



TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, TOWANDA, PA

JUNE 2023/JULY 2023

Holy Trinity Sunday —June 4th



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

Vacation Bible School

VBS is coming up — June 25th thru 28th

Go to https:// vbspro.events/p/ events/da86a0 to sign up or scan this QR code to sign up on the VBS site.



Congratulations Graduates!



College Graduates Lizzy Antes, Nursing (Wilkes Univ.) Allie Bone, Health Sciences (Jefferson University)

High School Graduates

Delaney Carrington (NE Bradford) Mikayla Post (NE Bradford) Kate O'Connor (NE Bradford) Macaria Benjamin (Athens Area)

6th Grade Graduates Trinity Pugh

Kindergarten Graduates

Isaac Albers Aurora Hodgdon Quinn Cantellops Matthew Regan

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Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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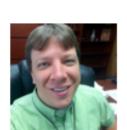






Pastor's Message





A Message From Pastor Jira Albers

The Christian Notion Of Family

Often Christians describe themselves as a "family" of faith. This makes sense. For ages Christians have traditionally called each other "brothers" and "sisters." But, every once in a while, it is good to stop and explore our long standing traditions to see exactly what they mean. Perhaps, the original meaning has been forgotten and it would be instructive for us to explore the traditions in order to glean some meaning for today.

"Family." What word could evoke such strong emotions? When most people think of family, their minds can wander one of two ways. Many people's minds wander to feelings of a warm, loving environment where they are accepted no matter what. They think of people who will support them through their triumphs and their failures. That is family.

However, "family" does not always evoke such warm feelings. There is a significant amount of people who had a household that was anything but warm, loving, and supportive. Abuse may have darkened these people's notions of "family." Conflict and refusal to forgive may taint their ideas of what a family can be.

One problem with Christians using the term "family" is that family is usually a closed group that cannot easily let new, unrelated people in.

However, Jesus' idea of "family" is vastly different. When teaching in a crowded house, Jesus' mother and brothers were trying to get to him. When asked to give his family privilege in entering through the crowds, Jesus responded: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:48-50).

There is no doubt that Jesus loved his mother and siblings, but Jesus' idea of family is so much more. Jesus' idea of family includes everyone who seeks to live a life in tune with God the Father. Jesus' family is not exclusive, the house of the Lord is not full, and the door leading to his family is not shut. "Knock and the door will be opened." Our church family is the same. It is not exclusive, it is never full, and the door is never shut. All who seek a life with God are a part of our family.

"Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister mother"

Matthew 12:50

The Question Box

(Questions About Our Christian Life)

"Is it OK to cry and miss someone? Isn't that a sign that I do not trust God?"

1 Thessalonians 4:13 says, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope." It does not say we do not grieve, just that with our grief we also have hope. – Pastor Jira Albers





Parish News



Baptism

On Sunday, May 21st, Pastor Albers baptized Maureen Englehard's great granddaughter Charlotte Maureen Wegman.

Charlotte's proud and happy parents are Nicholas and Leighann Wegmann and her Godparents are Kinser and Morgan Sherman and Patton and Lucy Taylor.

Congratulations!



Father's Day is June 18th

"When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant, I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years." —Mark Twain

Upcoming Gospel Readings

June 4th

Matthew 28:16-20

Living in the community of the Trinity

June 11th

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Christ heals a woman and raises a synagogue leader's daughter

June 18th

Matthew 9:35—10:8 [9-23]

The sending of the Twelve

June 25th

Matthew 10:24-39

The cost of discipleship

 $July\ 2^{nd}$

Matthew 10:40-42

Welcome Christ in those he sends

July 9th

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

The yoke of discipleship

July 16th

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

The parable of the sower and the seed

July 23rd

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The parable of the weeds

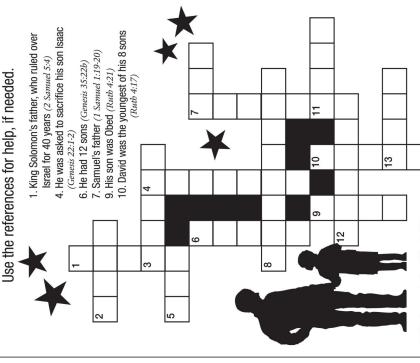
July 30th

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

His youngest son, Jacob, tricked him into giving away a birthright (Genesis 27:30)

Parables of the reign of heaven





Answer: DOWN 1. David, 4. Abraham, 6. Jacob, 7. Elkanah 9. Boaz. 10. Jesse; ACROSS 2. Noah, 3. Isaac, 5. God, 7. Eli, 8. Jonathan, 11. Adam, 12. Joseph, 13. Saul

Father of Jonathan; Israel chose him as their first king (2 Samuel 9:6)

He was married to Mary, mother of Jesus (Matthew 1:20-21)

David's best friend and the father of Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:6)





Parish News Continued







Compliments to Mavis, Ember, and Trinity for their performances in the Endless Mountain Dance Center's 20th Anniversary Recital, "Screen to Stage." Good job, girls!



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.

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 everyone who helped on clean-up day.
- *Thank you to all who helped serve at CHOP.
- *Thank you Maureen Engelhard, Rebecca Hodgdon, and Sarah Troup for teaching Childrens' Church.
- *Thank you to Bill Serfass for your willingness to fill in for Pastor Jira while he's on vacation.





A Closer Look at the Bible - Pastor Jira Albers

Genesis: The Spirit

I would like to take you on a journey into the first chapters of Genesis and explore the Bible's description of the "Spirit." What we translate as "Spirit" is the Hebrew word "ruakh." Ruakh can be translated "breath," "Spirit," or "wind." When we translate it, we should be keeping all three translations in mind. The idea is that God keeps us alive by giving us breath. In Genesis, it is God's "Spirit" or "breath" or "wind" that hovers over the waters and gives life to all.

Just to set you up for this image, I want you to delete from your mind (for just a moment anyway) our modern ideas of what the cosmos was like before God created. We tend to think of black space. We tend to think of the nothingness that exists between the stars. For a moment I want you to delete that image and I want to invite you into the image of what things were like before creation for the writers of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). The image that came to mind for them when they considered the time before God created was a vast, chaotic expanse of water. It is over this scene of watery chaos that God's Spirit hovers. Genesis 1:2 reads: "and the land was wild and waste; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the **Spirit of God** moved upon the face of the waters." The blowing of God's wind, the movement of God's Spirit, the breath from the words that God spoke brought order out of the chaos. This is powerful imagery, especially when our own lives feel like nothing but chaos. God is able to blow God's Spirit into our chaos and create order.

This is not the only time we see God's breath used in the act of creating. In Genesis, chapter 2, we see another powerful image of what God's creation was like. Here, instead of chaos waters being the state of things before creation, the writer describes it like a barren desert where there is not life. All there that exists is dead desert. But, water soon springs up out of the land, mixing with the dirt. Genesis 2:7 then tells us that "the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being." God shapes mud into a human, exhales breath into the mud, and the human comes to life. If you are alive, you have God's Spirit filling you with life. Every breath is a literal gift from God. God's Spirit brings everything to life, and without it, all life is taken away. In fact, the Bible describes people's breath being taken away (death). "When you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created" (Psalm 104:29-30). This is an acknowledgement of our dependence on God's "ruakh."

We see this idea of Ruakh, God wind, taking away life right away in the story of Adam and Eve. As you may recall, the first woman and man were told they could eat anything in the garden of Eden, except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But, at the urging of the crafty serpent, they see that the fruit of that tree is good for food and they take and eat. In other words, they desire to have knowledge for themselves, rather than to trust God and God's wisdom. Our inability to trust God is the source of so many problems in this world, and this story establishes it as the primary problem. After the man and woman eat and notice that they are naked. The Bible says in Genesis 3:8 that "they heard the voice of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God amongst the trees of the garden." This is a poor translation; because it evokes an image of a peaceful breeze blowing as God enters the scene. But, the voice of God is the Ruakh of God. And, like a parent who has discovered that their child has done something very wrong and is going to confront them, the angry wind storm of Yahweh God comes through the trees of the garden. It is fearful enough that the man and woman hide from God among the trees. When the wind storm arrives, there are consequences to the woman and the man eating from the tree from which they were not to eat. This brings up another important aspect of God's Spirit/ Wind/Breath: it can also be used to enact judgment and destroy. God Spirit brings life, but when we have chosen paths that lead to death, that Spirit can be withdrawn and death will follow; after which God can breathe something new into existence again.

We see this in the Noah story where the world has become evil and God allows the chaos waters to reclaim creation. All are destroyed except for Noah and those on the ark. In Genesis 8:1 we read that "God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided." Here the breath/Spirit/Wind of God returns to create once again.





HIGHLIGHTS OF CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 24, 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.

OPENING STATEMENT/MISSION AND VISION: *Synod Council* approved what Pastor is doing on development of curriculum for the Lay Associate Miniter Program. Bishop wants it going by Fall.

MINUTES: Maureen sent out the Minutes from the 4/03/2023 meeting. Having been received and read by everyone Thelma made a motion to accept the Minutes, seconded by Jen. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer's Report for March was sent out by Deb Finan for Council's approval. Tammy made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Jen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor is preaching Sermons Series based on People's Faith Questions.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER TEAM: Cards were being sent out to Bill and Marian Feathers to say hello. Some people have sent them on their own but there are also some cards on the table in the Hart Center that can be signed and they will be sent out

SERVING TEAM: Tammy set up for people in our congregation to go to CHOP after Service on May 7th to help fill bags for the children. It will be from 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Pastor will do an abbreviated Service that day.

STUDY TEAM: VBS plans are going forward. Jen, Korrie and Kynlee will be helping. The theme for this year is a Space theme; Shine Jesus Light. Money raised at VBS will go to Ethopia this year. VBS is June25th-29th.

SHARING/INVITING TEAM: We will send out cards to people we haven't seen in awhile.

PROPERTY TEAM REPORT: Church yard cleanup will be done on the 21st of May.

ENCOURAGEMENT TEAM REPORT: Bibles will be passed around for the congregation to sign and given to our High School graduates. We will celebrate our graduates on Pentecost Sunday, May 28th. We will have fellowship after Service and have a cake to recognize all special graduations. Holy Trinity Sunday is on the 4th of June and our congregation's namesake Sunday. We will do fellowship and cake on that Sunday also. Requests for Geraniums for Pentecost Sunday placed in memory/honor of someone needs to be done. We will ask Deb to please do that.

PERSONNEL: Korrie called Nathan and he will now be cleaning weekly.

CARE AND ENCOURAGEMENT TEAM REPORT: Pastor continues doing Worship and Communion at the Personal Care Home. Everyone is invited to join in this Service. Names were presented of those who we need to check on with phone calls, visits and support.

ITEMS "FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

We still need two representatives for Synod Assembly. Jen will check and see is able to do this for our congregation. Korrie made a motion that we cancel any further business with the company that provided our Offering Envelopes and we will do them ourselves with our own stamping system. She will get stamp. Motion seconded by Ron. Motion carried.

Next scheduled Council Meeting is May 22nd at 6:30 p.m. Pastor closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Maureen Engelhard

June 2023 Birthdays and Anniversaries

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Brian & Heather Manchester	2	3
4 Zachary Griffith	5	6	7 Tom Henson Brandon Renninger Pastor Jira and Randele Albers	8 Duane and Lois Carrington	9 Ron Cunfer Richard Seaberg	10
11	12 Eileen Alesky	13	14	15	16 Jim Giffen	17
18	19 Mathew and Wendy Keeney	20 Debbie Philippi	21	22 Sharon Weed Tom & Irma Henson Frank & Carol Zukerman	23	24
25	26	27 Aaron Lineberry Sr	28 Richard Horton	29 Ron & Thelma Allis	30 Brian Chilson	

July 2023 Birthdays and Anniversaries

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3 Thelma Allis	4 Beverly Serfass	5	6	7 Butch Brion	8
9 Kay Korb Kyle Lockhart Matthew Brimmer	10 Jameson Brown	11	12 Stacey Hart	13 Amy Champluvier	14 Helen Fleck	15
16 Harold Renninger	17 Bill Serfass Patti Thomason	18	19 Timothy Dunn Jr James & Kathy Smith	20	21 Aubrey Carrington Delaney Carrington	22
23 Mark Cantellops Donna Feusner 30 Terri Brion	24 Kelly Smith 31 Kay Champluvier Laurie Kapson	25 Paul Cook	26	27	28 Christian Horn Christopher Horn Dave & Cindy Estelle	29 Cassidy Ayers

June 2023 Meetings and Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Synod Assembly Worship at Skilled Nursing 10:00 am	2 Synod Assembly	3 Synod Assembly
4 Holy Trinity Sunday	5 Baccalaureate 7pm	6 Worship at Personal Care Home 10:15 am	7 Pastor's vacation starts	8 Pastor's vacation	9 Pastor's vacation	10 Pastor's vacation Hart Center reserved 11-4
11 Pastor's vacation	12 Pastor's vacation	13 Pastor's vacation ends	14 Hart Center reserved 5-8 pm	15 Grace Connection Meeting 10:30 am	16	17 VBS set-up 9 am First Presbyterian
18 Father's Day	19	20	21	22 Communion at PCH 9:30 am	23	24
25 Vacation Bible School 6-8 pm	26 Vacation Bible School 6-8 pm	27 Vacation Bible School 6-8 pm	28 Vacation Bible School 6-8 pm	29 Vacation Bible School 6-8 pm	30	

July 2023 Meetings and Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4 Worship at Personal Care Home 10:15 am	5	6 Worship at Skilled Nursing 10:00 am	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 Communion at PCH 9:00 am	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24 31	25	26	27	28	29





WE MATTER TO THE WHOLE CHURCH: A STORY FROM OUR SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD

Being a member of a congregation council is significant in the life of a disciple. Serving as a leader in a congregation is rewarding, terrifying, awe-inspiring and messy. You are among friends, family and your community of believers, and are chosen to lead in your congregation. It's just a few times a month, but as Barbara Nugent, a synod vice president, shares, "Then life happens, and you find out the reporting required. Situations occur; personalities clash; decisions need to be made. Who do you go to for direction?"

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod provided that direction in February when it offered training to 70 congregational lay leaders that strengthened each person's skills and faith. From evangelism to the ELCA constitution and bylaws, they gathered to meet the passions and needs, offering workshops with special breakouts for presidents, vice presidents, secretaries and treasurers that covered such topics as worship and music, communications, advocacy, stewardship and social justice/anti-racism. The day started with Bishop Kurt Kusserow encouraging these valued leaders to keep the focus on our purpose:

"Your leadership in the life of your congregation ought always to bear in mind that your congregation finds its fulfillment in the universal church, and that the universal church exists in and through congregations such as yours. I think this means addressing local questions and concerns in the life of your congregation as if they matter to the whole church (because they do)."

Everyone was hungry to gather ideas, consider future steps but also have an opportunity to connect, be empowered, feel valued and cared for and remember the excitement of being church. Rev. Melissa Stoller, director for evangelical mission, said it this way: "The day was a very visible yet not necessarily quantifiable force that we are church together. Wandering but not alone. Feeling worry, power, uncertainty, and joy as one." Central to this gathering was living into the mission of this synod "to serve, connect and equip congregations of the SWPA synod to tell the story of Jesus." Everyone knew that the synod was there for the congregations with staff, volunteers and greater church support, not only this day but in the days to come, and synod staff are supported through the generous mission support of congregations allowing them to be there for our leaders. One leading Scripture for the day reminded each leader of their value: "Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word" (Acts 6:3-4). Hoping each of our synods are seeking ways that work for them to encourage and empower congregational leaders. Knowing that we are church together, church that supports each other across the whole church prayerfully, financially, emotionally and with a hope for renewal.



Our Synod has PRIDE 🕻



June is Pride Month which celebrates LGBTQIA+ folx and their many achievements. Although injustices and prejudices still exist within our society, we have made great strides since the Stonewall Riots in 1969, attaining marriage equality. However, as previously mentioned, we still have a long way to go in the struggle for equal rights. By learning about LGBTQ Pride/History Month, congregational members are more likely to have an understanding and acceptance for all individuals, no matter what they look like, what gender they do or don't identify as, and who they love. Consider celebrating

PRIDE in your congregation!

Trinity Leadership Directory

Officers & Staff:

Pastor/PresJira 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

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

June—Debbie Philippi July—Maureen Engelhard

June 4—Holy Trinity Sunday

Acolyte-Kynlee Kunkle Lector-Korrie Kunkle Communion Assistant-Korrie Kunkle Ushers- Sue Alexander and Joyce Detharidge Counter-Korrie Kunkle

June 11—Second Sunday after Pentecost

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

June 18—Third Sunday after Pentecost

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

June 25—Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Acolyte– Trinity Pugh Lector– Jeff Lockhart Communion Assistant– Randele Albers Ushers– Ron and Ruth Russell Counter– Ron Cunfer

July 2, 2023—Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

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

July 9, 2023—Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

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

July 16, 2023—Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Acolyte– Ember Albers Lector– Doreen Secor Communion Assistant– Randele Albers Ushers– Thelma Allis and Doreen Secor Counter– Doreen Secor

July 23, 2023—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Acolyte– Mavis Pugh Lector– Jeff Lockhart Communion Assistant– Cathy Bellanca Ushers– Lois and Duane Carrington Counter– Doreen Secor

July 30, 2023—Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Acolyte– Kynlee Kunkle Lector– Korrie Kunkle Communion Assistant– Maureen Engelhard Ushers– Ron and Ruth Russell Counter– Korrie Kunkle Trinity Lutheran Church 908 South Main Street Towanda PA 18848

TRINITY TRUMPETER

June 2023/July 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