



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sharing the story of Jesus Christ so all may experience God's Love

We Value ~ Empowerment * Generosity * Identity in Jesus * Relationships * Worship Experience

January 2026

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From Pastor Denise

Happy New Year Trinity! I hope in this coming year you feel God's presence with you every step of the way.

For my article this month I would like to follow up on Tammy Woodbury's article last month and share my thoughts on the pray ground we are exploring. And then share my thoughts on my project for sabbatical this coming summer.

First the pray ground. I am excited about a pray ground because I want Trinity to be authentically welcoming of children. As children develop their faith, it is crucial that they are able to participate in the life of the church as children, without expectations being put upon them that don't allow them to be themselves. About 24 years ago now when I served a congregation in Racine, my ministry focus was around Family and Children's ministry. At the time I was also having my own children and learning from them about what it means to be a child. My own recollections were dim – funny how we lose that perspective as adults. My children were going to a Montessori school and from that I learned about Sophia Cavalletti and the church versions of Montessori style learning – for Catholics, through Cavalletti, it was Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Cavalletti and Maria Montessori developed a Theology of Childhood and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was the result. In American Protestant circles, it was Godly Play developed by Jerome Berryman. The whole idea is to walk with children in their faith journey through a learning process that allows them to experience and learn at their own pace and in the ways that children learn best – by observing, imitating and participating. I learned a lot more about this as I attended the annual Children's Spirituality Conference. But more importantly, I saw this all play out in the children of the congregation as well as my own children.

Pray grounds in congregations allow children to be up front where they can observe, imitate and participate in worship in ways they have traditionally not been able to participate – as their authentic selves. I remember my own growing up in the church – sit still, don't move, be quiet, don't ask questions. It was all kind of traumatic actually. The message it sends is that you are welcome only if you behave, dress, speak and act a certain way. I hear from many adults that this is one reason they fell away from the church and then are hesitant to bring their own children to worship. A pray ground allows children to be who they are as they participate in worship and in the life of the church.

When I was at All People's Gathering last month, I noticed that they have a pray ground in their sanctuary. I asked one of the members what their experience of the pray ground has been. They said they liked it because the kids are up front and participating. It can get a bit loud at times, they told me, but having the kids up front participating in worship far out ways the few times it gets loud or distracting. And as adults we can choose to manage our own ability to be distracted in order to benefit from having children participate more fully in worship. I've had to manage that myself when I am preaching and now I'm used to it. As we begin to have more children and families being active at Trinity we need to explore every avenue of authentic welcome.

So, as we move through this process of learning about pray grounds and what they have to offer, I hope you will participate in the listening sessions that will be scheduled in the new year. We will also try to create some renderings of what it would look like. You can also take a look at other congregations that have pray

grounds – either online or by visiting in person – one is All People's and another is Kingo in Shorewood. There are many more but I'm not going to list them all.

Second, my project for sabbatical this coming summer (June, July, August of 2026). The council has been talking about entering the Reconciling in Christ process to designate Trinity as an RIC congregation. This means entering a process that will help us determine whether or not we can be an authentically open and affirming congregation to the LGBTQIA+ community as well as people of color.

So for my sabbatical project my plan is to visit churches in our synod who are RIC and learn from them how their process went, what were the learnings, the surprises, and the challenges. And then to also hear about how they are living into being an RIC congregation. I would also like to visit some congregations who went through the process but voted not to become RIC – what were their learnings, surprises and challenges. Then in the fall when I return from sabbatical I will share my learnings with you all as we consider engaging in the RIC process. There may also be some opportunity for you as a congregation to do some learning around this process as well. With help from the Endowment Fund and the Greater Milwaukee Synod we will have some funding to have a part-time pastor with you during the summer to help in leading worship, teach Bible Study, provide pastoral care and hopefully provide a session or two about RIC. Then I could also learn from you and hear about your thoughts and questions.

The consideration of a pray ground as well as the RIC process are both about living into being an authentically diverse congregation. Jesus modeled this for us in his own ministry as he welcomed children, women, the poor and all those whom society deemed unworthy. Trinity is a very welcoming church and is already diverse in regard to socio-economic status and age. These two considerations will help us build upon what we already live into as we strive to follow Jesus' example of an inclusive and welcoming ministry.

If anyone has any thoughts about what I've written here, I'd be happy to get together and hear your thoughts and have some conversation together.

Peace be with you all,

Pastor Denise

OPEN CONVERSATIONS

with Pastor Denise

4th Wednesday of the Month

Wednesday, January 28 from

9:30-11:30 a.m. at

Hillside Coffee House

237 E Ryan Rd

Oak Creek



From Our President

Hello Trinity!

As we stand at the start of a new year, I find myself reflecting on the blessings and opportunities that have shaped our journey together. It is with a heart full of gratitude that I write to you my final President's message.

First and foremost, I want to extend my warmest wishes for a joyous and prosperous New Year to each and every one of you. May this year bring you peace, happiness, and an abundance of God's grace.

I am deeply thankful for the support and commitment of our congregation. Your faith and commitment have been a source of inspiration to me; I've learned a lot.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the members of our executive team—David, Sharon, and Jason. Your hard work and dedication have been instrumental in guiding our church through times of change. Your leadership and friendship have been invaluable, and I am grateful for your partnership.

A special word of appreciation also goes to Pastor Denise. Your spiritual guidance, compassion, and wisdom have touched the lives of so many in our congregation, including mine. Thank you for your care of our church family.

I am filled with hope and confidence of what lies ahead at Trinity. I am excited to see how our community will continue to thrive and shine as a beacon of faith, love, and service.

Once again, thank you for the privilege of serving as your President. Wishing you all God's blessings in the coming year!

With gratitude and warmest wishes,

Tammy

In Our Thoughts and Prayers and Recently Hospitalized

Greg Buck, Gail English, Bruce Peacock, Kathryn Swanson, Russell Bruneau Bill House, Wayne, Sandy House, Kerry Kirchoff

Altar Flowers for January

January 4	**.	**
January 11	**.	**
January 18	**.	**
January 25	**.	**

The bouquets are \$20 each. Please sign up on Signup Genius [tinyurl.com/TrinityFlowers](https://www.tinyurl.com/TrinityFlowers) or contact the church office. You can also sign up on the board outside the church office. (**) means nobody has signed up. You may pick up your flowers or call to arrange delivery.

Readings for January 2026

January 3/4, 2026 – Epiphany Sunday – Family First Worship – The Will to Dream: Joseph, Courageous Defiance

Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Matthew 2:1-15
Additional reading: All of Psalm 72 and Matthew chapters 1 and 2

January 10/11, 2026 – Baptism of Our Lord –

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17
Additional reading: Matthew chapter 3

January 17/18, 2026 – Second Sunday after Epiphany – Soul Purpose – Pastor on Vacation – Guest Pastor John Breimeier

Scripture: Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42
Additional reading: All of Psalm 40 and John chapter 1

January 24/25, 2026 – Third Sunday after Epiphany – Choir

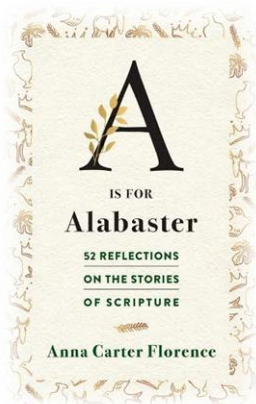
Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23
Additional reading: All of Psalm 27; Matthew chapters 4 and 5

January 31/February 1, 2026 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany – Family First Worship

Scripture: Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12



Winter Book Read



Join us for our winter book read discussion on **Saturday, January 24, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.** at Castillo's (5656 S Packard Ave #21, Cudahy). Winter is a great time to curl up with a good book and "A is for Alabaster" is definitely a fun and insightful book about 52 Biblical characters we may or may not know. Each reflection is just a few pages and offers fresh perspectives. I'll be curious to discuss your favorite characters and maybe ones you find challenging. I have heard Anna Carter Florence preach a couple times at the Festival of Homiletics and enjoy her insights on the Bible stories. I hope you will too.

Beloved preacher and writer Anna Carter Florence brings winsome insight to an array of characters and stories in the Bible—some celebrated and some overlooked. From courageous Abigail to Zelophehad's daughters, and from an alabaster jar of ointment to Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree, Florence takes readers on an enchanting tour of

the Old and New Testaments with reflections that reveal ancient wisdom and spark imagination anew. ([from Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))



Cross+Generational Advent Festival & Children's Christmas Program





Children's Christmas Program



Christmas Poinsettias

GIVEN FOR THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH:

**Kari House, Kathryn Swanson, Marcy Wilhelm,
Pastor Denise & Exaudh Mbise**

GIVEN IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Sarah Koers and David by Barbara Kendall.

**Otto Schraith, Genesa Hzmman, and Janice Biermann by
Fred & Sharon Schraith.**

Sarah Koers by Pharis Brooks.

Shorty and Lynn by Sue Zylka.

**Parents (Dorothy & Henrey Reves) and brother Richard,
and for the glory of Christ's birth by Shirley Komasa.**

**Husband, Don Felicki, parents (Buck & Darlene Kirchoff),
and Charlie Zimmerman by Cindy Felicki.**

Mike Zingsheim by Lori Zingsheim.

Barb & Tom Rendflesh by Wendy Rendflesh.

**Our grandparents, Erik's stepdad (Dave), and sister Sarah
Koers by Erik & Sarah Brooks & Family.**

Grandma Roffers by Scott & Lois Lukas.

Edward and Sophia Sostarich by Mark & Karen Sostarich.

**Our parents, Phil & Mary Lou McDaniel and Clarence &
Barbara Jo King by Matt & Darcy McDaniel.**

Husband, Ed by Doris Mueller.

**Jim Hundt, Sr and in honor of our parents Karen & Robert
Moczynski and Trish Hundt by Leslie Hundt.**

Parents, John and Viola Neiding by Karalee Helminak.

Youth and Family News

Submitted by Ray Bergwin and Alyssa Olson

Christmas Thanks

We give many thanks to all who volunteered with, participated in, and supported our annual Cross+Generational Advent Festival on December 7, our Sunday School Christmas Program and GIANT cinnamon roll sale December 14, and family movie night December 15!

Our Advent Festival expanded on the Will to Dream series from worship, with stories of favorite Bible characters told in a new way. Members of all ages shared words of hope, peace, joy, and love through letters sent to people across the country with The World Needs More Love Letters. We hope these Advent tidings bring comfort throughout the coming year.

Our Christmas program was a first for Trinity—a script written by our confirmation students! We got a peak into the “Angel Headquarters” with the angels at work and on their breaks, and stayed up-to-date on breaking news with the Heavenly News Network. Our pews were full, with 90 people worshipping in person and more online; what a wonderful welcome to our angels! After worship, we sold out our GIANT cinnamon rolls! Watch for our next sale in spring.

Thanks to all of you for supporting our youth and education ministries throughout the year. Because of your generous and welcoming spirits, we’ve grown to have over 20 children and youth involved in ministries at Trinity! We hope to welcome more families in to worship in the coming year and look forward to all the new and exciting moments this new year brings!

Hat, Sock, and Mitten Tree

Please continue to bring your gifts of holiday warmth and cheer (gloves, scarves, earmuffs, and other cold weather clothing), either purchased or homemade, and place them around the tree in the narthex for those in need. We have already made a few deliveries of these generous gifts of winter warmth to Human Concerns, but there’s still time to share more before our final delivery! Thank you for your generous support of this annual effort to keep our community safe and warm!

Youth Lock-In

We’re bringing back a favorite event for our middle and high school students with the return of our youth lock-in **January 17-18!** This year, we also have the opportunity to join youth from across the synod at America’s Black Holocaust Museum before our lock-in begins.

This is a great opportunity for adults to support our youth in a variety of ways. If you’d like to help with meals for the kids (donating food or time), set up, clean up, supervision, or anything else, please reach out to Alyssa at youthtlcsm@gmail.com.

Students are invited to join in faith and fellowship activities the evening of January 17, with an optional sleepover at church through worship on January 18. (Families, check your emails for more details and sign up!) Friends are welcome, too!



In addition to lots of fun games, delicious food, and staying up late, we'll dive into Acts 2:42 with ELCA World Hunger. This program brings youth together to learn about the role they can play in eradicating hunger and poverty in the world. As the group takes part in spiritual practices, they will explore questions of faith, hunger, hope, and justice together.

Breaking the Chains Fundraiser

The Trinity Thrivent Member Group gave \$300 to "purchase" a table of six for the upcoming Breaking the Chains Fundraiser on February 1 from 4pm-7pm at Redeemer Lutheran on 19th and Wisconsin. We have 4 seats open for anyone who would like to join Pastor Denise at this dinner event. As part of the program the founder of Breaking the Chains will be honored, Rev. Joseph Ellwanger. Please contact Pastor Denise if you would like a seat at the table, first come first served – tlcsmpastor@gmail.com.

Highlights from the December 2025 Council Meeting

- We began with devotions and shared a childhood memory of church and how that affected us.
- All reports were approved.
- We discussed council nominations for 2026 – so far we have 3 people being nominated for open positions.
- An update on Reconciling in Christ indicated that the initial team had met to discuss the process outlined by Reconciling Works and next steps for building our team.
- An update on bringing the pray ground proposal to the congregation was discussed featuring renderings and listening sessions. This process will be planned for the new year.
- The council discussed a draft expense budget for 2026. The treasurer, David, presented some things that would change in the new year that we need to anticipate. We are waiting for pledges to come in before we look at a full budget.

Financial Update for November

Submitted by David Hahn

Financial Update for November: We did take a small step forward in November. We were at a positive balance for the month but our year-to-date deficit balance is still high for being this close to year end.

1. Net income was +\$1,391; Year-To-Date net income is now -\$7,875.
2. We did have \$1,170 given for Thanksgiving even though we didn't have a service.
3. Compared to last year at this time, we are \$2,000 up in operating income, but also up \$7,000 in expenses.

As we approach another year end, we do want to thank Trinity for the financial support you provided throughout the year. There is still time for any special gifting to help reduce our deficit so we can start 2026 with a balanced budget.

Special request: For those who have already turned in your pledges; Thank You! If you have not pledged yet, it is not too late. We very much rely on pledges to determine what ministries we can continue to support in 2026. Right now we are at 70% of our pledge goal.

Project Uplift:

- Balance of \$25,631
- Income of \$216
- Expense of \$645 for boiler inspection and new boiler circuit breaker.

Impact Report:

Endowment Fund Grants

- \$1,104 new church computers (Windows 11)
- \$103 for All Peoples food pantry
- \$1,000 Solidarity Holy Land Trip Aliliywa Mbise
- \$41 for Godly Play

Thrivent

- Action Team Grants:
 - Advent Fest/SS Program
 - Quilting Supplies
- Choice Dollars:
 - \$300 for Breaking the Chains anniversary
 - \$500 for Christmas gift cards for Human Concerns
 - \$500 for snow pants for Lakeview students

Raise Right: \$1,198.37 booked to operating income in 2025.

Drone Calendars: \$730.00 booked to operating income in 2025, thanks to Patty Rosek-Johnson and Aaron Johnson.





January 2026

25075th Ave.
South Milwaukee, WI 53172
Phone: 414-762-6626
Email: officetlcsm@gmail.com
Web Site: WWW.TLCSM.ORG

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 No Sunday School for Elementary 9:30 Worship in person and online	29 Office Closed No Confirmation	30 No Lutheran World Relief Quilting	31	January 1 New Years Day Office Closed No Adult Bible Study No Bell Ensemble Rehearsal No Choir Rehearsal	2 Pastor's Day Off	3 Human Concerns Weekend 5:00 Worship in person
4 Human Concerns Weekend 8:45 Sunday School for Elementary 9:30 Family First Worship in person and online 10:30 Education & Youth Ministry Team meeting in person 10:30 Caring/Outreach Ministry Team Meeting in person	5 8:30- 1:30 Office Open 6:30 Confirmation	6 9:00 Lutheran World Relief Quilting 7:00 Executive Committee Meeting on Zoom	7 6:30 Trinity Grief Group	8 8:30- 1:30 Office Open 10:30 Adult Bible Study 6:30 Bell Ensemble Rehearsal 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	9 Pastor's Day Off	10 1:00 Saturday Stitchers 5:00 Worship in person
11 8:45 Sunday School for Elementary 9:30 Worship in person and online 10:30 Worship and Music Ministry Team Meeting in person 11:00 Renewal Ministry Team Meeting in person	12 Tidings Articles Due Ministry Articles Due for Annual Report 8:30- 1:30 Office Open 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 Finance Ministry Team Meeting on Zoom	13 7:00 Council Meeting on Zoom	14 2:00 Mutual Ministry Meeting in person 6:30 Trinity Grief Group	15 Pastor on Vacation 8:30- 1:30 Office Open 10:30 Adult Bible Study 5:00 Community Meal at United Church of Christ South Milwaukee 6:30 Bell Ensemble Rehearsal 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	16 Pastor on Vacation	17 Pastor on Vacation Youth Lock In 5:00 Worship in person with Guest Pastor John Breimeier
18 Pastor on Vacation Youth Lock In 8:45 Sunday School for Elementary 9:30 Soul Purpose Worship in person and online with Guest Pastor John Breimeier 10:30 Stewardship Ministry Team Meeting in person	19 Pastor on Vacation Office Closed Martin Luther King Jr Day 6:30 Youth Field Trip	20 Pastor on Vacation 9:00 Lutheran World Relief Quilting	21 Pastor on Vacation No Trinity Grief Group 7:00 Thrivent Member Group Meeting on Zoom	22 8:30- 1:30 Office Open 10:30 Adult Bible Study 6:30 Bell Ensemble Rehearsal 7:00 Endowment Fund Meeting on Zoom 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	23 Pastor's Day Off	24 9:30 Winter Book Read at Castillo's 5:00 Worship in person
25 8:45 Sunday School for Elementary 9:30 Worship in person and online 10:30 Sneak Peek Planning in person	26 8:30- 1:30 Office Open 6:30 Confirmation	27	28 9:30-11:30 Pastor Coffee Shop Open Conversations at Hillside 6:30 Trinity Grief Group	29 8:30- 1:30 Office Open 10:30 Adult Bible Study 6:30 Bell Ensemble Rehearsal 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	30 Pastor's Day Off	31 5:00 Worship in person

Save the Date



**Breaking the Chains Church
2016-2026**

**10 Year Anniversary
Redeemer Lutheran Church
631 North 19th Street
Milwaukee WI 53223
Sunday February 1, 2026
4pm to 7pm**



**InTENTionally Walking with the Justice
Impacted**

**breakingthechainschurch@gmail.com
414-217-0330 (please leave a voice mail message)
breakingthechainschurch.org**

Letters of Appreciation



Dear Friends at Trinity Lutheran Church,
Thank you for welcoming Patty and I to join you for worship this past weekend and for all your receptivity to hearing about how the ministry of Breaking the Chains Church helps to give new life to men who are incarcerated and those coming home to our community. We are most appreciative of your generous donation (over)

in the amount of \$1500 to support our ministry. We look forward to visiting you again soon and hope that some of you will be able to join our 10th year anniversary celebration on Feb. 1st.

Blessings to you,
Pastor David



Thank you so much for the beautiful poinsettia. We really appreciate your thinking of us. It was so nice of Pastor Denise to deliver it.

Sincerely,
Jon + Ann





LAKEVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

711 Marion Avenue
Tel: (414) 766-5252
Fax: (414) 766-5253

South Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53172
www.sdsm.k12.wi.us

Christopher Sepersky, Principal

12/14/25











Dear members of Trinity Lutheran church,

Please accept our humble thank you notes to show our deep appreciation for the snow pants you donated to Lakeview Elementary. Our families have appreciated them so much and it is thanks to your generosity.


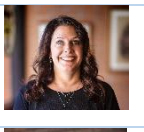

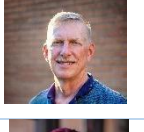


Trinity truly embodies the peace and joy of the Christmas season - truly you are a gift to the world this Christmas!

With warm appreciation,
Chris Sepersky
Principal

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION STAFF

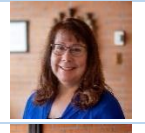
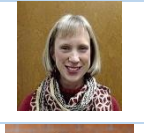


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	Lisa Maxfield Music Director choirtlcs@sbcglobal.net		Kari Pink Pianist/Organist karijanderson@hotmail.com
	Karel Suchy Saturday Keyboardist karel@studio1259.biz		Alyssa Olson Youth, Family & Education Director youthtlcs@gmail.com
COUNCIL OFFICERS			
	Tammy Woodbury* Council President woodbury3131@gmail.com		Jason Woodbury* Council Vice President woodburywfg@gmail.com
	Sharon Schraith* Council Secretary sharon.schraith@yahoo.com		David Hahn Council Treasurer tlcsmtreasurer@gmail.com

MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS & COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

	Eileen Kelley* Caring/Outreach Ministry Team kellyblackmon2@gmail.com		Joanna Miller* Cross Generational Ministry Team joaronmiller@yahoo.com
	Mike Radtke Finance Ministry Team radtke22@hotmail.com		Steve Mueller Property Ministry Team swm755@gmail.com
	Patty Rosek-Johnson Stewardship Ministry Team patty.rosekjohnson@gmail.com		Shelby Brooks* Council Representative slbrooks112107@gmail.com

* denotes Council member

CHURCH TEAMS AND COMMITTEES

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	David Hahn Thrivent Member Group djahn610@gmail.com		Aron Miller Endowment Committee aronmiller0675@gmail.com



Contact Us
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www.facebook.com/tlcsm

January 2026 TIDINGS

For more information about our congregation, please visit our website at www.tlcsm.org.



In person worship at 5:00 p.m. Saturday

In person and livestream worship at 9:30 a.m. Sunday

Sunday School 3-year-olds – 8th grade at 8:45 a.m.

(Labor Day – Memorial Day)

Church office Hours: Monday & Thursday 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
2507 5th Avenue
South Milwaukee, WI 53172