

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, TOWANDA, PA

DECEMBER 2018/JANUARY 2019

Annual Meeting January 20

The Annual Congregational Meeting for Trinity will be held January 20 immediately following the worship service.

In order to prepare the packet and give the congregation ample time to pursue all the items, all committee reports need to be in the office by January 1st. The report will be available on January 6th to give everyone three weeks lead time before the meeting.



Pastor's Eleventh Annual Chili Cook



Again this year, and after the Annual Meeting, there will be three awards in the chili cook off: **best traditional chili, hottest chili and most unusual chili**—think of the strangest thing you can put in a chili and surprise everyone. Prizes will be awarded for the best in each category. A sign up sheet will be out soon so keep an eye out for it. Also, you can let the office know if you want to enter. It is always a fun day with lots of good food, fun and laughs!!

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!!!

Love Baskets will be assembled on December 18. You can leave donated items on the table in the Hart Center.



In This Issue

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Annual Meeting | 1 |
| Chili Cook Off | 1 |
| Love Baskets | 1 |
| Pastor's Message | 2 |
| The Question Box | 2 |
| Parish News | 3 |
| Adult Education/Book Club | 3 |
| A Closer Look | 4 |
| Parish News Contd. | 5 |
| Caring and Sharing | 5 |
| Thank You | 5 |
| Parish News Contd. | 6 |
| Synod News | 7 |
| Synod News | 8 |
| Calendars | 9 |
| Calendars | 10 |
| Directory | 11 |

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

908 S. Main Street
Towanda, PA 18848

570-265-5322
trinluth@epix.net
www.trinluth.com



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



Pastor's Message



Grit: A Faith Perspective



**A Message From
Pastor Jira Al-
bers**

When evaluating the state of the church and the world, several recent discussions with church leaders has focused on the lack of “grit” in today’s people. What is grit? Psychologist Angela Lee Duckworth (who has made grit the focus of her study for years) defines grit as “the ability to persevere in pursuing a future goal over a long period of time and not giving up... It is having stamina. It’s sticking with your future, day-in, day-out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it’s a marathon, not a sprint.”

The idea of grit is nothing new. Our grandparents encouraged this same perseverance in the face of struggle. Somehow, grit has faded from some in our culture and many are easily devastated by the challenges of life. Some turn to drugs, some succumb to the pressures of culture, and others find some other form of release from the hard knocks in life. They lack the ability to endure through great struggle.

The debilitating inability to endure, however, is not something new to our culture. The writer of Revelation was encouraging grit in all seven of his congregations as they faced persecutions from both Rome and the local synagogues who were increasingly not

allowing Christians to participate in Sabbath worship. Some of the congregations were giving up on faith in one way shape or form because of the persecutions. Others were holding fast. But, to all John preached a word of hope that God will bring them to the other side of these persecutions. He gave a word of hope so that they might endure in faith; so that they might have grit.

Christian grit is a little different though than the “pull yourself up by the bootstraps” kind of grit that your grandparents encouraged. Rather than trusting in oneself to make it through, Christians find their grit by trusting in God’s promises. Noah built a ship based on God’s promises. Abraham and Sarah waited for a child for years based on God’s promises. Moses led the Israelites in the wilderness for years based on the promise of a land to call their own. Paul trusted in God’s provision while imprisoned multiple times. And, Jesus prayed, “not what I will, but what you will” (Mark 14:36) when facing his death while praying in the garden.

Christian “grit” is a faith that rests on the promises of God and therefore is full of hope (Romans 15:13). Jesus does not promise a life free from struggle, but Jesus does promise new life after the struggle. That is the basis of grit.

*“By your
endurance
you will
gain your
lives.”*

Luke 21:19

The Question Box

(Questions About Our Christian Life)

Was Jesus a Jew or a Christian?”

Jesus was a Jew. He was raised in a synagogue and taught in the temple. He became a Rabbi and continued to teach in the Synagogues. Christians are followers of Christ. It would be weird to say that Jesus is Christian. Does he follow himself? Christianity is actually an expression of Judaism with a focus on Christ. – Pastor Jira



Parish News

Advent Services



Wednesdays, December 5th, 12th, & 19th.

Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas through Advent devotions, the Advent wreath and weekly evening services.

Before the service at **6:00 pm**, we will have a soup supper for all! Various soups are being planned. At **7:00 pm**, Holden's Evening Prayer Service with song liturgy & scriptures.

Hurrah for our children!



Sunday, December 16, at our regular **9:30 am** service, all the children of Trinity will present their program. **Afterwards**, a "bring a dish to pass" luncheon will be held. **Secret pals will be revealed.**

In keeping with the tradition of Trinity Lutheran, a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held at **8:00 pm on December 24th**. Let us enjoy the birth of the Christ child.

Lessons and Carols, December 30



Sunday, December 30. Lessons and carols will be the theme of the worship service using Christmas texts and carols of the season.

Epiphany of Our Lord



**Sunday, January 6th-
Epiphany of Our Lord**

Worship Highlights

Advent Services

**Wednesdays
December 5th
December 12th
December 19th**

**December 16
Pot Luck dinner
Reveal "secret pals"
Children's Pageant**

**Christmas Eve
Sunday, December 24th
8:00 pm**

**DECEMBER 25
MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**Lessons and Carols
Sunday, December 30**

**Epiphany of Our Lord
-Sunday, January 6th**

Adult Education Opportunities



Afternoon Fellowship
Studying the scriptures with enjoying each

**January 15th, 22nd & 29th
In The Hart Center**



BOOK CLUB
Starting in March
Date/time to be announced

**The book is:
"Room" by Emma Donoghue**

A Closer Look at the Bible – Pastor Jira Albers

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens: ‘I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.’” (NRSV, Revelation 3:7-13)

In my article for this month the notion of “grit” was explored. Since grit is a persistent endurance toward a future goal without giving up, it seems pertinent to study a section of Revelation that encourages the people of God to take on such endurance.

What we will be looking at is the brief letter in Revelation for the church in Philadelphia. But, before we get into that, let us take a look at the book of Revelation in general to get an idea of what is going on. Revelation is written in the literary genre of apocalypse. An apocalypse is a type of literature that we do not currently have in our culture, therefore it is hard to read and understand. The closest we have to apocalypse is science fiction: a story set in the technological future (usually including aliens) that still sends a relevant message to the people reading. Apocalypse, similarly, is a story that sends a relevant message to the people reading, but is set in a horizontally divided world where what occurs on earth also occurs in heaven at the same time. In an apocalypse, if a war is occurring on earth, there is also a war occurring in the heavens. What if someone could be ripped from the earth and placed temporarily in the heavens? Then in heaven they would be able to see divine truths and understand “why” the chaotic and confusing events on the earth are occurring.

Revelation is written by a pastor (John of Patmos), who has been exiled to the island of Patmos by the Romans. Though he is in forced exile (an island prison), he still wants to pastor his congregations (of which there are seven). Therefore, he sends a letter to the congregations, but it is written in this strange literary form of strange images, bazaar animals, and wild symbolism because he does not want the Roman guards to understand the damning things that he is saying about Rome and Roman culture.

So, what is John preaching to his seven churches? Well, John wants his churches to “endure” the horrors of Rome (remember, in the recent past family members have been fed to lions under Nero) and to endure their current persecutions from both Rome and the synagogues who have started to kick Christians out of worship. He writes a book of hope for his persecuted people promising that justice will take place. In other words, he wants his churches to endure...he wants them to have some grit.

When persecuted religiously, you have a few options: you could join the enemy so that the enemy no longer persecutes; you could be religious in secret and pretend to be like the enemy throughout the week; or you could endure the pain and persecution while holding steadfast to the faith. The seven churches have gone down different paths in response to the pressures and persecutions of Rome, but Philadelphia is one of the few churches that chose the path of endurance.

The members of the church in Philadelphia are poor. They have no one of social power among their ranks. Their synagogue has kicked them out (imagine the pastor of your church just up a deciding that you can no longer attend or even enter your family church). And, on top of it all, Rome is acting as Rome, ruling through power and persecution. The temptation is to give up on the faith in some way, but John encourages Philadelphia’s endurance. He appreciates their “grit.” John sets a vision of hope for this hurt church that sees beyond the persecutions (a “grit” related goal so to speak): *“I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God.”* With this encouragement, Philadelphia endures. They have grit.



Parish News Continued



Junior Youth Group

Junior Youth Group (grades 1st through 6th) will meet January 13, 2019 at 12:30 pm in the Hart Center.



Women's News

Vesper Guild will not meet in the month of December. They will be helping with the assembling and delivering of the Congregation's Love Baskets on December 18.

Beginning in January, we will only be meeting the fourth Tuesday of the month..

Bible Study with Pastor Jira will be on the 15th, 22nd & 29th of January at 12:30 p.m. No Bible Study on the 10th as Wysox Church's noon luncheon is held. These meetings are all subject to the uncertain January weather, so stay tuned to minute notices!

Caring and Sharing

Don't forget your orders for Poinsettias. Order forms are in the bulletins and the deadline is December 16th or call the office/leave a message. They are \$8.25 each.

Special thanks from Rose Treimann for all the cards and especially the prayers. They really helped me a lot! Love, Rose



<http://creationsbydawn.net/poinsettias.html>

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Columbarium Space Available

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

Thank You Members Of Christ!

- *Thank you to Joyce Detharidge for putting the Rock Garden to sleep. & for decoration the four flower pots.
- *Thank you to the Vesper Guild for their hard work on the Fall Bazaar, providing Christmas for Grace Connection families and putting together the Love Baskets.
- *Thank you to the Altar Guild for serving our congregation so faithfully.
- *Thank you to the bell ringers for the Salvation Army.
- * Thank you to Maureen Engelhard for directing the children's Christmas program.



PARISH NEWS CONTINUED

THE ENGELHARD COMPASSION FUND 2018

This year's recipients were Pastor Jira Albers and his family! A check for \$675.00 was presented to them to help with the repairs on their home which had major damages due to the recent flooding. Thank you for your contributions to this fund so that we are able to help others! Please remember this fund throughout the year.

God Bless You All,
Maureen Engelhard

GOD'S GLOBAL BARNYARD

An animal can make a world of difference for a family in need. Animals provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops and offspring to sell on the market. With one gift, you can help a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good.

CHICKS: \$10.00, HONEY BEES: \$20.00, PIG: \$30.00, GOAT: \$50.00, PAIR OF GOATS: \$100.00



The Christmas tree in the Hart Center has these cute donation ornaments for you to donate as you wish! There are also plain monetary ones for just a donation of your choice.

SHOP ELCA GOOD GIFTS THIS CHRISTMAS for 50 gifts that grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives! **ELCA.org/goodgifts** -catalogs are also provided!

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Visitors from Saxony, Germany



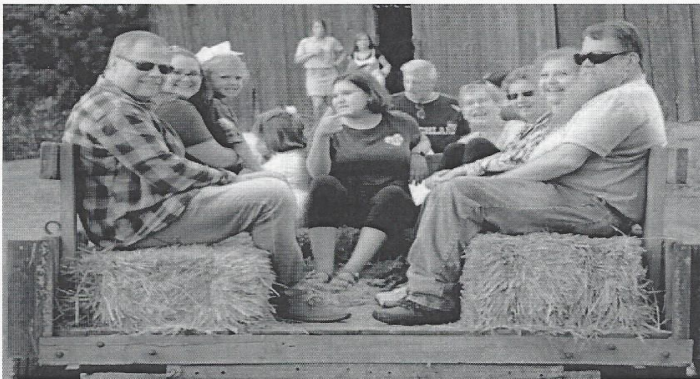
The Northeastern PA Synod is blessed with four Companion Synods—a special relationship with the Lutheran Christians in five countries. These are Argentina and Uruguay; Slovenia; Tanzania; and Saxony, Germany. From October 4 to 15, we had the privilege of hosting 15 of our brothers and sisters from Saxony, Germany. The visitors ranged in age from 17 to “older”.

While our visitors were in our Synod, they were each hosted by two different families—one in the Mountain Top area of the Synod and one in the greater Reading area.

From the moment they arrived on the 4th, the visitors had a very full agenda. Some of the opportunities provided to our brothers and sisters from Saxony were:

- worship with their host families,
- a retreat with our Saxony Committee to develop a covenant,
- going to a high school (American) football game,
- spending 2 days in New York City,
- a day in Philadelphia,
- a trip to Amish country,
- and a pig roast.

Of course they did get some down time too!



In order to host a group of this size, it takes the commitment and dedication of many people. A special “Thank You” goes to the host families and our synod’s Saxony committee. A extra special thank you goes to Pastors Wayne and Michele Kaufman.

**Final Reminder:
Monthly Mailing to Be
Sent Using Email**

In an effort to be more faithful stewards both of the synod's financial resources and of the earth God has entrusted to our care, the synod "Monthly Mailing" will no longer be reproduced on paper and mailed through the post office.

Beginning with the January 2019 mailing, materials will be emailed to each congregation and also posted for download on the synod website.

For this to work, it is important that each congregation have a current email on file with the synod office. If your congregation is not receiving the weekly E-News (sent out on Tuesday mornings), it is probably best if you contact us at nepsinfo1988@gmail.com with the email you wish to use for the monthly materials.

If your congregation does not use email, please recruit a member who does have an email address to receive your materials, and forward that address to the synod.

The synod recognizes that it may be inconvenient for a few congregations, and we appreciate your patience and cooperation with this transition. If you have any questions about what you need to do, please contact the synod at nepsinfo1988@gmail.com or 610-266-5101.

**Grace, Reading
Back to School Giveaway**



The lazy days of summer maybe the norm for some people, but not for the congregation and supporters of Grace, Reading's Back to School Event. For the past four years Grace has hosted this event at their location on the southern side of Reading.

This community project started when four congregation volunteers agreed to assist on a project suggested by Rita Wilk at church council. Rita's dream was to hold an event open to all community members, where needed school supplies and backpacks could be given out to students. Donations were obtained from Grace members along with other churches within the West Berks Mission District. Reaching the targeted recipients was simplified by piggybacking on the resources established by our Growing with Grace Tutoring program. This tutoring program serves two elementary schools located within a few blocks of the church.

In its infancy, this one-day event reached about 120 students with new and used backpacks / bags filled with school supplies. A limited amount of new underwear was given out as well.

To make a greater impact, additional funds were needed to expand the number of backpacks and supplies offered. Over the last three years, grants have been written and granted from Thrivent, Walmart, and the NEPA Synod (your Mission Support dollars at work).

Read more online at <http://nepasynod.org/grace-reading-backpacks>.

Synod News is published monthly by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
2354 Grove Road, Allentown PA 18109; 610-266-5101. nepsinfo1988@gmail.com.
View the full color edition online at <http://nepasynod.org/publications/synod-news>.

December 2018 Birthdays and Anniversaries

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----|--|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Scott Bracken | 6 | 7 Ryan Hart Lars Thomason | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 Jacob Kapson | 17 Diane Danko | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 Madelyn Clark Patricia Thomason | 22 Robert Horton Nicholas Dunn Rose Treimann |
| 23 George & Florence Johnson | 24 | 25 Carl Danko | 26 | 27 | 28 Agnes Cook | 29 Janet Seaberg |

30
Mikayla Post

31 Sara Lynn Troup
Mary Lou Vanderpool

January 2019 Birthdays and Anniversaries

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | | 1 Eric & Doreen Secor | 2 Gerald Foreman Janice Jackson | 3 Duane Danko | 4 Erik Danko | 5 |
| 6 Florence Johnson Lawrence Stoudt | 7 | 8 | 9 Tracey Weed | 10 Andrew Vanderpool | 11 William Johnson | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 Joyce Detharidge | 17 | 18 Daniel Troup | 19 |
| 20 Debra Chilson | 21 | 22 Thomas Foreman Janelle Hart Heller | 23 | 24 Crystal Hart Matthew Keeney | 25 | 26 Deana Horning Roger & Betty Blatz |
| 27 Lisa Horton Doreen Secor | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |
| | | | | | | |

December 2018 Meetings and Events

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 1st Sunday of Advent | 3 | 4 | 5 6PM Soup Supper 7PM Advent Service | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 2nd Sunday of Advent | 10 | 11 | 12 6PM Soup Supper 7PM Advent Service | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 3rd Sunday of Advent Secret Pal reveal Children's Pageant | 17 | 18 Filling & Delivering Love Baskets | 19 6PM Soup Supper 7PM Advent Service | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 4th Sunday of Advent | 24 8:00 pm Candlelight Service | 25  | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |

30 Lessons and
Carols 31

January 2019 Meetings and Events

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 Epiphany of Our Lord | 7 6:00 pm Council Meeting | 8 11:45 Wysox Lunch | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 Child's Faith Service 12:30 pm Jr. Youth | 14 | 15 12:30 Bible Study | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 Annual Meeting Chili Cook Off | 21 | 22 12:30 Bible Study | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 12:30 Bible Study | 30 | 31 | | |
| | | | | | | |

Trinity Leadership Directory

Officers & Staff:

Pastor – Jira A. Albers, MDiv..... 265-5322
Organist - Kay Champluvier..... 746-3641
Vice President – Debbie Philippi.....247-2353
Office Mgr/Treas.– Cindy Estelle... 265-5184
Fin. Secretary – Doreen Secor265-3832
Council Secr.-Maureen Engelhard.....247-2678
Ministers—All the members of Trinity

Council Members:

Cathy Bellanca..... 265-6049
Maureen Engelhard..... 247-2678
Doreen Secor 265-3832
Debbie Philippi.....247-2353
Peggy Cranmer.....886-0705
Satchel Manchester.....886-0705

Contact Trinity

Office Telephone: 570-265-5322
Homepage: <http://www.trinluth.com>
Email: trinluth@epix.net
In case of emergency, you can contact Pastor Jira at his home: 570-363-2951
Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday—

Serving us in worship:

The Rev. Jira A. Albers, presiding minister

Altar Guild– December , Cindy Estelle

Alter Guild– January, Thelma Allis

December 2—First Sunday in Advent

Acolyte– Delaney Carrington
Lector– Cathy Bellanca
Communion Assistant– Cathy Bellanca
Ushers– Ron and Ruth Russell
Counters– Maureen Engelhard
Children’s Church–Maureen Engelhard

December 9—Second Sunday in Advent

Acolyte– Emily Chilson
Lector– Bill Serfass
Communion Assistant– Bill Serfass
Ushers– Paul and Aggi Cook
Counters– Debbie Philippi
Children’s Church– Chris Griffith

December 16—Third Sunday in Advent

Acolyte– Kynlee Kunkle
Lector– Cindy Estelle
Communion Assistant– Cindy Estelle
Ushers– Janet Seaberg & Thelma Allis
Counters– Maureen Engelhard
No Children’s Church–Children’s Pageant

December 23—Fourth Sunday in Advent

Acolyte– r
Lector– Dave Estelle
Communion Assistant– Dave Estelle
Ushers– Duane and Lois Carrington
Counters– Cathy Bellanca
Children’s Church–Cindy Estelle

December 24—Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve

Acolyte–
Torch Bearers--
Lector– Ron Cunfer
Communion Assistant– Maureen Engelhard
Ushers– Doreen Secor and Cindy Estelle
Counters–Dave and Cindy Estelle

December 30—First Sunday after Christmas

Acolyte– Kate O’Connor
Lector– Cathy Bellanca
Communion Assistant– Cathy Bellanca
Ushers– Peggy Cranmer and Satchel Manchester
Counters– Peggy Cranmer and Satchel Manchester

January 6—Baptism of Our Lord

Acolyte– Emily Chilson
Lector– Cathy Bellanca
Communion Assistant– Cathy Bellanca
Ushers– Ron and Ruth Russell
Counters– Cathy Bellanca
Children’s church– Maureen Engelhard

January 13—Second Sunday After Epiphany

Acolyte– Abby O’Connor
Lector—Dave Estelle
Communion Assistant– Dave Estelle
Ushers– Paul and Aggi Cook
Counters– Maureen Engelhard
Children’s Church– Child’s Faith Service

January 20—Third Sunday After Epiphany

Acolyte– Delaney Carrington
Lector– Bill Serfass
Communion Assistant– Bill Serfass
Ushers– Peggy Cranmer and Satchel Manchester
Counters– Debbie Philippi
Children’s Church– Eileen Alesky

January 27—Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

Acolyte– Kynlee Kunkle
Lector– Ron Cunfer
Communion Assistant– Maureen Engelhard
Ushers– Duane and Lois Carrington
Counters– Peggy Cranmer and Satchel Manchester
Children’s Church– Cindy Estelle

Trinity Lutheran Church
908 South Main Street
Towanda PA 18848

TRINITY TRUMPETER DECEMBER/JANUARY

“Challenged to witness and share Christ’s love with all”

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

Spreading Christ’s word of peace to all through service.

