

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, TOWANDA, PA

APRIL 2023/MAY 2023

Palm Sunday—April 2nd



Join us in the waving and processing of palms as we start Holy Week with our Palm Sunday celebration, 9:30am, Sunday, April 2nd. Not only will we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but we will also meditate on his last moments before his death on the cross. Please join us for this powerful worship.

Secret Pals 2023 Reveal

Secret Pals

The Secret Pals program concludes with a celebratory luncheon on Palm Sunday after Worship. Each week in March, the senior pals sent a letter to their young pals including topics such as who first taught them about God, what is their favorite bible verse or hymn, and gifts God has given them. Eleven children were involved this year. Thank you to all participants on another great program!

Bear Creek Camp Work Day



BEAR CREEK CAMP

Explore, celebrate & grow in God's creation!

Work Day & May Play Day

9:00 am - Work Day Begins
11:00 am - May Play Day Begins
 Hiking, nature center open, rec hall open

12 pm - Free Lunch for All!
1:00 pm - Gathering in the Courtyard
 Q&A about BCC Summer Camp
 NEPA Synod Youth Update

1:30-3:00 pm - Activities Continue hiking
 camp store open, rec hall open, boating
3:00 pm - Closing Words and Songs

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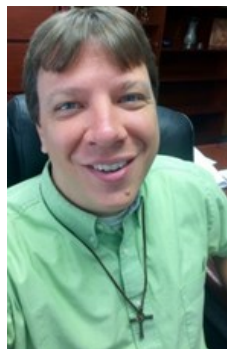
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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 Towanda, PA 18848

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 God's work. Our hands.



**A Message from
Pastor Jira Albers**

***“For by
grace you
have been
saved
through faith,
and this is
not your own
doing; it is
the gift of
God”***

Ephesians 2:8

What Is Faith?

What is faith? When we say that we are “saved by grace through faith” what exactly are we talking about? Is there a list of religious notions to which we need to agree in order to have faith?

“Faith” is said to be one of the defining traits of those who follow Jesus Christ. But, I am not certain that we necessarily take the time to consider exactly what “faith” means. We will start by looking at the Bible.

The word that we translate as “faith” in Greek, πίστις (Pistis) means “to be persuaded.” This specific idea of persuasion has a hint of “guarantee” in it, so biblically “faith” means that we are “persuaded by God’s guarantee.” In short, faith means, “trust.” According to our New Testament Greek, faith means that we “trust God’s promises.”

The Hebrew word that we translate as “faith” is)אמונה (emunah). “Emunah” is an action oriented word that means “support.” The idea is that we “support” what God is doing. This is an active “faith” in which we strive to be the “image of God” on this earth that we were created to be at the very beginning of humanity’s story in Genesis 1:27.

Put together, the biblical view of faith is: “Trusting God’s promises and striving to support what God is doing in creation.”

Faith is not the same as adhering to a set of beliefs or doctrines. Faith is not about discerning who is “in” or who is “out” based upon a particular religious or moral stance to which the person subscribes. Biblical faith is relational. Biblical faith is about trusting God’s promises and being a part of what God cares about.

In the Gospel of John, when Jesus says, “Come and see” to Andrew and Simon, they trust him enough to follow. They form a relationship with Jesus. As they follow him more and more, they support what he is doing more and more. Trusting and following Jesus is what the life of faith is all about. It is what it means to be called the followers of Jesus.

As a church, we proclaim God’s promises and strive to support all that Jesus cares about so that we might be people of “faith.”

The Question Box

(Questions About Our Christian Life)

What if I failed in my Lenten discipline?”

One of the first years that I started taking the idea of a Lenten discipline seriously, I gave up chocolate. I did great, until I was offered a chocolate chip cookie in class, and I haphazardly took a bite. I was devastated because I had been doing so well. Yet, even failure in a discipline makes us realize just how much we need Jesus’ forgiveness. That realization in itself drives us closer to God, and that is the whole point of a Lenten discipline. So, even a failure is a win. – Pastor Jira Albers



Parish News

Holy Week Services



Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 2nd at 9:30 am

Maundy Thursday, April 6th at 7:00 pm

Good Friday, April 7th at 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday, April 9th, Sunrise Service at 6:30 am on the lawn at the First Presbyterian Church

Easter Sunday at 9:30 am

Day of Pentecost



Sunday, May 28th at our 9:30am worship service we will celebrate the day of Pentecost. On Pentecost, which takes place on the 50th day (the seventh Sunday) after Easter Sunday, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-31). It is viewed as the birthday of the church, and we will celebrate the Holy Spirit as God's gift to us. Come to Sunday worship and celebrate with us.

Upcoming Gospel Readings

April 2nd (Palm Sunday)
Matthew 26:14--27:66

April 6th (Maundy Thursday)
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

April 9th (Easter Sunday)
Matthew 28:1-10

April 16th
John 20:19-31

April 23rd
Luke 24:13-35

April 30th (Good Shepherd Sunday)
John 10:1-10

May 7th
John 14:1-14

May 14th
John 14:15-21

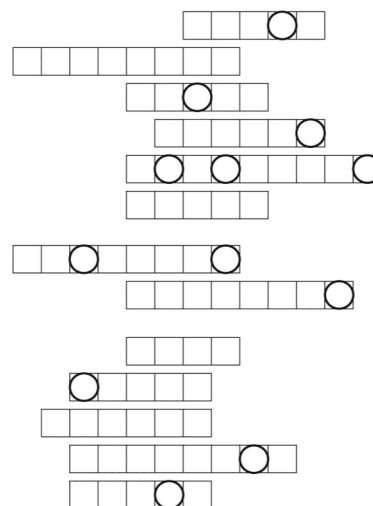
May 21st
John 17:1-11

May 28th (Day of Pentecost)
John 20:19-23

Puzzle!

After completing this Easter crossword, unscramble the circled letters to discover a special word:

1. What Jesus was wrapped in
2. The site of Jesus' crucifixion
3. One of the rulers who questioned Jesus
4. He washed his hands of Jesus
5. Followers of Jesus
6. He denied Christ
7. A large hill
8. The feast celebrating escape from Egypt
9. Jesus' mother
10. A Jewish teacher
11. The doubting disciple
12. Jesus was mistaken for this
13. One of Peter's other names



Answers: 1. cloth, 2. Golgotha, 3. Herod, 4. Pilate, 5. disciples, 6. Peter, 7. mountain, 8. Passover, 9. Mary, 10. rabbi, 11. Thomas, 12. gardener, 13. Simon; resurrection



Parish News Continued



Holy Trinity Sunday, June 4th

Join in a celebration of our namesake Holy Trinity with fellowship and cake after 9:30 am Worship.

Additional information forthcoming.



Candles and Bulletins

Honor your loved ones by sponsoring the church candles and bulletins throughout the year. Sponsorship is \$20.00 and you can choose to contribute one time or as often as you wish.

The envelopes are dated, so you can choose a specific week in which to honor your special loved ones.

Envelopes are available through the end of this year. Pick one up in the back of the church, fill it out, enclose your donation, and drop it in the collection plate. If you would like to sponsor, but cannot pick up an envelope, contact Deb at trinluth@epix.net or 570-265-5322.



Mothers Day - May 14th

Jokes only a mother could love

*"Why is a computer so smart?
It listens to its motherboard."*

*Why do mother kangaroos hate rainy days?
Because their kids have to play inside!*

Columbarium Space Available

As you make your end of life arrangements do not forget that the church has columbarium space available.

Call (570) 265-5322

Thank You Members Of Christ!

- *Thank you to Doreen Secor for finalizing the 2022 Treasurer's Report.
- *Thank you to Cathy Bellanca and Debbie and Philippi for joining the Altar Guild team.
- *Thank you to Korrie Kunkle and Ron Cunfer for taking on additional assistant duties.
- *Thank you to Maureen Engelhard for heading up the Secret Pals program.
- *Thank you to Cathy, Kay, Joyce, Maureen, Korrie, Kynlee, Tammy, Doreen, and Sara for being Secret Pals.



A Closer Look at the Bible – Pastor Jira Albers

The Last Shall Be First And The First Shall Be Last

Jesus famously says in Matthew 20:26, “the last will be first and the first will be last.” It is a shocking reversal of our expectations in this life. In this life, we assume certain things: those who work harder and longer deserve better pay; those who are smarter and more education deserve a better standing in life; and in the ancient world, the oldest gets the most. But, the Bible teaches us over and over again that God does not play by our rules, no matter how much sense we think they make. The Bible tells story after story about how God chooses the last, least, and lost. The parable of the land owner is a great example of what God has been trying to teach us for a very, very long time. Here is the parable just in case you have not heard it for some time.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last” (Matthew 20:1-16).

As you can clearly see, just because our expectations in this world supports the lifting up of those who have worked long and hard, that does not mean that God agrees. As you can clearly read, just as the vineyard owner chooses to be merciful and just to the latecomer, so too God chooses to be merciful and just to the latecomer.

This is not a new revelation. In fact, this disruption of our expectations through the preference for the latecomer reaches back to our earliest biblical stories. In the Genesis creation story found in chapter one, the animals are created before humans, yet the humans are the ones who are given “dominion” over the first born, or first created. The last shall be first. We see this upsetting of the cultural expectation of preference for the firstborn again in the story of Cain and Abel. Cain, the firstborn, brings an offering to the Lord as does his younger brother Abel. The Bible says, *“And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”* (Genesis 4:4-5). Of course, we know what happens when expectations are not met: anger. Cain murders his brother Abel.

This does not deter God from choosing whomever God desires. Jacob is chosen over his brother Esau. Joseph, the youngest, is chosen to save the world over any of his older brothers. And, in Luke we see over and over again how God cares primarily, not about the powerful and respected, but gives special attention and blessing to the last, least, and lost. *“Blessed are you who are poor...” “Blessed are you who are hungry now...” “Blessed are you who weep”* (Luke 6:20-21). In other words, the last shall be first and the first shall be last. God is God. God chooses whomever God pleases. We follow God, God does not follow us. God’s love and mercy means that sometimes the last come first.



HIGHLIGHTS OF CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 27, 2023

Church Council Meeting was held via ZOOM with the following Council Members in attendance: Pastor Jira Albers, Thelma Allis, Ron Cunfer, Maureen Engelhard, Jennifer Kaniuka, Korrie Kunkle, Tammy Lockhart, and Doreen Secor.

AGENDA: A motion was made by Thelma, seconded by Jennifer to approve the Agenda with additions. Motion carried.

OPENING STATEMENT/MISSION AND VISION: Synod Job Update: Pastor is working with different schools to help get new ideas for the new Lay Ministry Program. A “game plan” will be presented to the Synod Council.

MINUTES: Maureen sent out the Minutes from the 1/23/2023 meeting. Having been received and read by everyone Tammy made a motion to accept the Minutes, seconded by Korrie. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer's Report for February was not complete at time of the Council Meeting. Doreen and Deb are still working on the year end Treasurer's Report for the Congregation. A few categories need to be revised. Tammy made a motion to take the money out of the Love Account and put it in to the Columbarium Account. Ron seconded the motion. Motion carried. Doreen said she checked amount we paid the Accountant last year and the amount of \$487.00 that was in the original End of the Year Treasurer's Report is correct. The corrected and revised End of the Year Treasurer's Report will be presented to the congregation for approval on March 19th after Service. Notice will be sent out to the congregation.

PASTOR'S REPORT: He completed a Sermon Series in January/February on our Faith Values. Pastor is working a Part-Time position at the Synod recreating the Lay Ministry Program. He is preparing for Holy Week and Easter. He continues to go to Skilled Nursing and give Communion. He is working on the Towanda High School musical.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER: Ash Wednesday Service was held at 12:15 p.m. The late afternoon Giving of Ashes had to be canceled due to snow and ice. Virtual Wednesday night Services will be on at 7:00 p.m. through Lent. A Service of Prayer Around the Cross will be held during Lent. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services will be 7:00 p.m. Easter Service will be at 9:30 a.m. Supply Pastor pay was brought to a Motion, Maureen made the Motion that a Supply Pastor be paid \$200.00 according to Synod Guidelines and mileage according to government rates. Tammy seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

SERVING TEAM: Tammy thought we could help CHOP again as a Spring Service Project. She will see about us doing it in May after Easter.

STUDY TEAM: The Secret Pals Program for the children is set up. The letters to the children will start going out in March. It will end on April 2nd with a Reveal Party and brunch after Service. Rebecca Hodgdon will be the Children's Church Team Leader.

SHARING/INVITING TEAM: We should send out Invitation Cards to invite people to Church Service and include the Schedule for Holy Week.

PROPERTY TEAM REPORT: Comcast is now our phone and internet provider. We did get some credit back from Frontier. They do have a cap on the amount they will give back. The Council went over where regular church maintenance supplies are and who purchases them. We also divided some of the chores that need to be done weekly. Cindy Estelle previously did many of these chores selflessly for the congregation.

PERSONNEL: Nathan Milarta has currently cleaning every other week. He will be asked to return to doing this weekly.

ITEMS “FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: Synod Assembly will be May 1-3 at Kalahari Resort. We will ask for representatives from the congregation. This will be the first in-person assembly in a few years.

A motion was made by Ron seconded by Jennifer to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Next scheduled Council Meeting is April 3rd at 6:30 p.m. Pastor closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully Summited,
Maureen Engelhard

Church Council Secretary

April 2023 Birthdays and Anniversaries

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6 Mason Kunkle	7 Michael Wallitsch	8
9	10 Betty Blatz	11	12	13	14	15 Brianna Brimmer Tammy Lockhart
16	17	18 Roger Blatz	19	20 Karen Troup	21	22
23 30	24 Katie Feusner Jim Philippi Richard Seaberg Jr Bob Stroudt Jr	25	26	27	28	29

May 2023 Birthdays and Anniversaries

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3 Mary Ann Feusner	4 Eric Horn Christian Thomason	5	6
7	8	9 Quinn Cantellops Natalee Hicks	10	11	12	13 Ruth Russell
14	15	16 Cassie Gardner Mike and Melissa Cantellops	17 Rachel Champluvier	18 David Estelle	19	20
21 Peggy Cranmer	22	23 Isaac Albers	24 Joe Stoudt Mary Horton Peter & Sandra Hart	25	26	27 Brock Champluvier
28 Dan & Karen Troup	29	30 Matthew Dunn Christine Griffith	31 Duane & Bree Carrington			

April 2023 Meetings and Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Hart Center reserved 11am-4:00pm
2 Palm Sunday	3 6:30 Council Meeting	4 9:00 Bible Study 10:15 Worship at PCH	5	6 Maundy Thursday 7:00 pm Worship 10am Worship at Skilled	7 Good Friday 7:00 pm Worship	8 Hart Center reserved 11am-4:00pm
9 Easter Sunday	10	11 9:00 Bible Study	12	13 7:00 pm VBS Meeting 9:00 Communion at PCH	14	15
16 Congregational meeting after Worship to approve treasurer's report	17	18 9:00 Bible Study	19	20 10:30 Grace Connection Meeting	21	22
23 30	24 6:30 Council Meeting	25 9:00 Bible Study	26	27	28	29

May 2023 Meetings and Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2 10:15 Worship at Personal Care Home	3	4 10:00 Worship at Skilled Nursing	5	6
7	8	9 9:00 Bible Study	10	11 9:00 Communion at Personal Care Home	12	13 Hart Center reserved 11am-4:00pm
14 Mother's Day	15	16 9:00 Bible Study Election Day	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 9:00 Bible Study- last one until fall	24	25	26	27 Day of Pentecost
28 Last children's church for summer break	29 Memorial Day	30	31			



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

SYNOD NEWS



OUR FAITH IN ACTION

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Bangor had the vision to extend the use of our outdoor grove for our community. When the pandemic hit in 2020, we found that our grove provided a new opportunity to worship together before we opened for indoor worship in late fall. Our vision took on a new reason: to make the grove more accessible and available for more use to complement worship.

The first step identified was building a walkway to make the grove easy to enter and exit. We applied for a grant from the Synod Witness and Service Team Ministry and received it. (We also applied for a special ELCA grant but did not receive the ELCA grant.) As buying supplies became an issue, we needed to apply for a second Witness and Service grant. We received this grant in June of 2022, which enabled us to complete the walkway for our 50th Anniversary picnic and joint worship with Christ Lutheran Church in Mt. Bethel.

Since the completion, we have held several outdoor worship services. We have also added "Faith by Firelight", a monthly gathering for anyone who wants to be in God's beautiful creation, play a few bible trivia games and enjoy s'mores. God has blessed our congregation with this beautiful space, and we keep visioning and planning for ways to make it a safe haven for our community and us. We are thankful that this grant was made possible through mission support given by congregations in our Synod.





JUNE 1-3 2023 AT
KALAHARI RESORT

ATTENTION ALL CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS

Now is the time to figure out who will be your voting members at the synod assembly! Don't worry, it will be well worth their time and yours! Let's have a record turnout, as we gather together (in person) as a synod for the first time since the Great Disruption of 2020. If you have any questions contact the synod office, and together we'll figure it out together! REGISTER ONLINE at godslove.org/

Did you know that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod is a Reconciling in Christ organization?



We believe that God values and embraces each person as a beloved child, that the Spirit gives a diversity of gifts for the common good, and that Jesus Christ calls us to work for justice.

MEMES FOR YOUR EASTER DELIGHT



Trinity Leadership Directory

Officers & Staff:

Pastor/Pres.—Jira A. Albers, MDiv.....265-5322
Organist - Kay Champluvier.....746-3641
Vice President – Ron Cunfer.....247-7383
Office Manager – Deb Finan.....265-5332
Fin. Secretary – Doreen Secor265-3832
Secretary - Maureen Engelhard.....247-2678
Ministers—All the members of Trinity

Council Members:

Thelma Allis 265-4230
Ron Cunfer..... 814-234-8796
Maureen Engelhard.....247-2678
Jennifer Kaniuka 363-5793
Korrie Kunkle 265-9886
Tammy Lockhart 265-7706

Contact Trinity

Office Telephone: 570-265-5322
Homepage: <http://www.trinluth.com>
Email: trinluth@epix.net
In case of emergency, contact Pastor Jira his home:
570-363-2951

Serving us in worship:

The Rev. Jira A. Albers, presiding minister

Altar Guild

April—Maureen Engelhard

May—Cathy Bellanca

April 2—Palm Sunday

Acolyte– Kynlee Kunkle
Lector– Korrie Kunkle
Communion Assistant– Korrie Kunkle
Ushers– Ron and Ruth Russell
Counter– Ron Cunfer

April 9—Easter Sunday

Acolyte– Jennifer Kaniuka
Lector– Ron Cunfer
Communion Assistant– Maureen Engelhard
Ushers– Paul and Aggi Cook
Counter– Maureen Engelhard

April 16—Second Sunday of Easter

Acolyte– Trinity Pugh
Lector– Doreen Secor
Communion Assistant– Randeale Albers
Ushers– Thelma Allis and Doreen Secor
Counter—Doreen Secor

April 23—Third Sunday of Easter

Acolyte– Ember Albers
Lector– Jeff Lockhart
Communion Assistant– Cathy Bellanca
Ushers– Lois and Duane Carrington
Counter– Ron Cunfer

April 30, 2023—Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acolyte– Kynlee Kunkle
Lector– Korrie Kunkle
Communion Assistant– Maureen Engelhard
Ushers– Ruth & Ron Russell
Counter– Korrie Kunkle

May 7, 2023—Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acolyte– Jennifer Kaniuka
Lector– Ron Cunfer
Communion Assistant– Ron Cunfer
Ushers– Sue Alexander and Joyce Detharidge
Counter– Maureen Engelhard

May 14, 2023—Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acolyte– Kynlee Kunkle
Lector– Korrie Kunkle
Communion Assistant– Korrie Kunkle
Ushers– Paul and Aggi Cook
Counter– Korrie Kunkle

May 21, 2023—Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acolyte– Ember Albers
Lector– Jeff Lockhart
Communion Assistant– Cathy Bellanca
Ushers– Thelma Allis and Doreen Secor
Counter– Doreen Secor

May 28, 2023—Pentecost

Acolyte– Mavis Pugh
Lector– Ron Cunfer
Communion Assistant– Randeale Albers
Ushers– Ron and Ruth Russell
Counter– Ron Cunfer

Trinity Lutheran Church
908 South Main Street
Towanda PA 18848

TRINITY TRUMPETER

April 2023/May 2023

Come and See, Come and Serve, Follow Christ

Sunday Morning Schedule
Service of Holy Communion at 9:30 AM

Trinity Values:

Christ Centered Worship
Accepting Relationships
Intentionally Invitational
Sacrificial Service
Giving of Yourself