

HOLY TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 2024 Newsletter
Vol 32 Issue 1

To Be and To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christmas is the celebration of the good news that God so loves the world that God became a part of it in the frail flesh of a child. Despite our best efforts to keep him out, God simply intrudes. The life of Jesus is bracketed by two impossibilities: a virgin's womb and an empty tomb. God entered our world through a door marked "No Entrance" and left through a door marked "No Exit." Over and over again, the Christmas story reminds us that God shows up where we least expect him, especially among those who think they are the least deserving. Christmas is the good news that God is with us, and God is for us.

The King of Kings was not born to a princess in a palace. He was born to a simple girl and laid in a manger. The Prince of Peace was not adorned with velvet robes. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes. The good news of the Savior's birth was not announced to heads of state, but to shepherds out watching their flocks by night.

The Creator of all things, the mysterious One, becomes visible, small and vulnerable. And while this is good news for all people, it is especially good news for those who know they don't deserve it, those who don't have it all together, those who know they haven't got a prayer, those who often feel small and vulnerable, those who know their lives are broken beyond repair, those who know beyond a shadow of doubt that they are in bondage to sin and cannot free themselves. It is to such as these that Christmas announces this great good news: God is with us and God is for us.

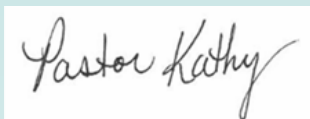
So many people seem to think that God is only with and for the "good" people, whoever they are. But Christmas announces the good news that, no matter how unworthy other people might think we are of God's love, or how unworthy we might think we are of God's love, God is for us and God is with us.

God chooses to love and forgive us. No matter who you are, no matter where you've been, no matter what you've done or have failed to do, God's love is for you – not because you're good, but because God is. And yet so many of us seem to struggle with this reality.

Let the story of Christmas point you to the truth that sets us free: God's love is not based on our worthiness, but on God's goodness and grace in Jesus Christ. God is with us, and God is for us. God has entered into the mess of this world and into the mess of our lives to forgive us, to restore us, to set us free.

None of us deserves it. None of us has it all together. None of us has a prayer. All of us are small and vulnerable. Each of our lives is broken beyond repair. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, we are all in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. And so, God has climbed into this world and into our lives, not because we deserve it, but because we need it and because God loves us. God is with us, and God is for us. That is the good news, and the gift of Christmas.

Your Sister in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Kathy". The signature is written in black ink on a white rectangular background.

Pastor's Report Highlights

Worship Planning has been finalized through 2023.

Finalizing Epiphany season worship plans in order to then prep for Lent which starts February 14th.

Debbie and I pretty much have the new church membership database ready to train key individuals who will be using it. We'll do the training early in January.



JANUARY

Birthdays

Jan 3	Eric Bowman	Jan 25	Nancy Allen
	Oscar San Miguel	Jan 26	Patrick Wain
Jan 6	Stan Lammon	Jan 27	Joan Groll
	Al Sandor	Jan 29	Emory Lynch III
Jan 9	Sue Schamadan	Jan 30	Barney Musselman
Jan 14	Dorothy Elsasser	Jan 31	Nancy Collier
Jan 15	Kathy Zeigler		Karen Feichtner
			Larry Feichtner

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held in the Sanctuary on Sunday, February 4, immediately following the worship service.

Please plan to attend and participate in this very important meeting for our Church.

A fundraiser pancake breakfast by Scout Troop 152 will be available in the Fellowship Hall following the Annual Meeting.

Large Catechism Class: The Ten Commandments

Interested in digging deeper into Luther's Catechism? Pastor Kathy is leading a class on Thursdays at 10am starting January 4th through February 8th (no class on January 18th). Another class will be held on Saturdays at 9am starting January 13th through February 10th. Copies of the Ten Commandments section of *Luther's Large Catechism* are available on the table next to the name tags.

HTLC Apparel

You may have noticed the staff wearing a jacket, vest, or shirt with a Holy Trinity Lutheran emblem. If you would like to order something visit www.sanmar.com to pick out the item(s) you would like. And give your order (item number, size, and quantity) to either Debbie or Pastor Kathy. The final cost is about \$10 in addition to the cost of each item you order.



Thank You

Dear Members and Friends of Holy Trinity,
Thank you so much for all the Christmas cards and gifts. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and love expressed to us during the holiday season. And we pray you each have a blessed New Year. We look forward to celebrating the joy of being the body of Christ with you for years to come.

Joy & Peace!
Pastors Kathy & Dan, and Barclay

Happy
New Year



JANUARY SPECIAL OFFERING

Initial Offering

Please Make Checks Payable to HTLC

Contributions may be mailed, dropped in the church mail slot, or in offering plate on Sunday mornings.

The January Offering envelope supports the expense of purchasing the boxes of offering envelopes.

2023 Annual Committee Reports are due to the Office by Friday, January 19th. Please email your report to Secretary @ HolyTrinityMansfield.org. If you are unable to email your report, please place it in an envelope marked "Annual Report" for the Office Administrator. Thank you!



FOOD COLLECTION

**Food collection continues every Sunday.
Donated food will be taken
to the designated agency
after the Third Sunday of each month.**

HTLC Congregational Budget Meeting

Dec. 3, 2023

Attendance: Members who attended the 10:00 service and stayed for the meeting. (49 voting members)

Call to Order: Carol Bertholf called the Congregational meeting to order at 11:20 am on Dec. 3, 2023 in the church sanctuary. Pastor Pennington opened the meeting with prayer. A quorum was established. Carol thanked the members of the congregation for staying for the meeting. She presented the written ballot to the congregation and members voted by written ballot. Two Council members counted the vote. The positions were filled as follows:

Council President: Bonnie Elias: 3-year term

Worship and Music Chair: Barbara Fraifogl: 3-year term

Finance Committee Chair: Don Karger: 3-year term

Endowment Committee: Becky McKinley: 3-year term

Endowment Committee: Doug Rhodes: 3-year term

Endowment Committee: Sue Hendrickson: 2-year term

2024 Budget: Carol introduced Don Karger who presented the proposed budget. The proposal had been reviewed and approved by both the Finance Committee and Church Council. The proposed budget had been made available to the congregation for their review shortly after it was approved at the Nov. 14, 2023 Council meeting. He highlighted areas of the budget. Questions were raised and answered.

Then, **Don moved that the Proposed 2024 Budget be accepted as presented. Jim Fleming seconded.** Members voted by written ballot. **The motion was approved with 48 yes votes and 0 no votes.**

Pastor Kathy thanked Carol Bertholf for her six years of leadership as Chairman of the Church Council.

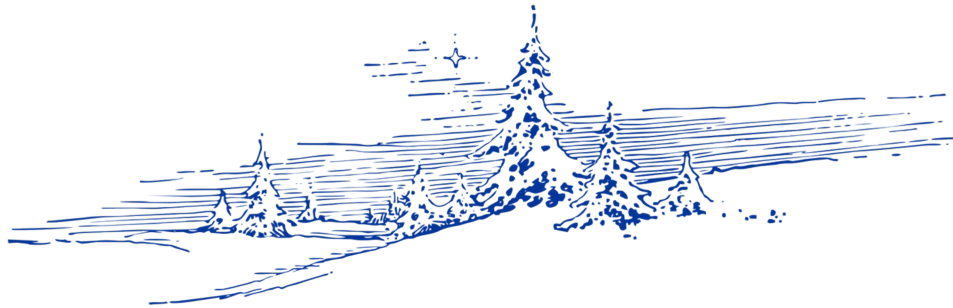
Carol reminded committee chairs that their annual reports are due by Jan. 19, 2024 and that pictures should be included.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Pastor Kathy Pennington.

Adjournment: There being no other business, **Jim Fleming moved and Always Butz seconded that the meeting be adjourned.** Carol adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Collier, Council Secretary



OUTREACH MINISTRY NEWS:

- Bring in the fronts of unsigned Christmas cards to be sent to Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch
- We are collecting for Love Our Heros this month—look for the collection tub
- Our meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 9th at 1pm

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
	1	2	3
	Office Closed		
	New Year's Day		
		No HT Bells	
		6p Dance Lessons	
		No Property Mtg	
7	8	9	10
9:00a Parish Ed Mtg			
10am Worship Svc		1p Outreach Committee Mtg	10a Comfort Quilters
11:15 Youth/Adult Ed		5:15p HT Bells	
1p Confirmation Class		6p Dance Lessons	
		6:30p Council Mtg	
14	15	16	17
	Office Closed		
10am Worship Svc	M L King Day		
11:15a Youth/Adult Ed		5:15p HT Bells	2p Finance Mtg
		6p Dance Lessons	
21	22	23	24
10am Worship Svc			
11:15a Youth/Adult Ed		5:15p HT Bells	
1p Confirmation Class		6p Dance Lessons	
28	29	30	31
10am Worship Svc			
11:15a Youth/Adult Ed		5:15p HT Bells	
12p – Council Retreat		6p Dance Lessons	

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	4	5	6
	10am Catechism Study		
	NO HT Singers		
	NO Books Coffee & Dessert Club		
	6p Dance Lessons		
	7p Appleseed Squares		
	11	12	13
	10am Catechism Study		
Fort Makers s	11:30a Worship & Music Mtg		9a Catechism Study
	12:00p HT Singers		
	1-3p F.H. Reserved		
	6p Dance Lessons		
	7p Appleseed Squares		
	18	19	20
	NO Catechism Study		
	12:00p HT Singers		9a Catechism Study
ce Mtg			
	6p Dance Lessons		
	7p Appleseed Squares		
	25	26	27
	10am Catechism Study		
	12:00p HT Singers		9a Catechism Study
	6p Dance Lessons		
	7p Appleseed Squares		
	<div>January 2024</div>		

IN CHRIST'S

	SUNDAY JANUARY 7	SUNDAY JANUARY 14	
Head Usher	JIM FLEMING		
Greeter			
Lectors	TBA	TBA	
Cantors	KATHY GLESSNER	DICK COLLIER	
Ushers	JERRY & JOYCE DUFF, C		
Altar Guild	JIM & LINDA FLEMING		
Communion Altar Asst.	KARL & LORI THEM		
Offering Counters	JIM & LINDA FLEMING		
Snow Removal	Jerry Fraifogl	Jim Fleming	



F'S SERVICE

SUNDAY JANUARY 21

SUNDAY JANUARY 28

JIM FLEMING

TBA

TBA

BONNIE ELIAS

NANCY COLLIER

; CINDY SHASKY, BECKY MCKINLEY

JIM & LINDA FLEMING

KARL & LORI THEM

JIM & LINDA FLEMING

Karl Them

Jonathan Butz



Defining Stewardship

~ Rev Taylor Rister-Stempniak

When Adam opened his eyes in Eden, he didn't have a fig leaf to his name. Yet God had given him a voice, fingers, toes and a smile fashioned after God's own grin. The Lord invited Adam into a mission to take these gifts and use them to "work and keep" creation alongside God in the garden. We know Adam offered his voice, naming the beasts and birds. We can imagine he stooped to bury seeds in soil. Maybe he saw his reflection in a stream and recognized that he belonged to God—how could he not when their images were the same? - and so did everything around him.

If Adam, in some small moment before the fall realized this and set out with enthusiasm to care for it alongside our God, then Adam grasped the profound meaning of stewardship. Many of us have more than fig leaves to our name. Even after we fell into sin, God never stopped being generous—what does it mean to have a God who stitched Adam and Eve clothes as they were sent from the garden, and who likewise has blessed us? Every bit of our time, talent, treasure and testimony is a gift from God to his people.

As stewards of his resources, we are those called to take stock, recognizing that God has given us all that we have and all that we are with love and with purpose. Our minds, bodies, voices, bank accounts, cars, homes, families—all are gifts from God to be folded into his story. Our voices may be lifted in praise, our homes and hearts opened to those in need, and our resources dedicated to the building up of his kingdom.

To even be included in this mission is a mark of God's grace. What Adam realized too late about stewardship is that

its greatest barrier is greed. He and Eve wanted for themselves what was set aside for God alone. Sin entered into this world because in greed, our first parents wrapped their hands tightly around what belonged to God.

How often do we find ourselves wrapping our hands around what belongs to God and refusing to let go? That crafty old serpent still whispers that we should live for ourselves, keep what is in our possession, but God has always been more generous than that. In the waters of baptism, he quiets that old serpent and restores the mission of stewardship. We are invited to work and to care for all that belongs to God, walking alongside him as he cares for his creation, his children and his Church, just as Adam and Eve first walked alongside him in the garden. Just as they first dedicated everything they had to the task, we are invited to do the same.

God wants all of us to be part of the story of stewardship—from the infant whose baptism is a testimony to God's grace, to the widow whose two coins ensure that the church is able to buy Bibles for the next generation, to the man willing to shovel snow on Sunday morning.

We walk into this mission with bold faith in our Lord. Because he has been generous with us, he will be generous with what he will do with us too. Being a steward is being unafraid to dedicate all that we are and all that we have to working and taking care of God's world because we know how this ends: with mountains breaking into song, with the hungry filled with good things, with the dead being raised to new life.

It ends where it began—where we began—in the hands of our God.

from NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH LIVING AND
GIVING MINISTRY. © North American Lutheran Church

Christmas Giving Tree

Gifts collected by the Outreach Ministry for 2 families for Christmas were given on Saturday, December 16.



THANK YOU to everyone who participated in giving gifts to these families!!!



Ring
ing
bells at
Kroger on Lex
Ave for the
Salvation
Army

HT Bells
playing in
December



Books, Coffee & Dessert Club

No Meeting in January 2023.

Our next meeting will be
February 1 at 1:30 pm

mydiversekitchen

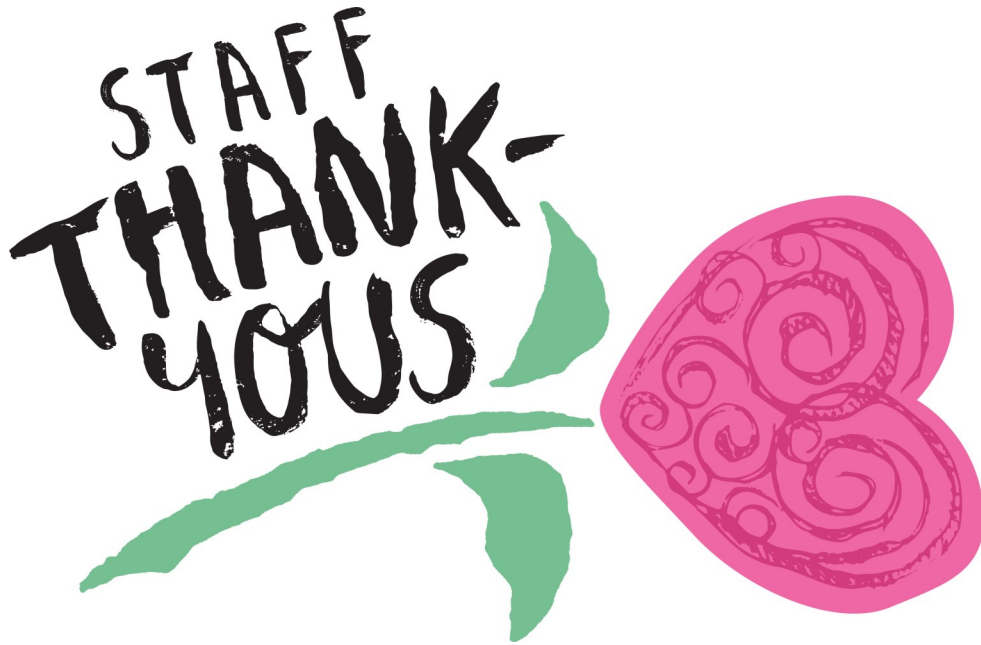
HOLY CARERS

Thanks to all of you who are involved with Holy Carers! Keep sending those notes & cards, making those calls and visiting whenever it's possible. Our homebound and shut-in members truly appreciate it!



There are so many ways to be involved at Holy Trinity! It takes many hands to keep things running smoothly so don't hesitate to jump in and serve. There are sign-up sheets in the hallway for a variety of places to serve.





Dear Holy Trinity—

We just wanted to express our thanks and gratefulness for the thoughtfulness of Church Council and individual members who showered us with cards, gift certificates, sweets & treats, tokens of appreciation and other gifts over the Christmas holiday.

We are blessed to work together at Holy Trinity—and to serve with and for the members here.

We pray that you and your families have a beautiful and blessed New Year!

Sincerely,

Steve Flockenzier, *Sexton*

Michael Smith, *Organist*

Debbie Taylor, *Office Administrator*

**HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
525 WEST COOK ROAD
MANSFIELD, OHIO 44907**



CONTACT INFORMATION

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www.holytrinitymansfield.org

BUSINESS HOURS:

9:30am-12:30pm Mon-Fri

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to be a Christ-centered Bible-based Church, equipping disciples with Scripture to share the good news of God's reconciling love with conviction, courage and compassion while