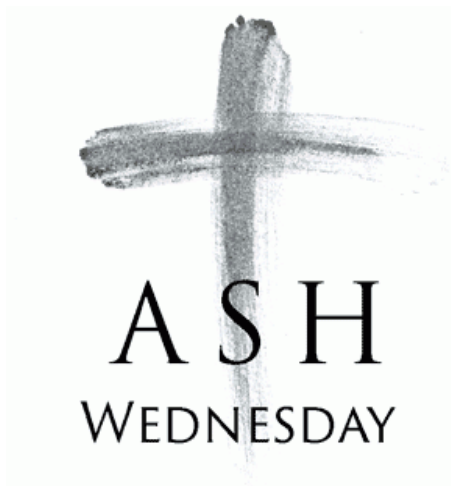


TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, TOWANDA, PA

FEB 2023/MARCH 2023

## Ash Wednesday—February 22nd



Worship in person on Ash Wednesday at 12:15pm or online at 7:00pm. Go to:

**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/towandalutheran/>  
**YOUTUBE:** <https://www.youtube.com/@trinityevangelicallutheran4934>

In addition to the 12:15 worship service, Pastor Jira will be present in the church to administer ashes between 4 and 6:00pm.

If you wish to worship online, you can pick up ashes on February 5th or 12th at the usher's station.

## Return of Secret Pals

*Secret Pals*

Becoming a Secret Pal is a fun way to share faith with a young member of Trinity in a way that will follow them into adulthood. The program starts March 1st and concludes with a celebratory luncheon on Palm Sunday, April 2nd after Worship. Contact Maureen Engelhard at 570-247-2678 to sign up and get the details.

## Pastor's Annual Chili Cook-Off Winners



Drum roll please! The winners of the Chili Cook-off are:

Best Chili —  
Ember Albers and Mavis Pugh  
Most Unique Chili —  
Maureen Engelhard  
Spiciest Chili —  
Pastor Jira

### In This Issue

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### Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

908 S. Main Street  
Towanda, PA 18848

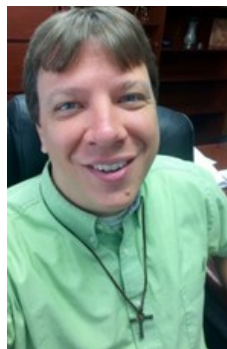
570-265-5322  
[trinluth@epix.net](mailto:trinluth@epix.net)  
[www.trinluth.com](http://www.trinluth.com)



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



## Value 5: Giving Of Yourself



**A Message From  
Pastor Jira Albers**

*“God  
loves a  
cheerful  
giver”*

*2 Cor. 9:7*

Our last congregational value, “Giving of Yourself,” was not created to get the church more money. In fact, “Giving of Yourself” is about more than money. Every part of our being is a gift from God, to be used by Jesus Christ in his mission of love.

We do not give of ourselves to be known as good people, nor do we give to win any sort of heavenly reward. On the cross, Jesus Christ already won us our reward, and, that was not of our own doing. Giving of ourselves is about loving God, and loving others. We love and give of ourselves because Jesus loved us and gave himself to us.

When I was a child, I wanted to do something really, really special for my parents, because I loved them and they loved me. So, I took the \$14 that I had saved and grabbed a set of new dishes (plates and bowls) which were marked \$13.99. It was a gift of love. Unfortunately, as anyone who is older than 11 knows, \$14.00 would not be enough for a \$13.99 item. When the total, including tax, came in well over \$14, my heart was crushed.

I think that the cashier saw that look of utter defeat on my face because she said, “You don’t worry about a thing. I will take care of the rest.” And, there we have it. A minimum wage earner

helps a poor boy give a gift of love. The cashier even helped me carry the heavy box of dishes out to the car where I hid it under my coat in the trunk.

I thought about that cashier the other day when the man in front of me at the grocery store had that familiar look of defeat on his face. He was trying to buy some eggs, milk, and bread. I was trying to buy some Reese’s Peanut Butter cups. God reminded me of the love of that cashier. I looked at the cash in my hand, put back the candy, and paid for his food. You see, God used that cashier years before to plant Jesus’ seed of giving into my heart.

Jesus’ entire life was about giving. He gave his time in order to heal. He gave his power to provide food for a crowd. He gave his life on the cross in order to save us from sin and death. Jesus gave it all because he loves us.

Jesus gave of himself, and that seed of love and giving has sprouted again and again like a perennial that keeps sprouting and multiplying every spring. Planting seeds of love reaps a harvest of abundant love.

You have been blessed in abundance, so that you can share joyfully in abundance. As a follower of Jesus you strive to be “Giving of Yourself.”

## ***The Question Box***

*(Questions About Our Christian Life)*

***“Do I have to give my entire 10% tithe to the church, or can I also give some of it to another organization doing the work of Jesus?”***

A church treasurer may not like it, but your 10% tithe can be split between the church and another faith-based organization which is doing the work of Jesus in this world. Your tithe goes to supporting all that Jesus is up to in this world, and that sometimes happens outside of the church. – Pastor Jira



## Parish News

### Lenten Luncheons Resume

*The  
Season  
of  
Lent*



Lenten Luncheons will be back after a hiatus caused by Covid. At noon, every Wednesday in March, the Towanda Area Clergy Association will sponsor a luncheon at a location as yet to be determined. Watch the weekly bulletin for details as they develop.

### Prayer Around the Cross—March 26th



Come for a special and powerful service of reflection and prayer centered around the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, during Sunday Worship.

### Upcoming Gospel Readings

**February 5<sup>th</sup>**  
Matthew 5:13-20

**February 12<sup>th</sup>**  
Matthew 14:13-21

**February 19<sup>th</sup>**  
Matthew 17:1-9

**February 26<sup>th</sup>**  
Matthew 4:1-11

**March 5<sup>th</sup>**  
John 3:1-17

**March 12<sup>th</sup>**  
John 4:5-42

**March 19<sup>th</sup>**  
John 9:1-41

**March 26<sup>th</sup>**  
John 11:1-45

# Puzzle!

Search for these words that are all associated with the Lenten journey.

crown donkey hosanna penance Pilate sins  
colt crucifixion forsaken kiss prayer suffer  
confess death Gethsemane lots repent thorns  
cross denial Golgotha palms silver vigil

E	N	A	M	E	S	H	T	E	G	R	L	W	Y
C	L	E	U	X	B	M	T	H	B	U	C	W	B
N	R	I	K	Y	P	A	T	E	T	I	Y	X	Y
A	V	J	G	A	L	B	R	E	Y	A	R	P	B
N	G	N	L	I	S	N	R	D	I	N	E	D	X
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O	M	N	S	H	O	P	W	E	U	R	S	U	N
M	U	N	F	O	E	V	K	Y	D	S	G	F	O
H	H	V	C	R	E	X	L	I	C	W	Q	E	C
F	Q	E	S	U	D	S	S	O	C	A	J	R	L
C	R	U	C	I	F	I	X	I	O	A	N	S	R
V													

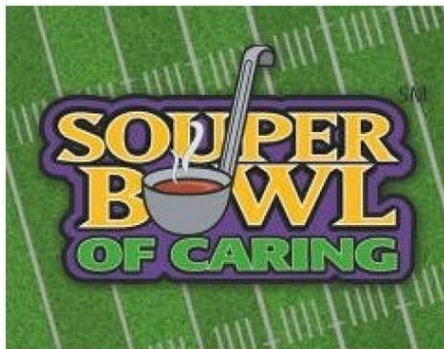


## Parish News Continued



### Candles and Bulletins

Honor your loved ones by sponsoring 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. Pick up an envelope 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](mailto:trinluth@epix.net) or 570-265-5322. The envelopes are dated, so you can choose a specific week in which to honor your special loved ones.



### Souper Bowl of Caring — February 12th

Join the nationwide effort to tackle hunger by bringing non-perishable food items and/or monetary donations to Worship on February 12th.

All items and monies collected will be donated to the TACO food pantry.

Go Team Trinity!



### Soup Sale

The Grace Connection Soup Sale was a big success. We exceeded our goal of raising \$300! Thank you to the following who donated ingredients: Cindy Estelle, Ruth Russell, Cathy Bellanca, Suzanne Alexander, Joyce Detharidge, Lois Carrington, Tammy and Jeff Lockhart, and Maureen Engelhard.

And, a big Thank You to Doreen Secor for making the soup.

### 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 Tammy Lockhart for organizing the Love Baskets for Christmas, and to both Tammy and Jeff for delivering the baskets to the recipients.

\*Thank you to Doreen Secor for organizing the Christmas cards and to Kay Champluvier for sending them in the mail.

\*Thank you to our Children's Church teachers for helping to organize the Children's Christmas Program.

\*Thank you to Randeale Albers for baking the cornbread for the Pastor's Chili Cook-off.





## A Closer Look at the Bible – Pastor Jira Albers

### It Is All About Returning To The Garden Of Eden

There is one image that is pervasive throughout most of scripture, and it is that of the garden of Eden. If you remember, on the seventh day of creation, God rested. And, while God rested, God made a garden on a mountain in Eden. God filled the garden with animals. To help tend the animals and the garden, God created a man and a woman. For some time, God walked with humans and humans with God in love and peace. The humans trusted God for everything, and in return God provided for all their needs. Soon the eternal peace of the garden would be disrupted. In the garden, there was only one rule: do not eat from the fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” for if they did, the humans would die “on that very day.” The crafty serpent tempted the humans into eating from the fruit of the tree and their eyes are opened and they soon realize that they are naked. On a leisurely stroll in God’s garden, God realized something was very different, and very wrong. The humans had eaten the fruit. As a result, God shows grace on the humans and does not kill them, but God does ban them from the garden. As Genesis 3:24 reads, “[God] drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.”

It is amazing to see just how much this story shapes the whole rest of scripture. As you read through scripture, you will see some themes that very much have everything to do with a desire to return to the garden. God desires more than anything to have that close relationship of walking with us in the garden, but our “humanness” makes that very difficult. The Bible is filled page after page with stories about how humans fail to live the garden life of peace and trust in God. Humans start to murder one another. Humans start to ruin their own relationships with each other and with God, and begin to trust in other Gods. Humans continually prove that they cannot live in the presence of the divine. This refusal to trust God culminates in a great flood that God sends upon the earth to cleanse and purify the earth once again. And the rest of scripture is the story of how God tries over and over again to establish righteousness in the world. “Righteousness” means “right relationship,” and that right relationship of the garden where humans lived in peace and trusted God is what God still desires.

As God tries to reestablish this relationship, you see that the stories of the Bible start to take a certain form. The form is the progression of the story of Eden, only in reverse. When humans were removed from the garden, the basic shape is moving away from the tree of life, through the gate down the mountain of the garden of Eden, past the cherubim with the flaming sword, and through the waters of the flood. So, in order to bring us back, you will see this progression in reverse: coming through the purifying waters, through the fire and cherubim, and moving up the mountain to the tree of life. For example, when God tries to restore the relationship with God’s people by giving them the law (the ways to live in order to walk with God) you see that the people pass through the waters of the Red Sea, at base of the mountain Moses enters through the fire, goes up the mountain and meets God who gives him the law which is meant to create life among the people. It is a return to Eden.

When God gave the gift of the tabernacle, a space where God could be present with the people, a little miniature garden of Eden that traveled with the people, the design had the return to the garden explicitly in mind. If you took time to explore the tedious laws concerning the construction of the tabernacle, you would discover that people would purify themselves before entering (the flood), and when they looked forward toward the Holy of Holies (where God resided) they would see the fires of the sacrifices (flaming sword), cherubim sewn into the curtains of the Holy of Holies, and inside the curtains was the mercy seat (the arc) with cherubim on the lid, in which the laws of God were held and upon which God would sit. It is in this space where Moses would consult with God, and it was a garden of Eden in the wilderness.

You see the same things going on when the people enter the promised land. They go through the waters of the Jordan, in order to enter into their new Eden-ish life in the land God promised. As you see, this theme of returning to life in the garden continues throughout all of scripture. Think about the curtain tearing in two when Jesus dies on the cross. Think about the images at the end of Revelation, with a return to the tree of life. Once you understand the vital image of the garden, your understanding of the scriptures opens wide.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 23, 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.

The Meeting was started with Devotions followed by the Elections of Officers for 2023.

**Vice-President:** Ron Cunfer

**Secretary:** Maureen Engelhard

**Treasurer:** Debra Finan

**Financial Secretary:** Doreen Secor

*Committies:*

**Worship and Prayer:** Thelma Allis & Maureen Engelhard

**Study Team:** Maureen Engelhard, Korrie Kunkle & Jennifer Kaniuka

**Service Team:** Council

**Encouragement Team:** Tammy Lockhart & Doreen Secor

**Giving Team:** Tammy Lockhart

**Sharing & Inviting Team:** Council

**Finance Team:** Doreen Secor

**Property Team:** Ron Cunfer

**Personal:** Korrie Kunkle

It was brought up at the Annual Meeting that the Yearly Treasurer's Report seemed to have some mistakes. It was voted on by the congregation that Council go over the Treasurer's Report and present the corrected version to the congregation for approval. The Council is doing this and will present the revised report as soon as it is corrected. Wysox has signed the contract for this year to use Pastor's Services. The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod will be purchasing a handful of hours of Pastor's Services from Trinity in order to redevelop a Synodically Authorized Lay Minister program.

The yearly envelopes were not sent to us. The company that sends us envelopes did not do this and it seems that the company may longer be in business. Ron and Korrie are checking into label options for us to make our own envelopes for this year.

The need for a paying a Supply Pastor may increase this year. A motion was made and passed to pay a Supply Pastor up to 4 times during the year. The amount of pay for this service will be according to Synod Guidelines.

Ash Wednesday Service will be at 12:15p.m. on Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Pastor will also be available at the church from 4:00-6:00 p.m. for the disposition of ashes. Lenten Services will be virtual at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays during Lent.

The internet continues to be a major problem. Deb will be checking with Comcast about service and checking if there are any other companies that would be available for internet service to the church. She will let the Council know so we can make a decision on the best option.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maureen Engelhard

Council Secretary

# February 2023

# Birthdays and Anniversaries

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 John Secor	3	4
5 Maureen Gehring	6	7	8	9	10 Dale Griffith	11 <b>Joe and Heather Snyder</b>
12	13	14 Cathy Bellanca	15	16	17 Eric Secor	18
19	20	21 Cathy Smith	22 Kynlee Kunkle Stacey Kwader	23	24 Lois Carrington David Horn	25 Emily Chilson Colleen Woodrig
26 Kristy Cook Richard Feusner	27 Sue Sites	28 Tanner Kunkle				

# March 2023

# Birthdays and Anniversaries

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 Satchel Manchester	3 Braylee Brimmer	4
5	6 Carolyn Lacey	7 Timothy Hart <b>Jim and Brenda Giffen</b>	8	9 Morgan Post	10	11
12 Mike Cantellops	13 Frank Zukerman	14 <b>Sven and Pat Thomason</b>	15 Aaron Lineberry Mavis Pugh Gene Vanderpool	16	17 Heather Manchester	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Wendy Keeney
26	27	28	29	30 Paul Sites	31 Cindy Sites Brian Manchester	

## February 2023 Meetings and Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 10:00 am Worship at Skilled Nursing	3	4
5	6	7 9:00 Fellowship 10:15 Worship at PCH 7:00pm VBS meeting	8	9 9am Communion at Personal Care Home	10	11 9:00-1:00 CPR class Wysox Presbyterian
12	13	14 9:00 Fellowship	15	16 Board Meeting Grace Connection at the Episcopal Church 10:30	17	18
19	20	21 9:00 Fellowship	22 Ash Wednesday	23	24	25
26 First Sunday of Lent	27 6:30 Council Meeting	28 9:00 Fellowship				

## March 2023 Meetings and Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 11:45 Lenten Luncheon 7:00pm online service	2 10:00 am Worship at Skilled Nursing	3	4
5	6	7 9:00 Fellowship 10:15 Worship at Personal Care Home	8 11:45 Lenten Luncheon 7:00pm online service	9 9:00 am Communion at Personal Care Home	10	11
12	13	14 9:00 Fellowship	15 11:45 Lenten Luncheon 7:00pm online service	16	17	18
19	20	21 9:00 Fellowship	22 11:45 Lenten Luncheon 7:00pm online service	23	24	25
26 Prayer Around the Cross during Worship	27 Council Meeting 6:30 pm	28 9:00 Fellowship	29 11:45 Lenten Luncheon 7:00pm online service	30	31	





# SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA



## *FriEDEN'S: An Amazing Garden Story*

A few weeks after the lockdown in the spring of 2020, I called a neighbor in town who had a garden in her front yard. It's Shartlesville, and the PA Dutch are used to their yards looking \*just so,\* so I knew this was a brave woman who loved gardening vegetables more than public opinion. I also knew she didn't have room for pumpkins in her small yard, so I called and proposed we plant some viney crops up on our church property. She agreed and even had the seeds, gardening skills, and ideas, so after consultation with council, the garden was born. We sent our crop to the neighboring UCC congregation's food pantry, and with the excess had physically- distant free produce giveaways.

In 2021, we expanded the garden by half, to about 50 by 75 feet. We watered each plant via a recycled gallon milk jug with a pinprick in the bottom. The plants were happy, but our backs were not. It took 45 minutes to an hour to water all the jugs, which we did nearly every day because the garden is in full sun. The black plastic we used for weed suppression became a slip-and-slide while we irrigated.

In 2022, we were able to install a drip irrigation system that did not require filling milk jugs and weed suppression fabric that was not slippery. The fabric required using a blow torch to make holes for planting but will be able to be used for multiple years. The irrigation only required turning on the spigot and letting it run for several hours, which was a true God-send because we had some unexpected health issues on the garden team that limited our volunteer force! It was an extraordinarily dry summer, so the grant came just in time.

This past summer we had 21 people volunteer in the garden, took produce to 5 food pantries or senior centers, including Cafe Esperanza in Reading, and welcomed 29 people into the garden at a joint VBS. Not only are we feeding our neighbors with free, fresh, pesticide-free produce, but we are also getting to know our neighbors, developing new connections in the congregation among volunteers, teaching children about food insecurity and the joy of gardening, and passing on agricultural wisdom.

Submitted by Pastor Inge Williams



SYNOD  
ASSEMBLY



2023

GOING  
BEYOND  
DEATH  
TO LIFE

JUNE  
1-3

*What's happening at Kalahari?*

- Plenaries full of important decisions like the next Vice President of the Synod and the next Secretary.
- Small group breakouts with important and timely topics like small rural ministry, growing young, anti-racism, innovative worship, and more...
- Vibrant worship featuring Agape (David Scherer) and spoken word poet, Joe Davis.
- Free time activities and gatherings.
- And an incredible guest preacher for our festival worship (announcement coming soon.)

*We're hard at work planning  
this incredible event!*

.....

SO, LET'S GET BACK TOGETHER,  
RECHARGE, WORSHIP, AND ENGAGE IN  
THE BUSINESS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.

# 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 Secor .....265-3832  
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](mailto: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**

February—Maureen Engelhard

March—Thelma Allis

## **February 5—Fifth Sunday of Epiphany**

Acolyte– Jennifer Kaniuka  
Lector– Ron Cunfer  
Communion Assistant– Bill Serfass  
Ushers– Suzanne Alexander and Joyce Detharidge  
Counter– Ron Cunfer

## **February 12—Sixth Sunday of Epiphany**

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

## **February 19—Transfiguration of Our Lord**

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

## **February 26—First Sunday of Lent**

Acolyte– Ember Albers  
Lector– Ron Cunfer  
Communion Assistant– Bill Serfass  
Ushers– Suzanne Alexander and Joyce Detharidge  
Counter– Cassidy Ayers

## **March 5, 2023—Second Sunday of Lent**

Acolyte– Jennifer Kaniuka  
Lector– Ron Cunfer  
Communion Assistant– Maureen Engelhard  
Ushers– Ruth & Ron Russell  
Counter– Ron Cunfer

## **March 12, 2023—Third Sunday of Lent**

Acolyte– Kynlee Kunkle  
Lector– Korrie Kunkle  
Communion Assistant– Bill Serfass  
Ushers– Paul and Aggi Cook  
Counter– Maureen Engelhard

## **March 19, 2023—Fourth Sunday of Lent**

Acolyte– Trinity Pugh  
Lector– Bill Serfass  
Communion Assistant– Bill Serfass  
Ushers– Thelma Allis and Doreen Secor  
Counter– Doreen Secor

## **March 26, 2023—Fifth Sunday of Lent**

Acolyte– Ember Albers  
Lector– Jeff Lockhart  
Communion Assistant– Maureen Engelhard  
Ushers– Suzanne Alexander and Joyce Detharidge  
Counter– Cassidy Ayers

## **April 2, 2023—Palm Sunday**

## **April 9—Easter**

Trinity Lutheran Church  
908 South Main Street  
Towanda PA 18848

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## TRINITY TRUMPETER

February 2023/March 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*