



Pastor's Ponderings

"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works!" Psalm 139:14

Love, inclusivity, and the desire to welcome all fearfully and wonderfully made humans created by God seems to be a focus of the churches I pastor this month. Spending time with people from seven different countries and diverse backgrounds in the RIDE Learning Permit class has cemented the importance of being helpful and welcoming to all. I pray that if I were a refugee or immigrant, someone would care, guide, and help me in a strange country with a different culture and language.

During the month and into the fall, our RIC (Reconciling in Christ) combined team from both churches, is exploring the spectrum, continuum, of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. With an increase of pressure on the LGBTQAI+ population—and as outside forces demonize and scapegoat many of these fearfully and wonderfully made humans—I am more convinced of the important intentional work we are doing to make sure all are welcomed.

Also in June, I became more aware and educated concerning our new national holiday, Juneteenth. Fearfully and wonderfully made humans were forcibly taken from their countries to serve masters as slaves in our country. Just over 150 years ago their freedom was slow in coming across our nation. This population now integrated into the land that enslaved them continues to need its voice heard and changes made in society to fully embrace all of God's children. Our church is no different—we are called to act, serve, and move forward in doing God's will by listening, including, and supporting a population that seeks justice and inclusion.

Paul writes in 1st Corinthians that we are one body made up of many members and it is through diversity we have unity. Our continued connection to CGN (Community of Good Neighbors), Friends of Night People, Hearts for the Homeless, and other interactions we venture into, will not only build the body of Christ but will make it stronger. Again, according to Paul in Galatians: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." One in Christ, means we are on the same level playing field and equally important to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The mission that Jesus and the first disciples were on is now ours, as we are called to love and service to all of God's fearfully and wonderfully made creations.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

And the results are in... Outreach Update

Thank you to all who responded to our Outreach survey. We tallied up the results, and we are making plans to support the activities that our respondents are most interested in.



Fellowship

- TOL will hold the favored potluck and pizza events again in the future.
- We are planning to join our friends in the "Sociables" group of Augustana Lutheran Church to attend a production of the comedy *Arsenic and Old Lace* in January-February 2024, performed at the Niagara Regional Theatre Guild in the Ellicott Creek Playhouse in Tonawanda. Watch for sign-up information.
- We would like to plan a chili cook-off for the fall, with an option for attendees to stay afterward for games. There is also interest in a Men's breakfast, continued table talks, and a chowder sale. Please reach out to one of us if you are willing to serve on a committee to help arrange and host one or more of these events at TOL.

Service

- Serving at Friends of Night People. We plan to serve a meal once a month at this impactful local soup kitchen. Watch for more information.

Holy Rest Cemetery

- A clean-up day is tentatively planned for **Saturday, July 29**. Additional help is always needed and appreciated. Please see Matt or Lanny.

The Outreach Committee

Peter, Stephanie, Matt, Jan, Pastor Fred Kopp

[Note: The mission for July is Holy Rest Cemetery—see the related articles in this issue.]

Potluck Luncheon at Augustana LC Sunday, July 23, 11:00 AM

A luncheon will follow the 9:30 AM combined worship service. If you wish to help with needed items, **please use the sign-up sheet** posted on the main bulletin board.

New Members!

On Sunday, May 28, we received into membership Steve and Melissa, Shirley, Brian and Jean, Christel and Marina.



We welcome you into the Trinity Old Lutheran Church Family!

Trinity Tidings, July 2023

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

Combined Worship with Augustana Lutheran Church Sunday, July 23, 9:30 AM

(at Augustana, 3143 Eggert Road in Tonawanda)

Niagara Frontier Conference Bishop Lee Miller II will be present at the service.

A potluck luncheon will follow at 11:00 AM.

ELCA Prayer Ventures, July 2023

- † Remember in prayer all those who have been impacted by disasters, including those related to extreme weather, climate change, economic upheaval, political unrest, and war, and by other events that cause suffering, loss and displacement.
- † “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Pray with relief and gratitude that we are never alone or without a loving rabbi instructing and rejuvenating us to navigate life as followers of Christ.
- † Ask God to guide and bless the Truth and Healing Movement of our church, an initiative to increase our understanding of past and present injustices and harm borne by Indigenous people and to encourage action to build right and healthy relationships, healing Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.
- † God is gracious and good to all and has compassion for all creation. Pray for God to help us spread the good news throughout the world and to every generation.
- † Lift up prayers of joy and thanksgiving, for God has given us new life, freedom and an eternal inheritance through the risen Christ – a gift for all people!
- † Pray for those whose mental and physical pain goes unnoticed in our communities and congregations; ask the Spirit to help us reach out to them with care, support and respect.
- † Give thanks and praise to God, who knows us inside and out and guides and supports us throughout our journey.
- † The brutality and destruction of the Russia-Ukraine War have gone on for over a year. Pray for a permanent end to the violence, and remember in prayer people of all ages who yearn for peace and normality.
- † Give thanks, today and every day, for those who stir our joy and hope, and resolve to be a source of joy and hope for others.

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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.

Trinity Tidings

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Mission from June

Thank you for your donations in support of ELCA World Hunger. ELCA funding provides programs to assist the hungry, as well as needed guidance and resources directed at ending hunger.

“Creatively and courageously working toward a just world where all are fed.”

[From: www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/ELCA-World-Hunger.]

July Mission: Holy Rest Cemetery

TOL is a part-owner of the cemetery that is located in Cheektowaga. It needs some TLC, but funds are also needed to support it. Your donations will help where it is needed most—general upkeep.

Marked envelopes are available in the narthex, or mail your donations to the church office (please indicate on your check that it is designated for Holy Rest Cemetery). Donations can also be made online through [Tithe.ly](https://www.tithe.ly).

Holy Rest Cemetery Work Day

TOL will host its annual work day at Holy Rest Cemetery on **Saturday, July 29 from 9:00 AM to Noon**. The cemetery is in need of sprucing up, and your help—even for a few hours—is greatly appreciated. Work day tasks include picking up debris and trimming around stones. Please bring your own gardening tools (hand trimmer or weed whacker), work gloves, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen. Cold bottled water will be provided. We'll meet at the cemetery at 9:00 AM, which is located at the corner of Pine Ridge Road and East Delavan Avenue in Cheektowaga. For more information, please contact Matt.



Hope to see you there!

Fundraiser to Support Arlen Jenkins and Family

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Sunday, July 9 from 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
(2669 Sheridan Drive in Tonawanda)

Spaghetti Dinner, Basket Raffle and more!
Adults: \$15.00 / Children 12 and Under: \$10.00

Arlen and her family are members at Good Shepherd. Arlen has a medical condition that requires her to travel to New York City for a bone marrow transplant. She and her mother will remain there for four months and then return home to quarantine for the next year as Arlen recovers. Funds raised will go to medical/travel expenses and other family needs. You are invited to attend the event, provide a gift basket if you wish, or to volunteer where needed. For more information, please contact the Good Shepherd office at 716-832-5390.

TOL Welcomes the Weavers' Guild of Buffalo



The Weavers' Guild of Buffalo is TOL's newest Community Partner! Who is the Weavers' Guild of Buffalo? It is a group of individuals that began 54 years ago to exchange ideas and information about fiber-related arts and weaving. We educate and demonstrate weaving, spinning, felting or dyeing for the purpose of keeping skills of this craft alive and to share it with others. This includes our outreach programs, newsletters, special interest groups and guild shows.

The guild is governed by a board and member chair positions. Meetings are held twice a month (except summer and December). The guild programs include lectures from various guest artists, some via zoom and others in person. Guild members are creative and skilled and they share their knowledge in workshops on a variety of fiber-related topics. A holiday party and a June summer picnic are memorable gatherings filled with food and fellowship. The guild has an extensive library and equipment for members to rent.

A special "Thank You" to Pastor Fred and Nancy who worked with the guild to use the facilities for our meetings. We are delighted with the available storage area for the guild library and our equipment. Thank you to the Church Council members for welcoming the guild to TOL.

The guild looks forward to meeting at TOL and plans on a long and thriving relationship as a TOL Community Partner.

Karen

"Christ in Our Home" Daily Devotionals

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

Adult Ed. Classes Led by Charlie Schmidtke

The classes meet on Monday afternoons from 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM on the days listed below. We will meet via zoom or in person.



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: Gamaliel's Intervention
- May 6: Destruction of the Second Temple



Happy Independence Day!

Chicken BBQ Thank You



On Friday, June 16, TOL hosted a drive-thru BW's chicken barbecue. Although the weather was rainy and unpredictable in the early part of the day, we enjoyed reasonably nice weather for the barbecue. Unfortunately, business was a little slow, but we were able to make some people very happy to not have to cook dinner, but rather have a meal all prepared for them! The women who came through were especially happy!

We would never be able to do any of the events at church without our wonderful volunteers! A great big "Thank You" goes out to all those who helped! A special note of thanks to Lanny and Nancy who were so instrumental in making arrangements for the event plus all their help on the day of the barbecue! You're the best!

Earlene

Tai Chi at TOL!

Instructor - Charlie Schmidtke
Tuesday 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.



Session 1:

September 19 and 26
 October 10 and 17
 November 7, 14, 21 and 28
 December 5 and 12

Session 2:

January 23 and 30
 February 6, 20, 27
 March 5, 19, 26
 April 2 and 16

Adult Retreat, September 29, 30 and October 1

Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center
 Retreat Coordinator: Charlie Schmidtke

What's Next: Here and Now / There and Then

So what does the next ten years bring? What happens when we die? We'll take the time and find the space to explore what's next in our lives.

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.



Reservations Deadline, September 17. Please contact Trinity Old Lutheran at 716-836-4868, Charlie at 716-694-1335 or through his email at schmidtkecharles@gmail.com.

Payment is due by September 29. Make checks payable to Charles Schmidtke, please. Information packets will be sent to everyone who registers.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office or Charlie.

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

Part IV: Luke's Nativity Story

Who was Luke

1:1-5	Introduction
1:5-25	John the Baptist, Zechariah, and Elizabeth
1:26-38	Gabriel and Mary
1:39-56	Mary Visits Elizabeth
2:1-7	Jesus' Birth and No Room at the Inn
2:8-21	Shepherds Visit
2:22-38	Jesus is Circumcised; Simeon and Anna Speak
2:38-40	They Return to Nazareth

Luke was from Antioch where Paul stayed after his conversion on the road to Damascus. There is a controversy over whether Luke was Gentile or Jew. Because he never mentions the destruction of the temple in his book called *The Acts*, some scholars believe he was a Gentile. Regardless, he was Greek educated, like Paul. His gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were written in Greek as two volumes of the same book but they are now separated in the New Testament. One of the underlying themes of *The Acts* is why did a Jewish Messiah become the leader of a Gentile church. Luke's intent was to convince people to follow Jesus, especially Gentiles. The word Christian began in Antioch and was used to distinguish Jesus from Judaism and to indicate that people should follow Jesus, not the Jewish Laws. The books were written between 80-90 AD and were probably edited in the 2nd century by some of Luke's disciples. After the destruction of the Temple (77 CE) and the Jewish diaspora, the church became predominantly Gentile. It is possible that the Gospel was written earlier when Luke was with Paul in Rome.

Luke was probably a physician in the Greek style, meaning he studied Philosophy and classical literature. He started with Paul in Troas and traveled with him to Philippi, Jerusalem, throughout Caesarea, then to Rome. In Rome he may have served as Paul's lawyer and certainly as physician because Paul was beaten, whipped, imprisoned, and stoned after being shipwrecked three times.

Where did he get historical information about Jesus, including the nativity story? He would have heard the parables and stories second hand from the oral tradition of the early followers of Jesus. Luke's story has no Magi and no escape to Egypt. He includes shepherds of both sheep and goats. The shepherds in Luke illustrate a miraculous birth; one that is divinely ordained and blessed; and Jesus' destiny is to become the Good Shepherd. His message started with the poor and common folks. Luke's story adds divinity to Jesus' humanity.

The shepherd's staffs were for herding, retrieving animals from ravines and clearing out caves of snakes or other dangers. The sling shot was to protect their herd from predators. David was the most famous Jewish shepherd. Shepherds who were skilled with the sling shot could kill a predator at varying distances. David's slaying of Goliath wasn't really a miracle; it was the result of a skilled

shepherd at work. Oil is used on their flocks' heads to protect them from sunstroke on very hot days. Oil was also used for balm on cuts/scratches. Thus, the Good Shepherd would anoint his flock to bless and protect them. People of Jesus' day would understand who shepherds were. Psalm 23 would have meant something quite different to people of David's time—the meaning of being a shepherd and God's presence would have been very real.

Circumcision is fulfilling Jewish law. It was the covenant between Abraham and God when Abraham was going to sacrifice his son. When God spared his son, Abraham sealed the covenant with God by circumcising himself, his son and the male members of his family, slaves and other workers. Circumcision occurs eight days after a boy's birth; thus, January 1 is celebrated as Jesus' circumcision. Luke tells us that Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple and offered doves or pigeons as a sacrifice to God. In the temple a good man by the name of Simeon picks up Jesus and basically proclaims that he can die in peace because he has seen what God has done to save His people. He proclaims that Jesus will cause people to fall and others to stand. Jesus will be rejected by many and Mary will suffer because of what happens to him. These words are prophetic for the message of the gospel. Luke goes on to tell of Anna, the prophetess, who spoke about Jesus to everyone who hoped for Jerusalem to be set free. Basically, calling Jesus a Messiah.

Why are these stories included? Luke was writing to Gentiles/Paul's converts. Why did they need to know about following the Jewish laws governing circumcision and the prophecies of Simeon and Anna? Was it because Jesus was the Messiah who fulfilled Jewish Laws and gave us "new" laws? Luke also may have wanted to inform Gentiles of the practice that distinguished Jew from Gentile (circumcision). Luke may also be including this practice as an introduction to the debates between Paul and James/Peter/John in Jerusalem. He is doing so because this issue finally gets resolved in Paul's favor (called the great compromise) and is an important issue in the Acts of the Apostles.

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"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.



ELCA Prayer Ventures, July 2023

Independence Day Give thanks for the freedom and abundance we enjoy in our country, and ask God to help us exercise generosity in our national life, addressing root causes of the poverty, hunger, injustice, racism and lack of opportunity our neighbors experience on a daily basis.

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Operation Christmas Child

Another school year is over, but the need continues for this month's suggested donations of school supplies for our Operation Christmas Child boxes. Items such as blue/black ink pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, colored pencils, and pencil cases would definitely be very useful for the recipients.

All donations may be placed in the box labeled Operation Christmas Child located in the narthex. Thank you so much for any/all of your donations!

Kelly and Debbie

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)

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.

On-going Collections

Can Tabs...Place your tabs in the marked container in the narthex. Your donations will support Ronald McDonald House in Buffalo.

Recycle Cans and Bottles...Your donations can be placed in the container in the hallway off the narthex. You may also redeem them at Bottle and Can Redemption Center (2790 Sheridan Drive in Tonawanda). TOL has an account there.

Friends of Night People (FNP)

- 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.

[Special thanks to Dick and Lanny for recently delivering 13 bags of clothing—along with sandwiches—to FNP!]



***Wishing everyone a happy
and safe summer!***