

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, TOWANDA, PA

DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020

Annual Meeting January 26

The Annual Congregational Meeting for Trinity will be held January 26 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 5th. The report will be available on January 12th to give everyone three weeks lead time before the meeting.



Pastor's Twelfth 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 17. You can leave donated items on the table in the Hart Center.



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Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Pastor's Message



Good News of Great Joy



**A Message From
Pastor Jira
Albers**

***"To you is
born this
day in the
city of
David a
Savior,
who is the
Messiah,
the Lord."***

Luke 2:16

In my mind as a child, Christmas was wondrous. We kids got the chance to live the story of Jesus' birth as we rehearsed the Christmas pageant. Never underestimate the power of pretending in shaping the imagination and faith of a child. We saw the heavenly star or saw the heavenly angel way up on the tops of our trees. We took joy at having a baby in the manger (looking carefully to see if there really was a baby in there), and we were in awe of the gifts provided to the baby Jesus. Then, of course, there were the gifts, the love, and the family togetherness that came along with the season. In other words, at Christmastime, all that was holy and distant suddenly became touchable and warmly embraced. Another word that could be used is "joy." As a child, I felt a very real joy at Christmas.

As I have grown older, the joy filled innocence of that sort of interaction with Christmas has faded. It is not that I do not still find joy and wonder in the Christmas story, but too many people have come to me expressing the incredible burden that the holiday puts on their life. Some have trouble handling the stress of cleaning the house and making the meal. Others cannot carry the financial burden that comes

with the holiday. Others cannot even think to face Christmas without that special someone who died just months or maybe even years before. In other words, a lot of people identify more with the slop and straw of the very first Christmas than they do with anything else in the manger scene.

However, that is what makes the Christmas story so powerful. Jesus, God with us, did not come to us in the golden crib of a stately palace. He was not born in a tidy space under joyful conditions; quite the opposite. Jesus was born with the animals, in a manger intended to feed goats and livestock and not in any way intended to house a newborn. In other words, Jesus is not a Lord of only the joyful, but has especially come to be the Lord of the lowly. Jesus is not found primarily in the great things in life (though he most certainly is not absent), rather Jesus is especially present in those times of struggle and burden.

Our attempts to make a perfect place for Christ on Christmas is actually turned on its head by God. Rather than creating something great, we receive something great: Jesus Christ, our Lord, who comes to us. That is great joy!

The Question Box

(Questions About Our Christian Life)

Is it true that Jesus was not born in the stable of an inn?"

Yes. There probably was no "inn." The Greek word that is translated "inn", *kataluma*, means "lodging place" and it is usually translated "upper room" not "inn." It can refer to a room of a house where out of town guests could spend the night or even just a dining room. For example, in Mark 14:14, Jesus celebrated Passover with his disciples in an "upper room" (same word used here). Jesus was likely born in the lower room of a family member's home (near the kitchen where the cattle are housed for the night). – Pastor Jira Albers



Parish News



There will be no Wednesday night Advent Services this year due to very low attendance.

JOINT WORSHIP AND CANTATA SERVICE



Sunday, December 15, at the First Presbyterian Church, Court Street, Towanda. Handicap entrance is on Pine Street. Trinity Lutheran, First Presbyterian and Wysox Presbyterian will jointly participate. The cantata will be "JESUS: THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH". It is at 10:00 AM.



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.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM/LESSONS & CAROLS,



Sunday, December 29. As this is the **First Sunday of Christmas**, the children will take part in the worship service. Lessons and carols will also be the theme of the worship service using Christmas texts and carols of the season.

Worship Highlights

**Joint
Christmas Cantata
December 15
@10:00 AM
At the First
Presbyterian Church
Towanda**

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

**DECEMBER 25
MERRY CHRISTMAS**

**Children &
Lessons and Carols
Service
Sunday, December 29**

**Epiphany of Our Lord
Sunday, January 5th**

Adult Education Opportunities



Morning Fellowship
Studying the scriptures with enjoying each other
other's company at 9:00 AM

**January 7th, 21st, & 28th
In The Hart Center**



BOOK CLUB
Nothing scheduled
At this time

A Closer Look at the Bible – Pastor Jira Albers

Luke 2:1-20

Though you certainly know the Christmas story very well, take a moment to slowly and carefully read Luke 2:1-20. What did you notice that you have never noticed before? What questions do you have? If you are done reading, we will explore this story that you have undoubtedly heard many, many times. I thought it might be fun to take a closer look and reveal some things that you may have not realized about this well known story.

First of all, Luke tried to place the birth of Jesus into a historical context. Note that I said “tried.” If your recall at the beginning of Luke’s gospel, he admits that he did not know Jesus and that he is doing his best to put together an accounting of the life of Jesus (and later the apostles in Acts). Though inspired by God to share the good news of Jesus Christ (which he most certainly does), the details of his accounting are only as good as the information that he had. And, his history and geography is not always accurate. We know from Josephus, a Jewish historian writing in the late first century CE, that in 6 CE Publius Sulpicius Quirinius, the newly-appointed Imperial Legate (governor) of the province of Roman Syria, was assigned to carry out a tax census of the new province. So, we are roughly in the right historical time period. However, Luke also links Jesus’ early years to Herod the Great (Luke 3:1). The census took place in 6 CE, nine years after Herod’s death in 4 BCE. Therefore, there is an obvious problem with the history. In addition, the Roman census did not require people to travel from their own homes to those of distant ancestors; and the census of Judea would not have affected Joseph and his family, living in Galilee. We do not get nervous when Luke makes mistakes like this though. His job is to be a pastor and proclaim the good news of Jesus. Getting a few facts wrong does not take away from the main message of God’s love (especially for the poor and the sinner) that Luke is trying to share.

To learn more about the setting of Jesus’ birth and the “inn”, check out the “Question Box” in this newsletter. But, briefly, just know that the Greek word for “inn” refers to the “upper room” of a house rather than an ancient motel. Mary and Joseph were likely staying in the “lower level” of a family member’s home because the upper guest room was full. They were sleeping near where the animals usually are brought in for the night.

Luke tells us that Jesus was born and wrapped in “bands of cloth.” “Swaddling clothes” is another way that the Greek word “sparganoō” is translated. Some people incorrectly say that “sporganoo” is the Greek word used for “burial clothes.” Though the connection between Jesus’ birth and his death would be amazing theologically, this is simply not correct. The Greek version of the Hebrew Bible also uses “sporganoo” in Ezekiel to talk about infant clothing, not burial clothes (Ezekiel 6:1-3). What is significant about “sporganoo” is that most children were not wrapped in it. Most infants were left naked to make cleanup easy. “Sporganoo” was expensive and only owned by wealthier families in the ancient world. Remember that we said Mary and Joseph were likely staying at a relative’s home? The “sporganoo” was likely given to them as a gift and its use creates the image of a rich, kingly one lying in a lowly manger. Jesus is a king for those who are poor (the poor being represented by the manger). This foreshadows Jesus’ message in Luke regarding Jesus’ concern for the poor and the sinner.

Note that the angels announce the arrival of the baby king to an undefined number of shepherds. The rich magi are the witnesses to the young king in Matthew, but in Luke the shepherds take this role. Again, the message of Jesus, as Luke shares it, is that Jesus cares primarily for the lowly and the sinner. It is no surprise then that the first who get to herald the message of Jesus’ birth are lowly shepherds. Shepherds in Jesus’ time were not considered noble members of society. Rather, shepherding was an entry level job in the ancient world and those who served as shepherds were notoriously thought to be thieves and cheats.

When we usually picture the manger scene, we usually see the Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, the shepherds, the animals, and sometimes even the Magi. What we usually do not realize unless we read closely is that Luke says nothing about animals, the Magi are from Matthew and are not a part of Luke’s Christmas story, and that there are a bunch of other people standing around (probably attending to Mary). Read close Luke 2:17-18: “When they [the shepherds] saw this [Jesus in a manger], they made known what had been told them about this child [from the Angels]; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.” So, who are “all those who heard it” who are “amazed at what the shepherds told them”? I bet you never noticed these other people standing around, but here they are. They likely include the family members taking up the guest space upstairs. That is enough study to get the mental juices flowing. Have fun continuing to explore the Christmas story!

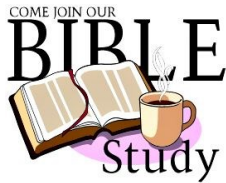


Parish News Continued



Junior Youth Group

Nothing to report at this time!



Bible Study with Pastor Jira will be on the 7th, 21st & 28th of January at 9:00 am. No Bible Study on the 14th as Wysox Church's noon luncheon is held. These meetings are all subject to the uncertain January weather, so stay tuned to minute notices!



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 17.

Beginning in January, we will only be meeting the second Tuesday of the month.. (January 14 at 10:00 am)



<http://creationsbydyl.com/magicalchristmaspoinsettia.html>

Caring and Sharing

Don't forget your orders for Poinsettias. Order forms are in the bulletins and the deadline is December 15th or call the office/leave a message. They are \$8.25 each.



REMEMBER: Please consider sponsoring our candles & bulletins in memory or in honor of loved ones. They are only \$15.00 and envelopes with dates are in the Narthex.

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 all our faithful members and shut ins!



PARISH NEWS CONTINUED

OUR CHURCH VETERANS



Paul Cook was honored with a Quilt of Valor. Paul's was made & presented by Ruth Clearwater. Paul was drafted into the US Army in 1966. He served in the Army Infantry & was in Vietnam From March 1967-1968. He was wounded on December 7, 1967 & discharged in October 1968. Paul's nephew, Tom Lefever is holding the quilt.



Dave Estelle was honored with a Quilt of Valor. Dave's was made & presented by Peggy Cranmer. Dave served in the US Navy from 1956-1960. His basic training was in Bainbridge, MD. From there he was an Aviation Metalsmith in NAS Atlantic City, NJ and Oceana, VA. His last tour was in NAS Lakehurst, NJ as a rescue crewman on helicopters.

**ON A CUTER NOTE....THE WINNER OF THE VESPER GUILD'S QUILT MADE BY PEGGY CRANMER!
TRINITY'S SWEETHEART....CAROL CUNFER**



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SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

We Love... 2019 A Day of Learning



We Love...because God first loves us. We Love...others because each person is a child of God. We Love...by expanding our understanding of others and allowing people to be truly who God made them to be. We Love...because God is love.

These were just a few of the takeaways from We Love... 2019, a day of learning to help congregations be more opening and welcoming to LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families. For many participants this was uncharted territory, as they are learning what all those letters actually do mean (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic plus many more).

For others, there was still plenty to learn as we explored the intersection between sexuality/gender identity and faith and discussed how the church can be a place where people do not feel they have to hide their sexuality or gender identity in order to feel the love of God and others.



The keynote speaker was Jamie Bruesehoff, a writer and advocate in New Jersey. She is married to an ELCA pastor and is the mother of three children, the oldest of whom is transgender. Workshops included safety basics, welcoming language in worship, what scripture has to say about homosexuality, bisexuality visibility, and parents sharing stories of when their children came out and how the church was both helpful and hurtful.

We Love... is being planned again for the fall of 2020.

Bern, Leesport Supports World Hunger

Bern gets in the Farming Spirit to Raise Funds for ELCA World Hunger

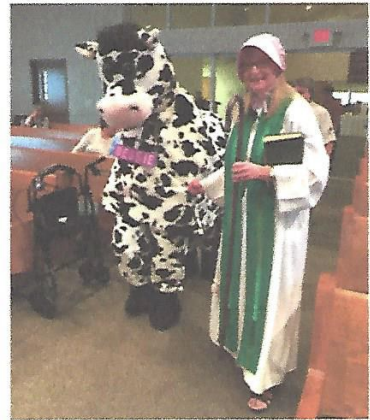


Ministry often surprises us. Our congregations work hard to meet many needs across the United States and around the globe. Feeding the hungry is one of those needs. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" Matthew 25:35. When we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty and welcome the stranger, we are encountering and caring for Jesus.

This past September Bern Lutheran Church in Leesport set out to raise enough money to buy one farm from ELCA World Hunger (ELCA Good Gifts). Over the course of four weeks, hundreds of dollars began pouring in. The spirit of the project was

evident throughout. Jane Battaglieri, Bern's Music Director, even enjoyed adding some special music in the spirit of the project. During one service, the song sung before announcing the total was "The Farmer in the Dell" and the postlude was "Old MacDonald." The people of Bern came together during their God's Global Barnyard project and their generosity was overwhelming! By the end of the project in October, a total of \$3,000 was raised!

The Rev. Phyllis Wolkenhauer was especially overjoyed at the success of the whole project. She wrote, "I think \$3,000.00 was a complete surprise to all of us. The day the final total was calculated, we received a letter encouraging us to participate in the ELCA World Hunger appeal and take advantage of the matching funds currently available. In the blink of an eye, the Lord increased our offerings to total \$6,000. What a gift!"



***Never underestimate the power of prayerful giving
and of a congregation coming together
to make an impact upon a world in need!***

Learning Ministries Day 2020

Saturday, January 25, 2020 (snow date Saturday, February 1)
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. @ Union Lutheran Church, Schnecksville

Theme: Vision 2020

Keynote Speaker: The Rev. Brenda Smith,
Program Director, ELCA Faith and Book of Faith
(Visit nepasynod.org for more information)

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View the full color edition online at <http://nepasynod.org>.


December 2019 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	18	19	20	21 Madelyn Clark Patricia Thomason
22 Robert Horton Nicholas Dunn Rose Treimann	23 George & Florence Johnson	24	25	26	27	28 Agnes Cook
29 Janet Seaberg	30 Mikayla Post	31 Sara Lynn Troup Mary Lou Vanderpool				

January 2020 Birthdays and Anniversaries

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Eric & Doreen Secor	2 Gerald Foreman Janice Jackson	3	4
5	6 Florence Johnson	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 Janelle Hart Heller	23	24 Crystal Hart	25
26 Deana Horning	27 Lisa Horton	28	29	30	31	

December 2019 Meetings and Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
1 1st Sunday in Advent	2 Bell Ringers For Sal. Army 11-6:00 pm	3 9:00 am Bible Study	4	5	6	7
8 2nd Sunday in Advent	9	10 No Bible Study	11	12	13	14
15 CANTATA 1st Presb. Church -no service @ Trinity	16	17 No Bible S.. Filling & Delivering Love Baskets	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 No Bible S.. 8:00 pm Candle- light Service	25 	26	27	28

29 Lessons and
Carols
Children's Program

30

31 No Bible S.

January 2019 Meetings and Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		HAPPY NEW YEAR	1	2	3	4
5 Epiphany of Our Lord All reports due	6 6:30 pm Council Meeting	7 9:00 am Bible S.	8	9	10	11
12 CHILD'S FAITH Baptism of our Lord	13	14 No Bible S.. 10:00 am V. Guild	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 9:00 am Bible Study	22	23	24	25
26 ANNUAL CONGREG. MEETING CHILI COOK-OFF	27	28 9:00 am Bible Study	29	30	31	

Trinity Leadership Directory

Officers & Staff:

Pastor – Jira A. Albers, MDiv..... 265-5322
Organist - Kay Champluvier..... 746-3641
Vice President – Doreen Secor.....265-3832
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:

Maureen Engelhard..... 247-2678
Peggy Cranmer.....886-0705
Satchel Manchester.....886-0705
Doreen Secor.....265-3832
Joe Snyder.....412-2796
Lois Carrington.....247-7765

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Email: trinluth@epix.net
In case of emergency, you can contact Pastor Jira at his home: 570-363-2951

Serving us in worship:

The Rev. Jira A. Albers, presiding minister

Altar Guild– December , Cindy Estelle

Alter Guild– January, Thelma Allis

December 1—First Sunday in Advent

Acolyte– Emily Chilson
Lector– Joe Snyder
Communion Assistant– Cindy Estelle
Ushers– Ron and Ruth Russell
Counters– Maureen Engelhard
Children’s Church–Maureen Engelhard

December 8—Second Sunday in Advent

Acolyte– Kynlee Kunkle
Lector– Bill Serfass
Communion Assistant– Bill Serfass
Ushers– Paul and Aggi Cook
Counters– Maureen Engelhard
Children’s Church– Rebecca Hodgdon

December 15—Third Sunday in Advent

**NO SERVICE HERE AT TRINITY-
CANTATA AT 1ST PRESB. CHURCH,
MAIN STREET, TOWANDA
AT 10:00 AM. ALL ARE INVITED!**

December 22—Fourth Sunday in Advent

Acolyte– Delaney Carrington
Lector– Bree Carrington
Communion Assistant– Dave Estelle
Ushers– Duane and Lois Carrington
Counters– Lois Carrington
Children’s Church–Chris Griffith/Cassidy Estelle

December 24—Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve

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

December 29—First Sunday after Christmas

Acolyte– Abby O’Connor
Lector– Bill Serfass
Communion Assistant– Bill Serfass
Ushers– Suzanne Alexander and Joyce Detharidge
Counters–
Children’s Program

January 5—Baptism of Our Lord

Acolyte– Emily Chilson
Lector– Joe Snyder
Communion Assistant– Dave Estelle
Ushers– Ron and Ruth Russell
Counters– Joe Snyder
Children’s church– Rebecca Hodgdon

January 12—Second Sunday After Epiphany

Acolyte– Kate O’Connor
Lector–Cindy Estelle
Communion Assistant– Cindy Estelle
Ushers– Paul and Aggi Cook
Counters– Maureen Engelhard
Children’s Church–

January 19—Third Sunday After Epiphany

Acolyte– Delaney Carrington
Lector– Bree Carrington
Communion Assistant– Dave Estelle
Ushers– Janet Seaberg and Thelma Allis
Counters– Doreen Secor
Children’s Church– Chris Griffith/Cassidy Estelle

January 26—Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

Acolyte– Jennifer Kaniuka
Lector– Ron Cunfer
Communion Assistant– Maureen Engelhard
Ushers– Duane and Lois Carrington
Counters–
Children’s Church– Maureen Engelhard

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.

