



## Pastor's Ponderings

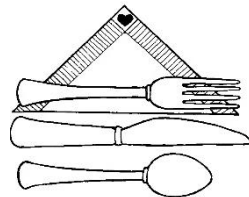
### "All God's Children"

My wife, Anne, was an elementary school teacher. During some of her sessions with her principal, discussing the challenging children in her class, her principal would respond... "Anne, all God's children, all God's children." I took this as meaning all children have worth and are special in God's eyes. From Birth to those a century old, if we use this Loving description of God's created beings, "All God's children," we realize that we are not too different from each other. Instead, we are all created beings of God. And those of us who have been blessed to get to know Jesus are called to be a good neighbor, serve the least of these, love our enemies, forgive seventy-seven times, do unto others as you would have them do unto you. When we embody Jesus and his loving teachings, we are then a "message-board" without words to those we serve and help. Once that message is out, the Holy Spirit goes to work, and God's Love through Jesus is spread in actions and sometimes in words.

Being Jesus' follower, it is not up to us to decide who's in or who's out in God's eyes... in fact we are "all God's children!" We are to be about serving, hosting, sharing a meal with, and being generous with God's children. God named us stewards of the earth and of each other.

As for the other thing ... thanks be to God who gives us victory through the Cross, and Jesus' outstretched arms of forgiveness and mercy for all people.

One of God's children, I remain,  
Pastor Fred he/him/his



## Good Shepherd LC Food Pantry to Provide Thanksgiving Meals

You are invited to help the church's Food Pantry collect items needed to assemble dinners that will be distributed to the families it serves. "Fixings" needed for each dinner are listed below.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Canned Sweet Corn                                       | Boxed Stuffing Mix  |
| Canned Green Beans                                      | Instant Potatoes  |
| Canned Cranberry Sauce                                  | Turkey Gravy (jarred or mix)  |
| Boxed brownies/cookie mixes or cake mixes and frostings | Donations of disposable foil roasting pans (Tip: bring your items in a foil pan.) |

Please leave your donations in the elevator entrance (Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 AM to Noon), or in the narthex (look for the sign.) The deadline for TOL donations is Sunday, November 12. Thank you for helping others to enjoy a holiday meal with their families.

## Monday Afternoon Adult Ed. Classes, led by Charlie Schmidtke

Classes meet on Monday afternoons from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM in the Fireside Room or on Zoom. The schedule for the remainder of 2023 is listed below. Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link.

November 6: Exodus – Deliverance  
November 20: Exodus – Mount Sinai  
December 4: Deborah's Victory



## Tai Chi with Charlie at TOL Monday Evenings, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Instructor - Charlie Schmidtke  
\$20 per 10-week session

Tai Chi  
Balance, Tranquility,  
Strength

If you are looking for a form of exercise that consists of slow gentle movements, meditation and breathing, consider learning Tai Chi. **Note that Session 2 will begin in March.**

### Session 1:

November 6, 20  
December 4, 11

### Session 2:

March 4, 11, 18, 25  
April 8, 15, 22, 29  
May 6, 13

**10/29/23: Date changes made (in red).**

## Workday—Much Accomplished!

On Saturday, October 7, we held a workday at TOL. Our gratitude to Barb and Dick, Karen and Frank, Gail and John, Earlene, Sandra, Sharon, and Peter. Many jobs inside and outside the building were completed. Since it was raining that day, Dick and Barb came back a few days later to paint the shed—it looks great! Thank you everyone, your help is greatly appreciated. We will try to have the next workday in the Spring!

Lanny

PS. We'd also like to express our gratitude to the two anonymous angels who come and help out with the chores whenever they can. Lately, they painted the yellow lines outside on the sidewalk near the parking lot, which will be so helpful. Thank you!

## Mid-Week Advent Services

Soup Dinner (6:00 PM) / Worship Services (7:00 PM)

November 29 Trinity Old Lutheran hosts  
December 6 Abiding Savior LC, 1534 Ruie Rd. North Tonawanda  
December 13 Good Shepherd LC, 2669 Sheridan Dr., Tonawanda  
December 20 St. Martin LC, 322 Old Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda



## Trinity Tidings, November 2023

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

*In all things*  
**GIVE THANKS**

### ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2018

Pray we are grateful, responsible and generous stewards with everything God has entrusted to our care for the well-being of our neighbor and the sake of the world.

©Copyright & Trademark 2018 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved.

### ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2023

- † Pray for our neighbors who have experienced great losses and turmoil as a result of the earthquake in Morocco and the unprecedented flooding in Libya, that they will find hope, comfort, relief, resources and assistance for the difficult recoveries ahead.
- † Remember in prayer those who have been impacted by recent tropical storms and hurricanes, that they might find relief, assistance and hope in the support provided by neighbors, faith communities, synods and relief agencies, including Lutheran Disaster Response. Ask God to strengthen our resilience and wisdom to meet the mounting challenges of natural disasters and climate change.
- † Give thanks and praise to God, creator of diverse, abundant creatures in the seas and oceans that feed the hungry, inspire awe, reveal secrets that lead to medical discoveries and keep aquatic ecosystems healthy and thriving.
- † Give thanks to God for the comfort of knowing that we, and those who have gone before us, will one day be gathered together in the kingdom of God – forever.
- † *Native American Heritage Day* Praise God for the rich and diverse legacies of Native American neighbors and siblings in Christ. Give thanks for the continuing influence of Indigenous cultures, traditions, spirituality, arts and concepts of community.
- † The suffering and devastation mount with every day the Russia-Ukraine War continues. Pray for an end to the war, and that our allies will remain steadfast in valuing and pursuing peace, justice and recovery for Ukraine.



©Copyright & Trademark 2023 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved.

### 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

Published monthly by  
Trinity Old Lutheran Church  
3445 Sheridan Drive, Amherst, NY 14226  
Church Office: 716-836-4868 or 716-836-4990  
Church email: trinityoldlutheranchurch@gmail.com  
Karen Mulartrick and Jan Sherman, Co-Editors



### Letter from Bishop Lee M. Miller II, Upstate New York Synod, October 10, 2023 (Excerpts)

Dear Beloved Church,

I write to you today as we join our prayers to those who are mourning, healing, and waiting in the aftermath of the violence this past week in Israel. We pray for the Jewish community, and we pray for the Palestinian community.

Please join me in prayer. Let us pray for peace in the Holy Land. Let us pray for a peaceful resolution going forward. Let us pray for peace to prevail in Israel and Palestine, and in places of conflict.

Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Yours in Peace,  
Lee M. Miller II

### Mission for November: Veterans One-stop Center of Western New York (VOCWNY)

The organization is located on Niagara Street in Buffalo and it continues providing important support services to local veterans and their families.

*Vision:* “All Veterans and their families have barrier-free access to the services they need to deal with challenges at home, to complete the transition to civilian life, and to achieve their goals and reach their full potential.”

[From: [www.vocwny.org](http://www.vocwny.org).] Copyright © 2023 - Veterans One-stop Center of Western New York. All rights reserved.

Please place your donations in the marked envelopes in the narthex or mail your donations to the church office (indicate on your check that it is designated for Veterans One-stop Center of WNY).



### October Mission, Thank You!

Thank you for your donations to Operation Christmas Child that will be used to help defray the costs of shipping the boxes and also completing them!

**Operation Christmas Child Update:** Shoeboxes are still available in the narthex—please take a brochure on what to pack. They are due on Sunday, November 12. If possible, please include \$10 to cover shipping. Any questions, please ask Debbie. Thanks!

## Reflections—TOL Retreat Weekend

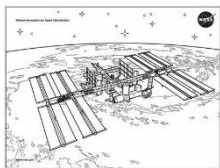
The theme of this year's retreat at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center (LCLC) was "What's Next: Here and Now, There and Then."

Again Charlie presented a thoughtful program as we explored living in the moment (Carpe Diem!) as well as discussing what lies ahead.

The perfect weather for Saturday afternoon's free time allowed for nature walks, views of Lake Chautauqua as well as meeting and greeting some of the Creative Anachronistic re-enactors (think Renaissance and jousts and swords and costumes!).

Later we used our talents for designing collages, stringing Job's Tears necklaces, coloring mandalas, and making a Bills' puzzle. Then we shared our creative expressions at an outdoor worship under the trees with a blanket of colorful autumn leaves under our feet.

On Saturday night we interrupted a friendly competition of "Catch Phrase" to go outside. Led by cell phone flashlights to an open field, we looked at the beautiful night sky filled with stars. At precisely the given time we saw the International Space Station arise from the northwest and head high in the sky across the lake to the southeast. What a majestic sight!



The retreat ended Sunday morning after a meaningful worship where we blessed and forgave one another before passing communion around the circle.

All weekend the sound of laughter and the joy of friendship filled the retreat center, and we were surrounded by spirit and grace.

*Diane S*

### The Retreat Was Sweet!

The weekend is now over  
We gathered once again  
Minds and hearts were opened  
With talk of then and when....

And grace was all around us  
Both in nature and in friend  
In our midst and in the sky  
With hope - it will not end.

We came to feel the secret:  
Not behind and not ahead  
But savoring the moment,  
Right now, right here, instead.

And what about this messy life  
The joys, the load of care?  
Don't ever fear tomorrow  
God is already there....

*Diane S*

*Used with permission.*



Diane has posted photos and poems about this year's retreat on the bulletin board located in the narthex. Stop by a take a look! (Thank you, Diane!)



## ELCA Prayer Ventures, November 2023

- † Pray that we will take to heart and respond to the same instructions Jesus gave to his disciples: to care for our neighbors who suffer poverty, hunger and illness and to bless those who commit their lives to caring for others, pursuing justice and making peace.
- † Pray that our acts of generosity will come from a place of gratefulness to God and concern for our neighbor and will "produce thanksgiving to God through us" (2 Corinthians 9:11).

©Copyright & Trademark 2023 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved.

## Support for Local Food Pantries

Your donations in support of Good Shepherd Lutheran's pantry in Tonawanda and Community of Good Neighbors (CGN) Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo are greatly appreciated. Augustana LC also supports CGN.

Please continue to 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!



## "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](mailto:augustchurch@yahoo.com).

## On-going Collections—Thank You!

**Can Tabs...**Your can tabs can be placed in the marked container in the narthex. Your donations will support Ronald McDonald House of WNY.

## Friends of Night People

- 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](http://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.

## Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke

### Study Notes: Jesus' Family

#### Part I: Gospel of James

The Gospel of James is the primary source that names Mary's parents and tells us something about them. (The Bible's four gospels give us no information about Mary's birth or childhood.) This gospel is not part of our bible but has been very influential concerning Catholic and Orthodox ideas about Mary and Joseph. During the first three centuries after Jesus' resurrection there were three different theologies arising.

- a) Jesus was fully human and divine, equally. A premise used in the development of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. There are variations on this belief and we'll discuss them much later when we examine the Armenian Orthodox Church.
- b) Jesus was fully human, but not divine.
- c) Jesus was fully divine and his body was basically an illusion.

My guess is that the Gospel of James was not accepted into the New Testament because it was based on the third belief that Jesus wasn't fully human. According to this gospel the physical world is one of corruption and sin and Jesus was without sin, so he could not have had a real body. Even though the gospel assumed this belief, it was used by early church leaders and accepted by many of the followers of Jesus to establish certain other beliefs—especially that Mary was a virgin her entire life.

This gospel was popular among many of Jesus' followers for centuries, until the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. The gospel's agenda was to tell Mary's story and prove that she was a perpetual virgin and sinless. Additionally, it's the only source we have that has named Mary's parents: Joachim and Anne. The gospel was written in Greek, in Syria sometime around 150 CE and was attributed to Jesus' brother, James. James was supposedly Jesus' half-brother or cousin because according to this gospel, Mary remained a virgin her entire life. She also was immaculately conceived because her father was not involved in procreation. Sex was viewed as sinful by the gospel's writers. Having sex for pleasure was sinful. Having sex to have children was not sinful because the sole purpose of marriage is to have children. "Go forth and multiply." By the 3<sup>rd</sup> century this idea of sin became connected to the Fall and the concept of original sin began to emerge. The belief in the concept of original sin didn't become widespread until the 5<sup>th</sup> century with the teachings of St. Augustine. Jerome was a widely accepted theologian. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century he convinced the pope to reject the Gospel of James but keep the idea that Jesus had no brothers and Mary was Immaculately Conceived (meaning she was conceived without sin). 14 centuries later the Immaculate Conception became a Catholic dogma in 1854. This dogma merely states that Mary was conceived without sin, not that her mother had a virgin birth.

Here is a brief synopsis of the gospel. According to James' gospel, Joachim was a rich, pious man. He was known for giving to the poor. He was married to Anne who was barren, which meant that they had displeased God. He did not divorce after 10 years, despite his right to do so. Joachim made a sacrifice in the temple, but his prayer was rejected so he went to the desert and fasted and did penance for 40 days (any of these details sound familiar). Anne also prayed and God hears her prayer. Angels announce the coming of their child and she dedicates Mary to God and vows to have

her raised in the temple. (This is consistent with the idea that Zechariah was her guardian and Mary and Elizabeth became close.) After Joachim returns from the desert, an angel appears to both Joachim and Anne and tells them to name their child, Mary. In Islam Joachim is seen as a prophet and an apostle to the people. He's usually ignored in Christianity. The Orthodox church pays more attention to Mary's parents than western Christianity. The Catholic Church is ambivalent because they don't want to accept anything from the Apocrypha and this gospel falls into that category. For Lutherans: Martin Luther was praying to Mary's mother, Anne, when the lightning strikes and he decides to change his ways and become an Augustinian monk.

Anne vows that Mary will be raised in the temple to continue her sinless life. Controversy exists over whether Anne placed Mary in the temple to be raised or whether she and Joachim died and Mary became a ward of the temple. It is also possible that Anne and Joachim moved to Nazareth and raised Mary there. The church in Constantinople brought Anne's relics to the church of Sophia in 710 CE. I'll complete the synopsis next month.

*Used with permission.*



#### September's Community Baby Shower— Results & Thank You! (excerpts from Sue Gibbons' letter)

Dear TOL and Augustana Members,

A heartfelt thank you to all for your generous support of the Community Baby Shower St. Paul's Williamsville sponsored to benefit Response to Love and Harvest House. The response was nothing short of amazing!

We received (in total):

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ○ Diapers: 7,983<br>(individual) | ○ Socks: 402 pairs                  |
| ○ Wipes: 886,569<br>(individual) | ○ Baby Bottles: 105                 |
| ○ Towels/Wash Cloths: 210        | ○ Lotions/Ointments:<br>207 bottles |

In addition, there were 20 bags of new and gently used baby clothes, a highchair and various other baby furnishings. Monetary donations exceeded \$2,400.

These two agencies have been struggling, as the need in the community has grown significantly over the past year. Your kindness and generosity is much appreciated as we continue to "love our neighbors" as Jesus taught us.

Thank you again, from the bottom of our hearts, for partnering with us in this endeavor.

Wishing you grace and peace,  
*Sue Gibbons*  
St. Paul's Williamsville  
Social Ministry Committee

