Trinity Tidings

The Mission of Trinity Old Lutheran Church is Proclamation, Fellowship and Service in the name of Jesus.

The Reverend Adam Arends
Transition Pastor

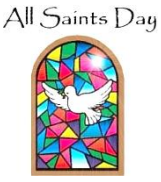
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Trinity Old Lutheran Church is a member of the Niagara Frontier Conference of the Upstate New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

From the Pastor

For those of us in mainline Protestant denominations who follow the cycle of religious seasons AND live in the United States, November brings us an interesting pair of days at the beginning and end of the month.

These pairings at first seem like they won't hold together very well, like eating apples with a slice of sharp cheddar. Yet once we take the time to consider them together, we find a fitting compliment to this month when the weather turns colder and we celebrate the harvest.



We begin the month with All Saints Day, when we honor and remember those saints in our families and in our community that have died and entered into God's eternal care, especially in the past year. On this day we light a candle, we read the names, we pray for each of them. This can be an important and memorable day to mourn again, and at the same time with hope and faith, we celebrate that because of what God has done in Christ, this is not the end of the story. We take courage from the lives of the saints who have shared the good news of Christ with us, and yet we mourn as we realize the empty seat at the table this year.

At the end of the month, our nation celebrates Thanksgiving. These days, the day of Thanksgiving is marked with eating too much food until we are stuffed more than the turkey was, lots of football on tv (Go Bills), and even "Black Friday deals" and shopping! We gather with family and friends and are happy in their company. For me, at least, it's a day to relax and be glad for an opportunity to be thankful for food and family. We have lost a bit of its original meaning early in our country's history, in that we don't usually think about celebrating the harvest of the fall that came in so that we could have a feast. Though we know the cold is coming, we celebrate and give thanks for all we have together.

All Saints, when we mourn, and Thanksgiving when we indulge seem like they don't go together. And yet, we know that even as we mourn an empty seat, we give thanks for the love, the wisdom and the faith that the Saints have shared with us. We give thanks that for all of us who follow Jesus, we know that we live in the hope of new life.

This year, let's give thanks for all the Saints, for our God in Christ, and even in the midst of shorter days, for the light that is to come.

Happy Thanksgiving to all you saints!
Pastor Adam

November 29: 1st Sunday in Advent
December 6: 2nd Sunday in Advent
Tri-Congregation Worship at Good Shepherd LC; Christmas Program and Worship, 10:00 AM



Worship and Veterans Remembrance Service at TOL, Sunday, November 15, 11:00 AM



All veterans are invited to come and participate! This is a joint service with Augustana and Good Shepherd LCs. A coffee hour will follow the service.

Please reach out to friends, family and neighbors to invite veterans to join us.

Niagara Frontier Chord Authority presents…

"Silver and Gold for the Holidays"
An a Cappella Concert

Thursday, December 10 at 7:30 PM
Trinity Old Lutheran Church



As the holidays approach, we celebrate in song! Come enjoy our toe-tapping music and a special visit by everyone's favorite holiday couple, Santa and Mrs. Claus! Then socialize with some wonderful people and enjoy complimentary refreshments while you browse a holiday wreath, crafts, and baked goods sale. Barb (NFCA chorus member) will be pleased to any questions you may have.

Admission $12 presale; $15 at the door
Children under 12 free
email: nfcachorusinfo@gmail.com for tickets
www.nfcachorus.org

Good Shepherd LC Food Pantry to Provide Thanksgiving Meals

You are invited to help the Pantry collect items from the list below that are needed to assemble dinners that will be distributed to the families it serves.

Canned Items: Sweet Corn, Green Beans Cranberry Sauce	Boxed: Stuffing Mix, Instant Potatoes
	Turkey Gravy (jarred or dry mix)
Boxed: Brownies, cookies, cake mixes and frostings	Disposable foil roasting pans (tip: bring your items in a foil pan.) Also paper shopping bags with handles are also needed.

Please leave your donations in the elevator entrance (Tuesday/Thursday/Friday, 9:00 AM to Noon), or in the narthex. We will be collecting your items until the **deadline on Sunday, November 15**. Thank you for helping others to enjoy a holiday meal with their families!

Sunday Worship Leaders in November:

November 1:	Pastor Adam Arends
November 8:	Charlie Schmidtke
November 15:	Pastor Adam Arends and Charlie Schmidtke (Veteran's Service at TOL)
November 22:	Charlie Schmidtke
November 29:	Charlie Schmidtke (Presiding); Jacob James, Seminarian (Preaching)



Trinity Tidings, November 2026

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

Tri-Congregation Worship at Trinity Old Lutheran Worship Service and Veterans Day Remembrance
Sunday, November 15, 11:00 AM

Invite a Veteran!

ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2026*

† *All Saints Day* Give thanks for the global Christian community. Praise God for the bond of faith that stirs joy and inspires siblings in Christ to unite in doing God's work in the world.

† *Veterans Day* Honor and give thanks for all who have served our country in times of peace and conflict here and around the world. Pray that their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten or taken for granted.

† Pray for God to be our enduring refuge who delivers us from our fears, guilt, pessimism and suffering. Ask the Spirit to strengthen our faith and help us face the challenges we encounter within and outside ourselves.

† Ask God to help us go about our daily lives in the church and society, mindful of the call to "let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

† Pray for an end to the conflict and for lasting peace, that displaced Ukrainians seeking sanctuary in other countries will soon be able to return home and rebuild their lives with a sense of calm and safety.

† Praise God for the creativity, intellect and enthusiasm of those who use technology to solve humanity's problems. Pray that we will carefully discern the consequences of technology, especially artificial intelligence and social media, and take steps to ensure the well-being and safety of all people, especially children, youth and marginalized communities.

† Give thanks for our church's embrace of inclusion and equity, demonstrating that we are one humanity, created by God in wondrous diversity, and that we are called to love one another just as Christ loves us.

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.

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For pastoral needs or emergencies, please contact Pastor Adam Arends at 716-773-4400 or email him at: pastor@sttimothygrandisland.com

For any general questions, please contact Nancy in the church office (716-836-4868) and she will refer you to the proper person.

Trinity Tidings

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November Mission: Veterans One-stop Center of Western New York

Supporting Veterans Beyond Service

"Veterans One-stop Center brings programs and facilities together in one location. Veterans and families find housing support; suicide prevention services; peer to peer activities; support, fitness and health services; and a community that builds connection and belonging.

Veterans One-stop Center offers a wide range of services and resources to meet the needs of Veterans and their families. From housing and suicide prevention to peer engagement, wellness, and community connection, every program is built to remove barriers and support long term stability."

2025 Facts & Figures:

- 350+ Peer Support Events across four counties
- 2000+ brand-new veterans engaged
- 2500+ Veterans and family members served
- 3000+ visits to the VOSC Fitness & Health Center

[from: www.voncwny.org]

Please use the marked envelopes from the narthex, or mail your donations to the church office (please indicate on your check that it is designated for Veterans One-stop Center).

October Mission: Thank you to all who supported Operation Christmas Child with your monetary donations to help cover the cost of shipping the shoeboxes!

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

† Pray that our words and actions reflect God's selfless love for humanity as we care for neighbors who endure hunger, homelessness, illness, incarceration, isolation and violence. *[ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2026*]*



My Musings by Diane Schmidtke

Flashing Through Time

I am a reluctant user of technology especially when it's new and "Greek to me." Given time I usually come around and stop grumbling and start learning. We received a digital frame last Christmas. Our daughters loaded it with hundreds of photos from their phones and from our tactile, old-fashioned albums.

I had seen this technology at others' homes, and although it seemed nice, I wasn't overly interested. As a practical, post-WWII baby-boomer, the thought of one more energy-eating device didn't appeal. Now, after months of making friends with our gift, I'm in love.

How heartwarming to see the kids and grandkids as they've grown and changed over the years. How amusing (and sometimes not!) to see Charlie and me as we've aged. How wonderful to see family and friends, near and far. Forgotten memories emerge, and maybe laughter ensues, or maybe a tear falls. Often, the memories initiate a conversation, an eye-roll, a flashback.



Speaking of digital and flashbacks: recently the mail brought us an amazing gift from Virginia. Our brother-in-law digitized my Dad's 8mm movie camera film onto a flash drive. It contains pieces of my history from age 7 or 8 when Dad bought the camera until my folks visited us in New Orleans to meet their first grandchild. What fun to relive birthdays, Christmases, trips to Minnesota, Allegheny, Letchworth, NYC, the Adirondacks, Algonquin Park, Niagara Falls, Rushford and much more! There I am with so many loved ones, now brought back to life, if only briefly… *I wish I could reach in for one more hug*.

There I am twirling my baton, walking on the wooden stilts my grandpa made, ice skating, playing dolls with my sister and catch with my uncle, swimming at Sherkston Quarry… Of course, in the past I had seen all of these "movies," but it's been decades. The one jolting surprise was a quick look at the license plate on our then-new car: in a flash my eyes saw/ my brain registered/ and my mouth shouted 9B-699!!! I never could have told you what this number was, but now there was instant recognition.

Although recently I passed a milestone birthday, in that flash, I was 16 again and wrapped in joy…

Used with permission.



Walk to End Alzheimer's

"Thank You" to everyone who bought a yummy chocolate sucker and/or donated to this year's fundraiser. We raised $465! You're awesome! Thank you, thank you!

Earlene

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.

ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2026*

National Native American Heritage Month Give thanks for Indigenous neighbors and siblings in Christ, who enrich society with their diverse gifts, traditions, resilience and wisdom.



Thanksgiving Day "We pray for the big things and forget to give thanks for the ordinary, small (and yet really not small) gifts" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*). Praise God for all we have and for those things that nourish and sustain us daily — physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially. Pray for the Spirit to inspire us to be generous toward the needs of our neighbors, and that our compassion and generosity, in turn, will inspire others.

Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke

You are invited to join the class on Monday afternoons in the Fireside Room (or on Zoom) from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link. The classes for November and December follow.



Nov. 9:	Mohammad
Nov. 23:	Ali (Shia) and Abu Bakr (Sunni)
Dec. 7:	Mani - Manichaeism

Friends of Night People

Fall and Winter items needed for clients include: clean used or new blankets, sleeping bags, hoodies, jackets, hats and gloves. Your items can be placed in the blue barrel in the donations area. A big "Thank You" to donors and to the volunteer teams who continue to prepare and deliver 100 sandwiches each week!!

Operation Christmas Child

This year I was able to secure a $250 grant from Thrivent. It allowed me to purchase the boxes we use for the project, along with prayer bears, jump ropes, combs, toothbrushes with covers, and some markers. This helped us to be able to fill the boxes. We also used some of our profits from our Basket Raffle to purchase items.

A big "Thank You" to everyone who donated materials for us to use. There is still time if you would like to make your own box. They are due on Sunday, November 15. Contact Debbie if you need more information.

Debbie

In Sunday School class, **we packed 54 boxes** for children who will now be able to feel the love of Jesus from others. Thank you to all who helped!



ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2026*

† "All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all" (*WOV* 767). Praise God, creator of the universe, for sustaining life and enabling it to flourish.

Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke
Study Notes: "Paul"

Part I: Paul's Conversion

Although "The Acts of the Apostles" is ostensibly about all of the apostles, it is really limited in the beginning to Peter and John with token references to some of the others. In previous articles I mentioned that James, Jesus' brother, not either of the apostles named James, was also a central figure in the Jerusalem church. Luke wrote his gospel and the Acts as one continuous document. It was split into two separate pieces when the bible was being put together. Luke's intention was to set the stage for Saul with whom he travelled and the man he felt was most responsible for the spread of Christ's message. For Luke, Part I (now called his gospel), was telling the story about Jesus and part II, now called the Acts of the Apostles, was telling about how others, but especially Paul, spread his message to Jews and Gentiles. When we first meet Saul, we are told that he is a Pharisee and that he is persecuting Jesus' followers. His teacher, Gamiliel, spoke out at the Sanhedrin (the governing body for the Jews of Judea and Galilee) to let the apostles who were imprisoned to be set free. His logic is that if they were sent from God, there is nothing the Jewish authorities could do to stop them. If not, their message would soon be forgotten. The members of the Sanhedrin heeded Gamiliel's advice; the apostles who were in custody were set free. Saul did not seem to heed his teacher's advice. Instead, he had a real, deep prejudice against this Jewish sect that was proclaiming that the Messiah had come. My hunch is that Saul was a devout Jew who was trained in teaching about the Torah. How could the Messiah have come if the Jews were still under Roman rule and oppression?

Saul was at Stephen's stoning and heard Stephen's impassioned speech about Jesus and His resurrection. Saul was unmoved. Stephen was one of the first seven deacons appointed by the apostles to help care for the running and organization of the new movement. This movement basically required the followers in Jerusalem to share their goods and work for one another. These "Nazarenes," the name given to Jesus' followers in Jerusalem, were undermining the basic structure of life for the Jews: establishing a new economic way of life. Stephen's speech referred to Moses who said that God would choose a prophet from one of His people. But Stephen went on to say that the "Most High God" does not live in buildings made by humans (a not-so-subtle reference to the temple and the practices run by Jewish authorities) and that the Jews had killed the prophet Moses had proclaimed would come. Stephen was stoned by loyal Jews—probably at Saul's command—for all the things he said that seemed to contradict what a faithful Jew should believe. Not only was Saul at Stephen's stoning, but Luke writes that he was actually going house to house to pull Jesus' followers out of them to persecute them.

Within this context we later read about Saul's conversion. It really was an astounding event that transformed this minor Jewish sect into a major religion. Saul was on his way to Damascus with letters from the Jewish High Priest authorizing Saul to arrest Jews in Damascus and to bring them back to Jerusalem for persecution. It is while he is nearing Damascus that Jesus comes to him in a blinding light. Saul is told to go to Damascus and wait to hear what he is to do. The men with him didn't hear or see anything and they didn't understand how Saul became blind. Imagine the fear and trembling that must have accompanied this experience. Fear and Trembling is the title of a book by Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher of the 19th century, which was about Abraham as the father of faith. Kierkegaard believed that faith begins with fear and trembling. Faith is an absurd leap into an abyss—it is not logical or reasonable. Faith in God cannot be rationally proven to be true; it is ultimately a mystery. I find that Kierkegaard's ideas about faith help to explain Paul's conversion. It must have been totally earthshattering for Saul; it didn't make any sense. Jesus' followers were his enemy, which meant that Jesus was not someone in which to have faith. Yet, his vision transformed his beliefs and his life forever. He must have been filled with a fear that all he had believed before was being overturned and he must have been trembling before a vision that blinded him to what he was about to become. So, Saul's world is utterly crushed and he no longer knows what to do. This is uncharacteristic of the man who travels throughout the Mediterranean to preach the Gospel. Before and after his conversion, Saul/Paul was headstrong, opinionated, bold and direct. For him to now feel vulnerable, weak and blind must have caused complete doubt about his abilities and his beliefs. Someone, probably one of the men who had gone with him from Jerusalem, took Saul by the hand and led him to Damascus. Saul was blind for three days and he didn't eat or drink for those three days. The Lord appeared to a man named Ananias in Damascus and told him to go to Saul and baptize him. Ananias was dumbfounded because he knew what Saul had done and could not believe what he was hearing. Luke then makes it clear what this passage is all about. "Go. I have chosen him to tell foreigners, kings and the people of Israel about me." Paul is the missionary who would transform this Jewish movement.

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Hope & Healing: Christian Cancer Support



For anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis, Linda Sokoly can give support through phone calls, email, texts or one-on-one, in-person conversations and prayers. If you or someone you know is in need of support, or if you have questions, please contact Linda through the Augustana church office at 716-832-5720 or by email at augustchurch@yahoo.com.



Thoughts on October's Adult Retreat

Kelly B.
Beautiful fall colors and sunny skies began our retreat weekend at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Retreat Center. Although the air was a little cool, we had the warmth of our friendships and the beauty of our surroundings to warm our souls.

I always look forward to this weekend because of the relaxation, laughter, lessons learned, and time away from "life." Thank you Charlie for leading us in another year of soul-searching and eye-opening experiences. My calendar is already marked for next year—October 1-3, 2027. Make sure you mark yours too and join us! You will not regret it!

Debbie F.
The retreat was insightful, thought-provoking, and reflective. Great food, great company, and beautiful scenery—what a wonderful place to spend a weekend. So much fun!!

Diane S.
My heart wasn't in the right place before…then the joy of being together took over and "retreat" did its magic.