

The First Word



Pr. Rob O'Berg

*You are to name him Jesus,
for he will save his people
from their sins.*
Matthew 1:21

By now most of us are probably used to seeing Christmas in stores well before Halloween. If you're a Costco shopper like I am, you might even have noticed a little yuletide advertising adorning the aisles before Labor Day! Many of my neighbors have had their Christmas lights up for a week or two. It's almost as if we are in a collective effort to stretch one month into three or four.

It's not like I'm complaining, though. When it comes to all the goings-on of the festive season we're now entering, my theme song is "Cold December Flies Away," (ELW 299, if you're interested). While everyone else is trying to stretch the season to three or four times its allotted length, my energies are directed at keeping it from being compressed into what seems like a week.

Maybe that's why the church paces itself with the rhythms of Advent. Our sanctuary—and many of your homes, I imagine—has an Advent wreath to mark the passing of time, week to week. Even secular time markers (when the tree goes up, when the baking starts, etc.) can serve to create moments to pause and remember again why this season is so special.

The one sentence from Matthew at the top of this article encapsulates not just the theme of Advent but of God's whole plan of salvation . . . and why we're encouraged not to lose focus *en route* to Christmas. Advent marks

the unfolding of God's saving plan born before the beginning of time—a plan involving both a birth and a death. Jesus' whole life was devoted to making God's life known to us and inviting us to share that life with him. In that sense, the Christmas story is still unfolding as we decorate our houses and remember why Jesus came that first Christmas.

I wish all of you a rich Advent and a Merry Christmas. My prayer for all of us is that we savor every day—every minute—of Advent and not let one single day 'fly away' this December but treasure each day as gifts not to be missed!

Pastor Rob



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The First Word From Pastor Rob	1
Information at a glance	2
TLC & NextGen	3
Prayers/WELCA and Bulldog Pantry	4
Birthdays and Anniversaries	5
BMAT/FMAT	6
December Calendar	7



OFFICE HOURS

Monday CLOSED
 Tues-Thurs 9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.
 Friday 9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
 (559) 229-8581

Check Out Our Website!

Our website is constantly being updated with new photos, sermons, event information and more! Go to tlcfresno.org and share our website with your friends and family.



**Follow us on
Facebook and
Instagram!**

PRAYER REQUESTS

Did you know that you can put in a request for prayer on Trinity's website? It's simple and you can do it at any time of day or night. Just go to tlcfresno.com and follow the link to put in your request. You'll be put on our prayer list right away!

Congregation Council

A fundamental human need is to be heard.
 Your Congregation Council is here to listen.

Ed Brewer.....	273-6123
Frank Collins.....	250-3589
Wyatt Czesinski.....	593-5797
Veronica Flanders.....	287-8432
Walt Flanders.....	287-8432
Paul Fountinelle	229-3637
Barbara Stalis.....	270-7708
Shawn Swaim.....	360-1009
Jeff Willis.....	jwillis0312@gmail.com

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Sundays

9:00 am-Contemporary Worship Service
 9:00 am-Adult Bible Study - Conference Room
 9:00am-Chancel Choir - Music Room
 10:30 am-Sunday School (K-6) - Multipurpose Room
 10:30 am-Traditional Worship Service

Mondays

9:00 am-Exercise Class 11am-12pm (online)
j3jordan@hotmail.com

Wednesday

6:00pm-Middle & High School Gathering/Worship
 9:00 am-Exercise Class 11am-12pm (online)
j3jordan@hotmail.com

Thursday

7:00 am-Men's Bible Study,
 12:00 pm-Bell Practice
 1:00 pm-Choir Practice
 6:00 pm-Women's Bible Study



LINKS OF LOVE

Our Links of Love ministry at Trinity reaches out to Trinity members who are homebound or in need of having one of our lay ministers come out and visit, bring Communion, or send cards. Interested or know someone in need,? If so, please call Lisa Collins, at the Church office at 229-8581, and we will make sure to contact you.

Deb Moe
Twindeb2@yahoo.com
 559-907-2914

Liz Davis
Twinliz2@icloud.com
 559-779-7740



Happy Advent, Trinity family! I still cannot believe we are already at the end of the year. So many things have happened this past year—both wonderful and bittersweet. I am so thankful for all the opportunities I had to develop my pastoral skills and presence and deepen on my own pastoral identity as I prepare for internship next August. I am grateful for the ways God has used my experience here at Trinity Lutheran to shape my vocational calling into ordained ministry.

Thank you all who attended and contributed to the Community Thanksgiving meal on November 23 and our Thanksgiving Eve worship service on November 26. Both days were beautiful examples of the fun and fellowship we have as a church community. I am especially thankful for Erica Bird's leadership in recruiting six Fresno State students to help serve. We would not be able to have these community outreach events without such partnerships!

Before the year closes, the NextGen staff and I invite you to attend our Youth Christmas Talent Show fundraiser on Friday, December 19 at 6pm. The evening will feature a dinner alongside talent acts our students have been working extremely hard on. Tickets will be available to purchase both in-person and online starting Sunday, December 7. If you are unable to attend but would like to donate, you are welcome to make an in-person or online donation to "Youth Special Needs." The funds we raise this winter will go towards a future retreat in the Spring or Summer. We hope to see you there!

Grace and peace,

Josh Lee
NextGen & Outreach Director





The Annual WELCA Christmas Luncheon is Saturday, December 6th at noon. Our theme this year is "Baking Up Christmas".

We have a fun program planned for the day. Hurry and get your tickets, if you haven't already! Only \$12 after church in Luther Hall!

Diane Durando and Tami Thompson

"STOCKING THE STREETS"

Greetings Trinity Family,

"Stocking the Streets" is an effort of ELCA World Hunger and Trinity Lutheran Church to care for all our neighbors, some of whom lack a roof over their heads. A "Stocking the Streets" bag includes the items most frequently requested by individuals facing homelessness.

As we enter this Advent season, not everyone is Merry and Bright! Suffering and anxiety occur year-round. This is where you can help us help our neighbors who show up weekly sometimes daily looking for assistance. We will begin by gathering the items listed below:

First aid kits, hygiene wipes, new socks and underwear, travel-sized rain poncho, hand warmers, emergency blankets, food gift cards, flashlight with batteries, prepaid bus cards, resealable plastic bags, and homemade snacks.

Keep our "Stocking the Streets" flyer with you for the next time you are out shopping. Pull the list out and buy what you can for those who can't! Pray for the person receiving these items. Please place all items in the Christmas Wishing Well!

Thank You & Merry Christmas,
TKC/Sunday School Staff & Kids
Questions See Ms. Lisa
(lisa@tlcfresno.com)



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

James Niell; Ellen Vikers; Rod Harris; Frank Collins; Coleen Schwartz; Fran Garwick, sister-in-law of Myrna Bowman; Lori O'Berg; James Spangler; Judy Friesen; John & Patty Kline; Terri Drewes; Sabrina Cook; Robin Kline; Roger Odahl; Adriene Keyes; Scott Rowley; John & Roni Grove; Barbara Cucuk; Joan Zoldoske; Debbie Zoldoske-Clark; Sebastian Truax; Lisa Korth, friend of the Techman's; Continued prayers for Reva Chand and Debbie, friends of the Fountinelle's; Peace and comfort for the family of Don & Karen Gregory and Larry Ames as they mourn the passing of Don's sister and Larry's wife, Janet Ames; Dr. Stephen & Jodi Swanson for their work in Tanzania; the people of the Holy Land; the people of Ukraine and Russia; all victims of natural disasters; victims of violence and terror attacks; our troops, first responders, & their families.



The Bulldog Pantry would like to thank the following people for helping us in October and November food distributions; Nancy Bird, Jan Odahl, and Robert Phillips. Thank you also to Linda Riley and WELCA for the donation of hygiene items and toilet paper.

We are grateful for those who have shared an Action Plan with us too. Your donations and support allow us to serve an increasing number of households in need in our community.

We are regularly serving 230 families now and because of that we are currently looking for donations of non-perishable food items. (Walmart and WinCo have canned corn & green beans on sale.





December Birthdays & Anniversaries



Gerald and Sandra Lakeman	12-09-1972
Mark and Carol Smith	12-28-1968
Angelo and Barbara Stalis	12-30-1965



In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:26-38

BMAT PUZZLE ANSWERS:
1-c; 2-b; 3-c; 4-c; 5-b; 6-b; 7-b



Nancy C. Snedden	12-01
Patrick McConnell	12-01
Joetta L. Engelman	12-03
Christian M. Bach	12-04
Paul Fountinelle	12-05
Joshua Bardon	12-06
Austin Bardon	12-06
Margarete Roessler	12-07
Candice Heers	12-08
Kristine Guest	12-11
Marge Goeddel	12-11
Roselind Gaviola	12-12
Emma Willis	12-17
John Grove	12-19
Cashel G. Wilson	12-19
Aurora E. Ulrich	12-20
Carlie J. Talbot	12-21
Tim Lindeman	12-22
Cole Czesinski	12-26
Isabella J. Perez	12-27
Kelly P. Dixon	12-30
Cathie D. McConnell	12-30
Caden J. Bailey	12-31

"On behalf of the family and friends of Debbie Barbour—who has been in our weekly intercessory prayers for several months—I would like to thank you for your prayers and support while she has been fighting against cancer. It is with a heavy heart that I share Debbie passed away in late November. Please continue to hold her family and friends in prayer while we grieve the loss of her life. - Charlotte Fountinelle"



FMAT'S Annual "LESSONS and CAROLS" Bake Sale

FMAT has been working all year to raise money to continue improving our campus.

We had the 1st Annual Cornhole Tournament in May

Luther's Libations was held in September

Lastly, the fabulous Sunday morning Bake Sale in December

A full report of all that we accomplished will be available in the Annual Book of Reports for 2025.

Come support FMAT by buying delicious cakes, pies, cookies, and other treats following the 10:30 service of "Lessons and Carols." You can eat your goodies here and share with your friends worshipping with you that morning. (Coffee, tea, and punch will be provided.) You can take your yummy purchases with you to eat them at home (by yourself, or as a treat for others!) Your purchase would make a lovely hostess gift if you are headed on to an event.

Varying sizes in packaging, variable price range. There will be savory, as well as sweet items!

BMAT Puzzle of the Month (Bible Study Ministry Action Team)

Pass It On!

Many acts of kindness and compassion are recorded in the Bible. Pick the correct person or place associated with each kindhearted act.

1. She adopted an infant she found in a basket left along the riverbank.
a. Pharaoh's mother b. Pharaoh's aunt c. Pharaoh's daughter.
2. She accompanied her mother-in-law to a foreign country rather than return to her family home.
a. Orpah b. Ruth c. Naomi
3. He restored property to the disabled son of his beloved friend Jonathan.
a. Saul b. Joshua c. David
4. Jesus restored the life of a widow's only son at the gates of this city.
a. Nain b. Cana c. Jerusalem
5. She was one of the many wealthy women who financially supported Jesus and his disciples.
a. Lydia b. Dorcas c. Joanna
6. Jesus forgave Peter for denying Him during his hour of trial in this place.
a. High Priest's palace b. Pilate's courtyard c. Mount Calvary
7. He provided a tomb for Jesus' body.
a. Simon Peter b. Nicodemus c. Joseph of Arimathea

Answers on page 5



December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 9a Layettes 12p WELCA Board Mtg.	3	4	5 9a Warming Fresno	6 WELCA Christmas Luncheon @12p
7 9a Chancel Choir 9a Cont. Worship 10a Coffee Hour 10:30a Trad. Wrshp. 11:30a Coffee Hour	8	9 1:30 Mary-Martha Circle	10	11	12	13
14 One Service for LESSONS & CAROLS @10:30 Annual Bake Sale & Budget Meeting	15 6:30p Evening Spirit Circle	16 10:30 Good Morning Circle	17	18	19 9a Warming Fresno Youth Talent Show Fundraiser & Dinner @6p	20 Christmas Movie & Cookie Party @2p
21 9a Chancel Choir 9a Cont. Worship 10a Coffee Hour 10:30a Trad. Wrshp. 11:30a Coffee Hour	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Wor-ship @4p and 11p	25 Office Closed Merry Christmas!	26 Office Closed	27
28 9a Chancel Choir 9a Cont. Worship 10a Coffee Hour 10:30a Trad. Wrshp. 11:30a Coffee Hour	29	30	31			

Trinity Lutheran Church
3973 N. Cedar Ave.
Fresno, CA 93726
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(559) 229-8581

December 2025

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Our Mission:
To Lead People Into The Life-Changing Love of Jesus Christ**