



Trinity Old Lutheran Church is a member of the Niagara Frontier Conference of the Upstate New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Pastor's Ponderings

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
Matthew 16:13b

During Lent, Anne and I have been using a devotional that asks deep questions about faith. We have found out new things about ourselves and each other and we look forward to the next day's question. I find that I have to leave all the thoughts and worries of the day behind in order to truly connect to the question. It is not always easy, but when it's done, surprises happen.

Jesus asked deep questions like the one above, testing to see if the message he was living through word and deed was getting across. The surprising thing, the essence of the message was getting through. Peter was able to proclaim, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Because of this proclamation from Peter, Jesus entrusted "church" building to him. "I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." This responsibility could only come to fruition after Jesus died and was resurrected, and the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to Be what God prepared them to Be.

In a sense, we, by diving deeply into our faith and in all its sureties, doubts, and questions, are opening ourselves to a Jesus who is asking us to take on responsibilities. Maybe the responsibilities include sharing our faith, or giving of ourselves and what we have to others. With the Holy Spirit's presence, we receive this calling and stand on the knowledge that we, like Peter, are blessed to be a blessing.

May the Lord Bless and Keep you this Easter Season.

Peace,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

Questionnaire for Fellowship and Outreach Participation



The Outreach Team put together a survey to help learn what kinds of activities the congregation would like to participate in. Please take a moment to answer our questions. There are just nine checkboxes to click, with an estimated completion time of one minute.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PJSXWKG>

We will also have copies available in the narthex for those who prefer to complete the survey on paper.

The Team meets at 7:30 PM on the fourth Tuesday of each month via Zoom. Please contact Stephanie or me for a link to join us—we'd love your help in extending our Outreach!

Pete

Adult Ed. Classes Led by Charlie Schmidtke Monday Afternoons at 1:00 PM

This month we will continue our review of some biblical passages and sources not included in the bible as we look at who the "Real Jesus" was. All are welcome to join us in the TOL Fireside Room and also on Zoom. (Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link.)



- April 10 What the Q documents tell us
- April 24 How the Gospels were selected; what was lost
- May 8 The Council of Nicea and how Jesus was defined

Table Talk Returns!

Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM
(in-church and on Zoom)

We'll meet in the Fireside Room and resume our discussions on Oprah Winfrey's "Belief" series. We'll have the opportunity to view and discuss spiritual beliefs and practices found throughout the world. Please contact the church office if you'd like to Zoom. Each session stands alone so feel free to join in at any time.

WWI Invites You for Coffee and Conversation!

Following the 11:00 AM worship service on **April 23**, WWI will be hosting a coffee hour in the Fireside Room (across from the office). Come grab a coffee/tea/juice, and a treat or two and catch up with your Church family. A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board for any women who would like to help with either refreshments or clean up. Hope to see you!



Women's Luncheon Group

The group will meet at Danny's Restaurant (3715 Genesee Street in Cheektowaga), on **Thursday, April 13 at 12:30 PM**. If you need a ride from TOL, or have any questions, please contact Judy or Barb. Everyone is invited.



Upcoming BW's Barbeque Chicken Dinners!

- **Friday, June 16** (3:00 PM – 6:00 PM)
- **Sunday, September 10** (12:00 Noon – 3:00 PM) (with Basket Raffle)

Volunteers will be needed! Watch for more details in the Sunday bulletins and *Trinity Tidings*.

Trinity Tidings, April 2023

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



Holy Week Worship

Palm Sunday Worship, April 2 (in-church and Zoom)
9:30 AM at Augustana Lutheran
11:00 AM at Trinity Old Lutheran

Good Friday, April 7 (in-church and Zoom)
11:00 AM at Augustana Lutheran
7:00 PM at Trinity Old Lutheran (Tenebrae Service)

Easter Sunday Worship, April 9 (in-church and Zoom)
9:30 AM at Augustana Lutheran
11:00 AM at Trinity Old Lutheran



An ELCA Prayer for Easter

Sunday “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised” (Matthew 28:5-6). Praise God! Give thanks that our lives, purpose and hope are forever changed in the risen Christ, God’s tangible expression of love and mercy for humankind.

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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.

ELCA Prayer Ventures, April 2023

Give thanks for musicians, choirs, cantors, music directors, orchestras and bands that give witness to our faith, draw us into worship and reflection, and help us express our joy and praise to God.



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March Mission

Thank you for your continued support of Family Justice Center and the important services the organization provides in an effort to break the cycle of relationship abuse.

Trinity Tidings

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April Mission: Augustana Refugee & Immigrant Driver Education (RIDE)



Augustana LC continues its RIDE/Drive to Thrive driver education program with Pastor Johanna Andritz serving as Director. It remains a “one-of-a-kind” program in WNY that continues to assist refugees and immigrants in obtaining drivers’ licenses.

Pastor Johanna presented a RIDE update at TOL on Sunday, February 24. RIDE is also supported by Lutheran Charities of WNY.

As new participants enter the program, more volunteers will be needed. Please consider volunteering—some of the ways you can help are listed below.

- Being a liaison with the driving school
- Teaching, teaching assistants, and office help
- Providing refreshments

If you have any questions, please speak to Pastor Fred or Pastor Johanna. More information can be found on the Augustana website at www.augustanaonline.org/outreach.

To make a monetary donation, please use the marked envelopes found on the table in the narthex or use Tithe.ly through the TOL website. If using the mail, please enter “RIDE” on the check memo.

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)

Pastor's Message from the 2022 Annual Report (excerpts)

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

"We look forward to this new year as new creations in Christ. Even though we seem to be in a fractured society, with many conflicting ideologies fighting for followers, we are reminded in Scripture that Jesus' kingdom is not of this world, in fact it transcends this world through love, grace, hope, and peace. Jesus' radical love is portrayed in who he interacted with, sinners and prostitutes, people with leprosy, non-Jewish people, though laws stated how this was not of God. Jesus broke down walls and barriers that humans build to keep people apart and he offered a way to discover his reconciling love. As New Creations, we are called to the lofty purpose of imitating Jesus' radical love and its inclusivity, which means... loving even our enemies! This year we at TOL are called to challenge ourselves to do acts of love, fight for justice, work towards peace, and lift up the promises of Jesus in all that we do.

This new year will have its challenges. We must continue to assess our ministry and see where God is leading Trinity Old Lutheran Church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Knowing we are a small church, we need to assess what kind of partnerships to begin, develop or grow. As a congregation we will look at ministries to start up or continue. The living Word of God is not stagnant so what should we consider as we follow the call of God in Micah to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. In the upcoming year we are making small steps to work for change that is backed up by our Lord's welcoming spirit. We have established a "Reconciling in Christ" team, to explore and move towards being a welcoming place for all. Our Synod is a "Reconciling in Christ" synod. We have established an outreach team to grow and support our ministries. We will continue to connect to our sister congregation, Augustana, sharing Bible studies, ministries, Pastor, and worship. The new year looks like it will be a year of education with more than a half dozen in our 1st Communion class. The future is full of possibilities. I look forward to people increasing their involvement and having an impact on our world, locally and afar."

A review of the year: we continue to return to some practices that we had before the height of Covid and to keep the worship hybrid; we made the sanctuary more accessible by removing a pew and we continue to review how to make it welcoming to all; and we worshiped with four other churches during Lent.

"We celebrate the people who make worship go on without a hitch, they deserve our thanks. You know who you are.

As new creations, let us join together and keep welcoming new people to our worship and continue to strive to be a blessing to others."

Pastor Fred

Holy Rest Cemetery: During the annual meeting, Matt expressed a need for additional board members and also help with clean-up. If you can help or need more information, please speak to Matt.

"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.



Annual Meeting – Thank You!

- * **Thank you** to Nancy for preparing the 2022 Annual Report and for making copies available to members worshiping in-church and mailing/emailing copies to other members!
- * **Thank you** to everyone who helped in any way with the Potluck Lunch that preceded the Annual Meeting—and to those who brought delicious food and desserts!

Mid-week Lenten Soup Dinner/Worship

I remembered a saying as I thought about our Lenten Soup Dinner on March 1. "Many hands make light work." That is exactly how I felt after our dinner. Without the soup/chili makers, those who supplied the desserts, soda/juice/coffee, bread/butter, and candy, and those who helped with set up and clean up—this would not have been possible. All of these things take time and effort and it does not go unnoticed. I am so appreciative of the willingness of all the people who took time out of their daily lives to help and to make our event successful.

There aren't enough words to express what it means to me to be part of such an awesome Church family!

In Christian Fellowship,
Kelly

Dandelion Thoughts

1. Up through grass they spring and bloom
Winter is over; they dispel the gloom
Their color is meant to bring us cheer
Please don't make them disappear
Nature calls us and makes her pleas
This is life renewed - food for the bees!
2. Flower in a crannied wall
Makes me smile and feel quite tall
Some would call this plant a weed
But I would say, "No, no, indeed"
This is God's glory at its best
A colorful, drinkable, edible quest!



Diane S

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Arbor Day, April 28



Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke
Study Notes: "Who was the Real Jesus"

Part I: An Introduction to a study of Jesus

Who is Jesus the man? Our adult education class for this year has focused on Jesus as a human, using different written gospels and letters other than just the ones in the New Testament. The purpose of the class was not about changing people's minds, rather it was intended for people to hear about the wide and diverse material written and said about the man, Jesus, within the first two centuries since his resurrection. I also wanted to present the incredible diversity of thoughts and beliefs that are included in Christianity. Context is important and I tried to examine Jesus' context (how others saw him in his own day), and not just see him through our own historical perspective. I assumed that Jesus was human and divine. But this course concentrated on trying to understand him as a human being, starting with his birth. One of the difficulties we all face in trying to figure out who Jesus was is whether we're looking at Jesus as an historical figure; or are we trying to put together his legitimate biography and life story; or are we trying to discern what influence his family and his Jewish roots had on who he was; or are we interested in him as a savior, miracle worker or a Jewish Messiah. I assumed that we all have very different interests, which actually change from time to time. One primary question for the class was trying to determine how accurate a picture we get of Jesus from the four gospels. How do we deal with their inconsistencies and contradictions? Should we totally disregard all the other writings and gospels that are not included in our bible?

I assumed that it was valuable to examine a variety of non- New Testament writings about Jesus that have been adopted by other Christian churches and denominations (for example, in Egypt, India, and Armenia). Because the early church Fathers selected only four gospels and ordered all the others destroyed, does that mean they were right in doing so? Did they have a vision of Jesus and selected the gospels they thought supported that image OR did they select the gospels and create a vision of Jesus from the gospels OR was it a bit of both. Theologians, clergy, and laity have very different views of Jesus. Is there really one True and absolute belief? Obviously, there are wide variations among Christian sects. I tried to provide a context for understanding Jesus as a man from a variety of sources starting with his contemporaries and the world within which he lived. We started the year by looking at the two different nativity narratives in Matthew and Luke. Matthew tells of the coming of the Magi and the escape to Egypt while Luke tells of the shepherds and the immediate return to Nazareth. Did Jesus and his family go to Egypt or did they go straight home to Nazareth?

Before turning to the bible narratives, here are some notes about "Christmas" that provide a context for examining the different bible stories.

1. Jesus was NOT born on December 25:
(a) Shepherds would not have been in the fields in December; (b) Saturnalia was a popular Roman festival of the Roman Sun God. It was celebrated

on December 25 and the early Christians wanted to continue to carry on the activities of Saturnalia, which included decorating homes with boughs, candles, and garlands; having families gather and share a big meal; exchanging presents and singing popular festival songs. Early Christians used the festival they loved and named it Jesus' birthday—the nativity of the Son of God.

2. Trying to understand dates and dating of biblical people and events is confusing. The calendar we use was supposed to be divided Before Christ (BC or BCE) and After the Lord (AD or CE); but Jesus was probably born somewhere between 4-7 BCE. In 525 CE, the pope charged Dionysius Exiguus to establish the dating system by using the Julian Calendar, which consisted of 365 ¼ days. He assumed that Jesus was born between 1 BCE and 1 CE; however, there were a couple of problems. First, the Romans did not have a number 0, so there was no 0 year (for example our number 10 was X for the Romans). Second, he miscalculated what year Jesus was supposed to have been born. Scholars believe that Jesus was born sometime in the fall or spring of 4 BCE to 7 BCE.
3. Child birth at the time usually included at least three female attendants with the pregnant woman. Two would support her under her arms and she would deliver the baby to the third. Sometimes the woman sat over something to "catch" the baby. Our pageants are great but they also dehumanize birth and what Mary, and Joseph, went through. Men were rarely involved. Let's not forget that delivery is bloody, painful and anxiety ridden. It was common for women to die at childbirth in those days. It was also common for still-born and early deaths for children. In those days infant mortality was common: think of the poor in third world countries today and not like a middle-class experience. Life expectancy in Jesus' time was about 35. Mary at 14 would have been a maturing woman, not a young teen. We have no idea how Mary actually delivered: did Joseph help? Were there women from the Inn or town who helped? Did women they met as they traveled to Bethlehem help? Would Elizabeth return the favor and meet her in Bethlehem? Hospitality was a hallmark of the culture. Seeing a woman ready to deliver would bring other women to help; she would not have miraculously delivered Jesus without any blood, pain, anxiety or assistance. Our idea that it is out of order or unnatural for parents to outlive children is only something that the developed countries have experienced in the latter part of the 20th century. The reality for humanity through most of our existence was that children died either at birth or very young. Most families experienced one, even many deaths of children. People who became parents before 1930 had a very different experience and attitude growing up than we have today.

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ELCA Prayer Ventures, April 2023

- † Remember in prayer people who live in despair and yearn for hope, especially those recovering from natural disasters, incarcerated in prisons and jails, displaced by war and economic crises, or suffering poverty, hunger, unemployment or lack of shelter.
- † Give thanks for God's steadfast love and kindness, which are so often obscured by our daily activities, concerns and distractions.
- † Pray for God's counsel in how to be a positive, compassionate and healing influence in society and the world, following the path of life, light and truth.
- † Thank God for listening and responding to our prayers, both spoken and silent.
- † Pray that our faith might grow and mature as the Spirit guides and encourages us through worship, service, Bible study, involvement in a faith community, and the witness of our global companions.

Earth Day Praise God for the diverse and abundant natural resources that sustain life, the interconnection of all that exists, and the wonders of creation that inspire and humble us. Pray that we will wisely steward what God has entrusted to our care and work diligently to restore what we have damaged and depleted – for the well-being of humanity and the honor of our Creator.



Pray for farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers who, each spring, prepare, plant and tend fields, orchards and herds so that they will produce bountiful harvests and feed the world.

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Operation Christmas Child for 2023

The suggested donations for April are small toys (ball, slinky, jump rope, small cars or trucks, plastic animals, yo-yo, etc.) anything small enough to fit into a shoe box.



Maybe you have a childhood memory of playing with something special that you think a child would enjoy. The ideas can be endless in this category.

Please place your donations in the marked box located in the narthex.

Thank you so much!
Kelly and Debbie

Seasons' Readings—Spring!

Spring is here—spend time with a new book or puzzle! There are books related to gardening; time to think about what to plant in your own gardens! Please stop by the Resource Room to see what's available. For any new donations, please leave your items in the box located in front of the desk.



Ways to Give to TOL

Online: Tithely is available through the TOL website (trinityoldlutheran.com) or download the Tithely app to your smartphone. Giving by mail—please send your checks to the church and to the attention of the Financial Secretary.

“Christ in Our Home” Daily Devotionals

Copies of the booklets (April through June) are available in the narthex. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please call Nancy in the church office (716-836-4868).

