the 10 lepers in Luke). Giving in whatever form it takes can only come in response to love, community and grace already received. If you are reading this, you are a part of our community. For that gift we are grateful.

REFLECT on how Christ finds you and makes grace known this week.

PRAY for your community and family, as you define it.

GIVE a few moments of gratitude for the people in your life who strengthen and love you.

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

Remembering Our Beloved Saints

All Saints Weekend, October 31 & November 1

All Saints is a sacred weekend for Trinity friends and family as we give thanks for our loved ones who have died. If you wish to have a name read during worship, please share it with the church office by Sunday, Oct 25. You can put a note in the offering plate, or call or email the church office. We will take time during our services on Saturday night and Sunday to hear names and light candles in loving memory.



Works of Trinity

Ministry in Focus Noisy Offering:
LSSI

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

For the month of October, we put our focus on Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. LSSI has a diverse, broad reach of impact, from infants to the elderly. They run housing facilities, drug prevention through rehabilitation, family therapy, foster and adoption services and youth mental health treatment. Our partnership with LSSI is as long as they have been in existence, because only together can we spread the gospel of love and compassion in direct, meaningful ways.

Thank you for your generosity.

Scan this QR code to visit our website's Giving page, where you can support the Noisy Offering.

Trinity's Racial Justice Team

"Our world is one where racial and ethnic lines are drawn and enforced. Our world is one where power and prejudice combine in bitter oppression. But, God has not gathered the Church as yet one more example of brokeness [in our world]." – Freed in Christ, A social statement of the ELCA, 1993 Trinity's Racial Justice Team has been gathering for a while, and we'd love to have you in the conversations. Be watching this space each month for more information and opportunities to learn, discuss, and be drawn into the diversity of our church, community and world.



Helping Loaves and Fish Food Pantry!



In October, we will collect Hamburger Helper, rice and noodle side dishes.. Please put items in the grocery cart at the west entrance or in the bin at the south entrance. All non-perishable items are always welcomed.

Thanks for your generosity!

September Council Highlights

- **Finances & 2027 Budget:** Trinity remains in good financial shape, with **$4,344.79 in income over expenses for August**. The 2027 budget process has begun, with consideration of involving additional congregation members.
- **Financial Planning & Philanthropy:** Council approved seeking congregational approval to **transfer funds from the General Reserve Fund to establish a Capital Fund**. Council also continued discussions about creating a more formal process for using a portion of General Reserve gains for charitable purposes.
- **Property & Building Updates:** The boiler Inspection requires installation of a **secondary safety valve**, which has been ordered. An aging Sanctuary air-conditioning unit also needs replacement; an estimate is being sought, and work is anticipated next spring.
- **Outreach & Community Involvement:** The council approved participating in **LSSI's 2026 Holiday Hope Chest program**, continuing last year's successful Christmas outreach.

Financial Report: August 2026

Total Monthly Budget Income	$ 24,232.05
Total Monthly Budget Expense	$ 19,887.26
Year-to-date Budget Income	$162.291.70
Year-to-date Budget Expense	$168,732.86
Year-to-date Income Surplus (Deficit)	$ (6,441.16)

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
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OCTOBER 2026



Important Dates to Note

Blood Pressure checks—October 4
Adult Group Study—October 6
Trinity Night—October 7
Adult Group Study—October 20
Pastor's Bible Study—October 25
Staff & Clergy Appreciation — October 24 & 25
All Saints Weekend—October 31 & November 1
Blood Pressure checks—November 1
Trinity Night—November 4
Pastor's Bible Study—November 15

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)