



Pastor's Ponderings

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a *new creation*.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
Galatians 2:20

Recently I have been listening to an alternative music station. This is new for me; my set dials have been NPR, sports, rock, easy listening, jazz and classical. I listen to them depending on my mood, time of day, or how I want to de-stress in the car. The alternative music station has expanded my perspective on music. Most of the music stations I listen to, apart from jazz, play familiar songs that I have heard for years. Until this new station, I felt comfort in the expected and known. Now I am listening to unfamiliar songs, artists, and musical styles that I am finding fun, informative, and exciting. Though I have heard of some songs and artists that are being featured, this station has been a breath of fresh air.

Being a new Creation in Christ daily can be and is a refreshing breath of fresh air for us. As a new creation we begin our day with Jesus, knowing we are forgiven, our fear of death may be lessened, and we can trust that we are not walking alone that day. As a new creation our day can be filled with new insights, and new ways of looking at the world because we are living "in the Word." The Word, the living Christ, gives us permission to evaluate and look at things new in Love, not just from a perspective of 2,000 years ago when there was no electricity, knowledge of many scientific facts and advances, but to look at things in Love from a contemporary point of view. This allows for the living Christ to influence how we love, who we love, and what justice issues need to be a focus in our lives today.

Diving into the New Testament as a new creation opens up our minds to who are the women at the well being shunned by their community, who are the tax collectors and sinners, what do agrarian parables mean to us in the modern day, how do we serve the least of these, how do we listen to and act towards the Samaritans of this day, and so much more.

I pray that you join me in letting go of all the presets we have and being open to where love leads us this month.

Peace,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

New! The Book of Revelation Study—beginning in September

Pastor Fred will begin an eight-week study of the Book of Revelation beginning on Fridays in September from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM in Augustana's Luther Hall. It will be on Zoom and in person. The dates of this study will be announced in August. All are welcome to one or all of the study dates. Look forward to seeing you!

Monday Evening Tai Chi at TOL!

Instructor - Charlie Schmidtke
MONDAY evenings: 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM
\$20 per 10-week session



If you are looking for a form of exercise that consists of slow gentle movements, meditation and breathing, you might want to consider learning Tai Chi. If there is enough interest, two sessions will be offered beginning in September. Please use the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to indicate your interest.

If you aren't familiar with Tai Chi, please speak to Charlie!

Session 1:

September 18, 25
October 2, 9, 16, 23
November 6, 20, 27
December 4

Session 2:

January 22, 29
February 5, 19, 26
March 4, 11, 18, 25
April 8

Upcoming BW's BBQ Chicken Dinner & Basket Raffle Sunday, September 10 Dine-in or Take-out

Dinner: Plans are now being made for this annual fundraiser. To make this year's event a success, volunteers will be needed—as well as desserts!

Basket Raffle: Our BBQ Chicken Dinner & Basket Raffle is on Sunday, September 10 and we need your help. Please consider either donating a basket, items to make up a basket, or possibly a gift card. We appreciate any way that you can help! Please see us with any questions about the raffle.



Debbie and Kelly

More information on the event will be in the Sunday bulletins and September *Trinity Tidings*.

New! Sermon Discussion/Input

In seminary, Pastor Fred was told that an aspect of the Sermon is that it's a dialog. To help, Pastor Fred is asking for participants to join him in a bag lunch discussion of the texts for the next month of sermons. It is known as a "Pericope Study." We will be meeting for two hours on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Noon starting August 23.

Please inform Pastor Fred if you are interested in coming. There will be some preparation in order to have a discussion about the text/world events/church challenges. It will be held in TOL's Fireside Room.

Trinity Tidings, August 2023

We invite you to join us for worship,
with Holy Communion
Sundays at 11:00 AM
(in-church or on Zoom)



ELCA Prayer Ventures, August 2023

- † Pray for an end to the wildfires across Canada and for the relief of all people and communities affected. Give thanks for the selfless service of firefighters in Canada and from more than 10 other nations, including the United States, as they work together to protect life and respond to this widespread natural disaster.
- † Pray for the elected leaders of our nation, that they will discern what is right and good and serve all people, without prejudice.
- † Pray for an end to the Russia-Ukraine War, the conflict in Sudan and political unrest in other nations. Ask God to help us value and respect one another, exercise compassion and generosity, and find ways to work together to address common problems and challenges.
- † Pray for refugees around the world displaced and unsettled – sometimes for years – as a result of war and violence, natural disaster, economic crisis, changing climate and ethnic or political persecution.
- † Ask the Spirit to prompt us, throughout our busy days, to pause and behold God's presence and attentive love.
- † "Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid'" (Matthew 14:27). Amid fear, loneliness and shaken faith, turn to God in prayer and trust that God is present and attentive to whatever is going on in our lives and the world.

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Prayer for Trinity Old Lutheran and Augustana Lutheran Churches

Inspire us to be good stewards of the resources you have entrusted to us. Teach us to give freely of ourselves and to offer our lives in service. Show us your will for the ministries at Augustana and Trinity Old Lutheran. Strengthen our relationships in this community as we serve our neighbors in love.

"Christian Cancer Support"

If you are on a cancer journey and are in need of support, please contact Linda Sokoley. She is on a journey as well and she can offer you support, hope and healing. Please contact Linda through Augustana LC's office at 716-832-5720 or by email at augustchurch@yahoo.com.



Trinity Tidings

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Church Office: 716-836-4868 or 716-836-4990
Church email: trinityoldlutheranchurch@gmail.com
Karen Mulartrick and Jan Sherman, Co-Editors



July Mission

Thank you to everyone for your donations in support of the general upkeep at Holy Rest Cemetery. Also, a group of volunteers were to participate in a cemetery workday on Saturday, July 29. An update will appear in the September *Trinity Tidings*.

August Mission: Family Promise of WNY

This month's mission will be to support Family Promise of WNY (FPWNY). The organization has been serving homeless families in Buffalo for over 25 years and is located on Hickory Street. It functions as an emergency shelter that also enables families to stay together while in their care. The website contains information on FPWNY history, the shelter and its mission, ways to help and how to volunteer.

FPWNY Vision: "We seek to build a community that wraps homeless children and their families in hope."

[from: FPWNY website at www.fpwny.org]
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Please use the marked envelopes located in the narthex, or mail your donations to the church office (please indicate on your check that it is designated for Family Promise of WNY). Thank you for your support.

Support for Local Food Pantries

Your donations in support of the Community of Good Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo and Good Shepherd Lutheran's pantry in Tonawanda are greatly appreciated. Suggested items needed are listed below.



Please place your donations in the narthex shopping cart or leave them in the elevator entrance during the week (Tuesday to Friday, 9:00 AM to Noon). Thank you!

- Canned fruits, vegetables, beans, soup, tuna and chicken
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Cereal and other breakfast items (oatmeal, grits)
- Pasta, Mac-and-Cheese
- Spaghetti and pasta sauces
- Instant potatoes
- Paper products, feminine hygiene products

Gift cards (Tops or Wegmans) (mail to church office)

Monday Afternoon Adult Ed. Classes, led by Charlie Schmidtke

The classes meet on Monday afternoons from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. We will meet via zoom or in person. The class schedule for 2023-24 is listed below.

2023

September 11:	Creation According to the Book of Jubilees
September 25:	The Flood
October 9:	Sodom and Gomorrah
October 23:	Abraham's Sacrifice
November 6:	Exodus – Deliverance
November 20:	Exodus – Mount Sinai
December 4:	Deborah's Victory

2024

January 22:	Elijah and the Prophets
February 5:	Babylonian Captivity
February 19:	Last Supper
March 4:	Between Easter and Pentecost
March 18:	Pentecost
April 8:	The Great Compromise
April 22:	Gamiliel's Intervention
May 6:	Destruction of the Second Temple

The Adult Retreat

September 29, 30 and October 1

Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center
Retreat Coordinator: Charlie Schmidtke



This will be a time for us to gather again in fellowship, laughter and prayer. The retreat is open to all who are 18+ years of age. Complete retreat information is posted on the main bulletin board, as well as the sign-up sheet. If you worship with us on Zoom, please call or email the church office and we can add your name to the list.

Deadlines: September 17 for reservations;
September 29 for payment.

If you have any questions, please contact Trinity Old Lutheran at 716-836-4868, or speak to Charlie. Information packets will be sent to everyone who registers.



ELCA Prayer Ventures, August 2023

- † Ask the Spirit to give us wisdom and discipline to care for wildlife and natural resources, for the well-being of creation and humankind.
- † Many seasonal workers are heading home, back to school or toward new employment. Give thanks for their work and service throughout the summer; pray that they will find employment, housing and benefits that sustain them and their families; and pray that their spirits will be renewed and sustained in welcoming communities of faith.

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Seasons' Readings!



Stop by the Resource Room near the main bulletin board for the ongoing TOL Book Sale. In addition to books and puzzles, there are magazines available for your shorter summer reading material.

"Garden Glory"



Job's Tears hit the ground for another spin
Transplanted from pots and now they're in
The weeds were determined to give us a fight
But the soil said "hello" you've landed just right
Where you belong till the beads can appear
And then you'll be ready for another year
Of crafting, designing and spreading some mirth
It's astounding what joy comes from the earth!!!

Diane S

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Hearts and Hands: Faith in Action

Hearts and Hands (HNH) continues to serve residents living in Erie County and eastern Niagara County.

About Hearts and Hands

Built upon an interfaith coalition, Hearts and Hands connects caring, reliable volunteers with older community members who have essential needs, like transportation, to ensure they can continue living independently.

Services

Hearts and Hands is a best efforts program at no expense to the care recipient. Services are provided by volunteers who give of their time as they have it available. Neighbors helping neighbors.

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For more program details and information (and how to become a volunteer), please visit the HNH website at www.hnhcares.org/services or call 716-406-8311.

TOL is a part of this community of volunteers—
Neighbor Helping Neighbor Volunteer Program!



Give thanks for the six Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service welcome centers across the country, which provide asylum-seekers with case management, health care and counseling, legal assistance, school enrollment for children and youth, and emergency food, housing and financial assistance.

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Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtko
Study Notes: “Mary/Elizabeth and Jesus/John”

Part I: Background Information

Any study of Jesus should look at who his family was or may have been. To start that process we'll examine: 1) the relationship between Mary (his mother) and Elizabeth (possibly a relative) and 2) Jesus and John the Baptist when they were young. Luke is the only gospel that gives us an account of the relationships among Mary and Elizabeth and of Jesus and John. On the other hand, all the gospels start Jesus' adult life with his baptism by John. The gospel of John has the beautifully poetic opening, but his narrative starts with the Baptist. Matthew gives us Jesus' childhood ending with their eventual return to Nazareth after staying in Egypt. After that he goes immediately to Jesus' baptism by John. Mark starts with John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism. Luke is quite different. We'll examine his telling about Elizabeth, Mary's visit to her, and John's birth. Later we'll also cover Luke's story about Jesus being found in the temple when he was 12. Luke goes to Jesus' baptism immediately following that story. I believe these stories in Luke were important for his entire narrative found in both the gospel and the book of Acts. He wrote both books to elevate Jesus as our Savior and Paul as the one who brought the gospel to the world. He briefly mentions some of the work of the apostles, but the Acts is really misnamed: I don't really think it is the Acts of the Apostles, rather it's the Acts of Paul with some mention of some of the apostles. Paul is baptizing in Jesus' name and is following in the tradition of John the Baptist and Jesus. Luke gives us stories that are important about Jesus' childhood and we'll examine the relationship of John and Jesus before Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River.

We tend to look at the bible as a spiritual and historical account of God in the Old Testament (OT) and of Jesus in the New Testament (NT). Reading the bible historically, that is, looking for facts and the truth about the past is problematic. The bible comes out of an oral culture, meaning the gospels were written decades after the events occurred and nothing was written before Paul's letters. His letters had limited audiences for the first 100 years or so. Thus, the faithful became followers and baptized because of the oral stories being passed on by the apostles and the other faithful (especially the women). Looking for historical accuracy in an oral tradition is looking at the wrong starting point. This oral tradition became a primary source for all the written gospels, whether they were included in the NT or not. Oral traditions use stories to pass on wisdom, lessons and what is most important in life (meaning and purpose). It's about meaning and understanding, not about verifying facts and analyzing evidence. We tend to gravitate to the “real” and “factual.” How often do you say aloud or think to yourself whether or not a movie or TV show is based on a “true” story? If it's a good story, does it matter? It usually does though. That is a cultural bias that favors facts and evidence and minimizes meaning and purpose. So, if we are going to be fair, we're going to have to be careful about our questions about fact and evidence and listen more to the meanings of the stories. However, I have a real paradox here. I'm going to try to provide you with “cultural” facts and evidence to help us understand the meanings of the stories. I think facts and evidence should not overturn the stories' meanings or purpose, but hopefully can help us understand it better. Our focus remains on the humanity of Jesus and the people around him.

So, we'll start with an overview. There are a lot of scholarly debates about what I'll be presenting. I'll try to provide a consensus view that makes some sense out of Jesus' family. Mary's parents were probably Anne and Joachim and probably died when Mary was a child. According to the custom of the times, when her parents died, she would have become a ward of the temple. One of the most likely explanations for her childhood was that Zechariah (sometimes spelled Zachariah) becomes her guardian. He worked in the temple and was married to Elizabeth. So, Mary and Elizabeth would become close as Mary grows up in the temple. Another story line is that Anne and Joachim do not die when Mary was a child; rather, they move to Nazareth and raise Mary there. This story line makes the betrothal to Joseph and her trip from Nazareth to Elizabeth more consistent. We'll turn to this story line in a minute. Elizabeth and Zechariah had no children until later in life (maybe she in her 40s, Zechariah in his 50s). Their child is John the Baptist. Zechariah could have divorced Elizabeth if she had no child after ten years of marriage. It is the woman's responsibility to get pregnant and having children was the primary purpose of marriage. But he doesn't divorce her. [Read: Luke 1:5-25]

Zechariah was a priest from the tribe of Levi and Elizabeth was a descendent of Aaron, Moses' brother who was the first priest for the people in Cana. David established the roles of the family lines and the Levites would serve as priests. The priests would cast lots to determine who would go into the altar. There are two altars in the temple. The first altar was called the Golden or incense altar. A veil separated the incense altar from the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies held the Ark of the Covenant and only the High Priest could enter this area. Jews believed that God was physically present with the ark. The incense altar was built of acacia wood and covered with gold. It had four horns, one at each corner, similar to the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard. The incense was burned twice daily, morning and evening (since the time of Aaron). When the Babylonians destroyed the temple and took people into captivity, this practice was lost for over 70 years before the temple was replaced with the help of the Persians. Ethiopian Jews claim to have secreted the first/real ark of the covenant after the temple's destruction and have it protected in a special temple in Ethiopia; this place still exists today.

There was a special family line who had the proper recipe for the incense (which included salt—a precious commodity). This offering symbolized that the prayers of the people were rising up to God. Animal sacrifices occurred outside on the courtyard altars and were for atonement (after which people would be able to commune with God—the basis for our Eucharistic practice). Luke's passage is about Zechariah's experience when he is chosen to burn the incense which is a real honor. Scholars believe about 8,000 people may have been outside the temple when Zechariah's story occurs. There were always large crowds around the temple, using the pools surrounding it, seeking rabbis for advice, offering sacrifices for loved ones, etc. We'll continue the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah next month.

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*“We can do no great things,
only small things with great love.”*

Mother Teresa

Operation Christmas Child

It's hard to believe we are three months away from putting our boxes together. We are so thankful for each and every one of your donations. Hopefully, you found it easier with our monthly suggestions.

The suggested donations for this month are markers, small notebooks, safety scissors, and glue sticks. Please place your donations in the Operation Christmas Child box in the narthex.

Thank you so much!
Kelly and Debbie

Community Baby Shower—Donate in September!

We are joining local churches in collecting donations that will benefit Harvest House (a local agency that has a Babies and Children's Ministry that provides clothing, baby furniture and other necessities) and Response to Love (an agency that also provides assistance to individuals, children and families in need). Both of these agencies are on Buffalo's East Side.

The items most needed are listed below.

- New or lightly used baby clothes (newborn to toddler)
- Baby diapers (all sizes, but especially sizes 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Baby bottles
- Towels and washcloths
- Baby lotions

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, on Eagle Street in Williamsville, will gather the donated items from each church and transport them to both agencies. (And if anyone has a truck and would be willing to help deliver, that would be appreciated as well!)

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this community effort. Every item donated will be given to a family struggling to make ends meet, and it is a wonderful way to show the face of Christ in our community.

For more information, please contact Sue (St. Paul's Williamsville, Social Ministry Committee) at the church office (716-634-2330).

Friends of Night People Collection

- Collection of new men's socks, and small-size hygiene products (soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste) or create care packages. See the marked container in the narthex.
- Men's seasonal clothing collection—look for the Big Blue Barrel near the main bulletin board.

Ways to Give to TOL

Online: Tithe.ly is available. For instructions, please visit the church website at www.trinityoldlutheran.com or download the Tithe.ly app to your smartphone. Please call the church office at (716) 836-4868 if you have any questions.

Giving by mail: Please send your checks to the church and to the attention of the Financial Secretary.



Wishing everyone a continued safe and happy summer!