



## Pastor's Ponderings

I am getting a new Bible. It's called NRSVue. The NRSV has been called the most accurate English-language translation. However, in the thirty years since its first publication hundreds of manuscripts have been studied in exacting detail to inform our understanding of the ancient languages they were written in and the cultural use of language at the time the manuscripts were written.

I am excited to use this NRSVue in my study and prep for sermons. I am also excited for the Lutheran Study Bible and its side-notes, questions, and insights that the publishers give me.

Can you believe it, the Bible can be updated because we know more about the time and culture when it was written.

The time and culture the Bible was written in is totally different from the culture of today. So just as the editorial committee of NRSVue thought to update, we too must be in constant interaction with the Bible and updating what it means for us today.

My work with the Bible and Jesus teachings has led me from an archaic understanding of humankind, when DNA, atoms, disease origins, and so much more that we learned from science was not known. So my study has led me and so many other Christians to see God's love to be all encompassing and including the people of the LGBTQAI+ community.

It is true we ALL sin and fall short of the Glory of God, and that we ALL are made in the image of God. Therefore, God's Love extends to ALL. This is a simple explanation of a long-contemplated situation for me, the church, and in the world.

During Pride Month, I am here to say, I stand with my siblings in Christ and know that God's Love through Jesus is bigger than we can comprehend.

I hope this helps us in our journey into the ever-updating Bible (because of new research), to challenge and strengthen our beliefs in our present day culture and time period.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Fred he/him/his

**Update on Plumbing Issues...**In the past few months, you've heard or read about the "Easter Sunday flood" in our men's room and the damage it caused to the Yoga room and other rooms in the basement. Our "help" request to our members and friends was heard loud and clear, and we were overwhelmed by the generous responses to offset the cost of repairs and clean up. As of the end of May, we've raised over \$3,000 and the June contributions haven't been added to that yet. Thank you to everyone who either helped with the clean up or responded to our plea for financial help—our TOL members and friends always come through. We honestly couldn't have done it without your help!

With appreciation,  
Lanny and the Church Council

## Serving at Friends of Night People

As Jesus said, *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me"* (Matthew 25:35, 40).



On Friday, May 30, five of us from TOL volunteered at Friends of Night People, an organization that supports those in need with food, clothing, medical care, and

counseling. Each of us was assigned a task—serving food or beverages, distributing toiletries, or helping in the clothing room. Between 5:00 and 7:00 PM, we served 149 people. It was a humbling experience that reminded us of the deep needs in our community.

As we've seen on previous volunteer nights, everyone is treated with dignity. No questions are asked—anyone in need is welcomed for a meal and given essentials like clothing, toiletries and, when available, baked goods, bread, and produce. One touching moment was seeing the joy on a young woman's face when she found a gently-worn pair of sneakers in her size.

We're grateful for the chance to serve and we encourage others to be part of this vital ministry. In the coming weeks, we'll also be collecting donations of much-needed items. Right now, there is a particular need for men's socks and underwear (new, in packaging), and travel-size toiletries such as body wash and hand sanitizer. A complete list of needed supplies will be included in upcoming Sunday bulletins. Please bring your donations to the collection box in the donation center near the coat room.

Thank you for your continued support—and special thanks to our volunteers Stephanie, Josh, Nancy, Philip, and Matt who served on May 30!

*The Communications and Evangelism Team*

## Socks for Friends of Night People ~ a special Summer Collection ~

During July and August, we will be collecting new men's socks for Friends of Night People.

Please place your donations in the marked container located in the hallway collection area. Thank you for your support this summer!



*"No act of kindness, no matter how small,  
is ever wasted." Aesop*

## Trinity Tidings, July 2025

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



### ELCA Prayer Ventures, July 2025\*

- † Nothing is impossible for God. Our sins, fears, demons and eccentricities are no match for God's power to forgive, heal and renew us. Give thanks to God for surrounding us with siblings in Christ who extend to us their mercy and love.
- † Pray for the compassion to care for our neighbors in need, just as the good Samaritan stopped to assist a stranger robbed, beaten and left for dead.
- † Ask God to help us advocate for and improve access to public spaces for older adults and people with disabilities.
- † Pray for congregations and special ministries that work for wholeness, peace and justice in your community, across our country and throughout the world.
- † Promise to love and serve our neighbors in need with the same boundless grace and concern that God has shown us, unhindered by suspicion, prejudice, exclusion or the belief that someone must work or suffer as we have to earn our respect.
- † We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world — together! Companion synod relationships of the ELCA connect our synods and congregations with Lutheran churches throughout the world. Praise God that this program nurtures all involved for life and ministry through prayer, study, communication, exchange of visitors and sharing of resources.
- † Praise God for gathering us in a church that welcomes all, strives to be faithful to the gospel and equips us to serve in a world of complexity, tension and ambiguity.

### Prayer for Trinity Old Lutheran, Augustana and Good Shepherd 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 Trinity Old Lutheran, Augustana and Good Shepherd. Strengthen our relationships in this community as we serve our neighbors in love.*

**Support Group for Grieving Parents...** This group, for parents of children and grandchildren who have died, meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday each month in the Fireside Room (10:00 AM to 11:30 AM) and also on Zoom. Coordinators are: Charlie and Diane and Jean.

### Sermon Discussion/Input with Pastor Fred Wednesday, July 23, at Noon in the Fireside Room

Pastor Fred invites you to join him in a bag-lunch discussion of the texts for the next month of sermons. Please let him know if you plan to attend so he can prepare materials.

## Trinity Tidings

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### July Mission: Holy Rest Cemetery

TOL is a part-owner of the cemetery that is located in Cheektowaga. It needs some TLC, but monetary 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 (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). [A clean-up day is scheduled for **Saturday, July 19**. See details on the calendar page in this issue.]

### June Mission: TOL Sandwich Ministry

Thank you to everyone for your donations to the Sandwich Ministry. With the food costs rising, your monetary support is so important for the teams in their preparation of 100 sandwiches per week, which are then delivered to Friends of Night People in Buffalo. *[Donations of peanut butter and jelly are also most appreciated!]*

### Support for Local Food Pantries

Your donations for the Community of Good Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo and Good Shepherd Lutheran's pantry in Tonawanda are greatly appreciated! Please place your items in the narthex shopping cart or leave them in the elevator entrance during the week (Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:00 AM to Noon).



### ELCA Prayer Ventures, July 2025\*

Stewardship and generosity are daily expressions of how we respond to God's immeasurable grace. Pray that the Spirit will nurture within us a lively spirit of generosity to respond to the needs of others, do God's work in the world and grow the church.

### Ways to Give to TOL



**Online:** [Tithe.ly](https://www.tithe.ly) is available. For instructions, please visit the church website at

[www.trinityoldlutheran.com](http://www.trinityoldlutheran.com) or download the

[Tithe.ly](https://www.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.

*My Musings*  
by Diane Schmidtke

**Boggled**

"Boggled: to be very surprised, confused or uncertain about something."

How many times have you said, "this is mind-boggling" or "I am so boggled right now"?

Things can be going along pretty smoothly when out of the blue we get boggled. It happens to everyone along Life's path, in large and small ways. When this happens, I try to summon my four coping mechanisms.



1. "Look for the helpers. There always are helpers." These are the wise words from Mr. Rogers, which have served me time and again.
  2. Be open to serendipity and signs. They come unexpectedly; they make me gasp; they make me smile; they feed my soul.
  3. Hang on to certainty. For me this has come to mean the "International Space Station."
- For a few years we have been spending time with the night sky. We check the ISS website for time, direction and altitude. We set a timer. We head outside to the front porch, first looking for the Morning Star, Venus. If she is visible, my eyes adjust to seeing other stars, then pre-check the path ISS will follow, then wait for her to rise over the horizon on her journey. If the website says 10:03 PM, NNW to SE at 46 degrees for four minutes, that is EXACTLY what happens. Each time. No mistakes. This is the beauty of science: dependability, certainty, trust. I marvel...this centers my world.
4. Prayer...no need to elaborate. God holds us all.

So, when waves of "Boggle" enter your world, look for the helpers, embrace the mystery of grace, feel the presence of God, head outside, take a deep breath, say hello to the astronauts as they pass overhead, and be amazed!

*Used with permission.*



**Do You Hear What I Hear?**

*Did you ever experience a miscommunication?  
Do you feel you need to learn how to listen better?  
Do you want to discuss what gets in the way of  
good communication?  
Do you want to share time away with others and enjoy great  
fellowship?*

**Join us at the Adult Retreat!**

**October 3, 4 and 5**  
**Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center**



This is 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.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office (716-836-4868).

**Synod Assembly Notes: Saturday, May 31**

Pastor Fred, Lanny and I attended this year's Assembly on Zoom. This was a totally different type of experience, with it being virtual instead of traveling to be there in person. Portions of the Assembly were "business as usual" when all the routine reporting and voting took place. But the most interesting parts of the Assembly, to me, were the speakers who shared their thoughts and experiences about sharing the love of Christ in our world. We learned about "Sumud," which is an Arabic word for steadfastness and resilience—the steadfastness of God's love and the need to share it. We were reminded to "insist on love" and that the Upstate New York Synod is an affirming organization, which advocates for the full welcome, inclusion and equity of ALL people.



*Nancy*

**Holy Rest Cemetery Clean-Up Day—Saturday, July 19!**

TOL will host its annual work day at Holy Rest Cemetery on **Saturday, July 19 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. 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!*

**Pizza Party**



Thank you to all who were able to join us at our pizza party on Sunday, June 8. It was a great turnout!! The pizza and desserts were delicious and the fellowship time together was priceless.

Thank you to all the helpers who continue to amaze me with your kindness and generosity! I couldn't do it without you.

*Kelly*

**Operation Christmas Child—July and August**

For the summer months, the suggested donations are school supplies. Examples of these items would be blue/black ink pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, colored pencils, markers, small pocket size notepads, and safety scissors. All items can be placed in the bin located in the hallway marked Operation Christmas Child.

Thank you for your continuous support.

*Kelly and Debbie*

**"Christ in Our Home"**

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

**Coming! Craft Fair/Basket Raffle/Baked Goods Sale**  
**Saturday, September 6!**



**Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke**  
**Study Notes: Jesus and Thomas**

**Part II: Thomas, the Faithful Servant and Jesus**

We celebrate Easter as a single celebration. For Thomas and the others, it was very, very different. Mary Magdalene runs up and says Jesus is gone. They all think she's crazy and worry that the Jewish authorities or the Romans would blame them and start persecuting them. The apostles started having endless debates about what to do—could Mary Magdalene be right? What really happened to his body? The arguments and worry went on for days. Judas never returned to the group after the crucifixion and Thomas took over Judas' job of providing food and necessities for the apostles. Where was Thomas when Jesus first appeared to the apostles? He was out getting food and trying to get information about what was going on; he was trying to save everyone's necks—the apostles and other disciples who were hiding with them. So, think about Thomas' response when the apostles tell him they saw Jesus. First, he didn't trust them very much because they may have seemed almost hysterical at times; then they tell him that a dead man was in their midst. What would you have said; what would any of the other apostles have said? Probably what Thomas said: prove it. It's not that Thomas doubted Jesus; he just didn't trust or believe the apostles. No one had ever brought himself back from the dead. Thomas saw Jesus raise Lazarus, but who can raise himself from the dead?

Think about Thomas' response when he saw Jesus. He had no doubt that Jesus had performed this greatest of all miracles. He wouldn't have understood how it happened—who could? After Jesus appeared, the apostles would have started to rethink their purpose and mission. Thomas would still have attended to the practical things and probably never fit in with the rest of them. They went back and forth to Galilee but were in Jerusalem for the Pentecost. Jesus' brother James was also with the apostles and probably began to assume some leadership in Jerusalem. In fact, after Pentecost James was the leader in Jerusalem. The final chapter in turning this ragtag group of apostles into real leaders and missionaries for Jesus came at Pentecost. Without the inspiration and strength given to the apostles by the Holy Spirit, I don't think much would have happened with Jesus' gospel message to the world. I think it took the power of the Holy Spirit to move the apostles out of their hiding place and proclaim the good news to the world. After Pentecost, the apostles and all of the others who were there would have been given a strength and commitment that changed the world forever. Pentecost was the most exciting experience for all of Jesus' followers. The bible indicates there were at least 120 followers who directly received the grace given by the Holy Spirit on that day. Don't just think it was the apostles. It would have included Jesus' mother, probably his siblings, the wives and children of the apostles who were married, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, of course, Mary Magdalene and those who would become deacons later. Unfortunately, we don't have a comprehensive list of who was present at Pentecost and we don't know what each one did afterward.

Think about the experience. One moment they're talking and arguing endlessly and the next moment there was a wind, and then tongues of fire. All of them were renewed and buoyed. All the confusion about Jesus' parables and life slipped away and his message became clear. They all finally understood

what Jesus meant and why he said and did what he did. We know they ran out into the streets and began their ministry. However, I think it is naïve to believe that all of them understood Jesus in the same way. There were common meanings that they shared (the Resurrection, sharing the bread and wine, caring for the poor and marginalized, making love central in one's life, etc.), but all that Jesus taught would have been understood in ways common to each personality and background. That's why we have apostles creating a Coptic Church in Egypt, a Syriac Church in Antioch, an Armenian Church in Armenia, a Roman Church in Rome, a Jewish/Christian Church in Jerusalem and eventually Orthodox Churches in Greece and Asia Minor (Turkey). The five early centers of Christianity were: Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome. Armenia, Greece and India became regional centers also. These centers never really agreed on everything and schisms and splits occurred over the centuries. In the US, we typically only hear about the split between the Roman Church and the Greek Orthodox Church.

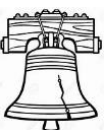
Politics and human foibles have always been a part of the church—even back in the beginning among the apostles. Thomas was more of a leader than a follower. I don't think he got along with Peter and James. In fact, they told Thomas that it would be best if he carried Christ's message away from Jerusalem—away from them and what they were trying to do. They wanted everyone to be a good Jew first, before being baptized in Jesus' word. Thomas' gospel gives us a different understanding of what it meant to follow Jesus. Thomas was sent to what is now called Syria, but he continued on to India. Thomas probably provided the material for the gospel attributed to him, and his followers wrote an Acts According to Thomas. Thomas brought Jesus' message to people who were not Jewish and who were not culturally Greek or Roman or Palestinian. The Christians who have followed Thomas' message are different from those who followed Peter and the Roman Church or those who followed Constantine and the Orthodox Church or those who became Coptic believers or those who belong to the Armenian Church. We hear about Thomas the doubter, but not Thomas the founder of a large Christian Church with works not included in the bible.

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**ELCA Prayer Ventures, July 2025\***

**Independence Day** Give thanks for the freedom we enjoy in our country. Promise to be responsible with that freedom and attentive to those marginalized by poverty, prejudice, persecution, unjust laws or malevolent ideologies.



**Hope & Healing: Christian Cancer Support**

For anyone on a cancer journey, Linda Sokoly (Ministry Leader) from Augustana LC is available to give support through emails, phone calls, texts or one-to-one in person conversations or prayer.



Linda can be reached through the Augustana church email at [augustchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:augustchurch@yahoo.com) or by calling the Augustana church office at 716-832-5720.