



## Pastor's Ponderings

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs!" *Luke 18:16*

I am thinking about children this month. Children around the world. Ina Hughes wrote this prayer that helped me to think about all children.

We pray for children

Who put chocolate fingers everywhere, who like to be tickled, who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants, who sneak popsicles before supper, who erase holes in their math workbooks, who can never find their shoes.

We pray for those

Who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire, who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers, who never "counted potatoes," who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead, who never go to the circus, who live in an x-rated world.

We pray for children

Who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with the dog and bury the goldfish, who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money, who cover themselves with band aids and sing off key, who squeeze tooth paste all over the sink, who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those

Who never get dessert, who have no safe blanket to drag behind them, who watch their parents watch them die, who can't find any bread to steal, who don't have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser, whose monsters are real.

We pray for children

Who spend all their allowances before Tuesday, who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food, who like ghost stories, who shove dirty clothes under the bed and never rinse out the tub, who get visits from the tooth fairy, who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool, who squirm in church or temple and scream in the phone, whose tears we sometimes laugh at and whose smiles can make us cry.

And we pray for those

Whose nightmares come in the daytime, who will eat anything, who never see a dentist, who aren't spoiled by anybody, who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep, who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for children who want to be carried and for those who must, for those we never give up on and for those who don't get a second chance. For those we smother and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Fred he/him/his

## Tri-Congregational Task Force Report

The Tri-Congregational Task Force met on June 3 and decided to organize three teams to continue our efforts at merging. Each team selected a leader and recorder. We exchanged phone numbers and email addresses and discussed what issues the team should be addressing. We also decided that we would seek to add other members to the teams and our first working meeting would be September 15. The teams are:

1. Mission and Ministries. We will organize the material from the retreat and establish a mission statement that would include continuing our current ministries and possibly adding new ministries. This will help define who "we are": the three congregations as one. This step will help prepare us for completing the MSP the Synod will require for calling a pastor. It will also help us decide which church building(s) will best serve our joint mission and ministries.
2. Finance and Legal. How will budgets be merged and who will manage the finances? How will the building(s) be sold? Identify and work with attorneys for selling and for addressing current lawsuits against each congregation.
3. Liturgy and Communication. We will start to merge the calendars and determine liturgical practices. Begin process of joining newsletters and one website—who will manage them? We plan to start having at least one joint worship each month. The team plans to prepare a photo directory of members of all three congregations.

If anyone is interested in joining one of the teams, please contact Charlie or Lanny.



## Upcoming Annual Work Day at Holy Rest Cemetery! Saturday, August 1, 9:00 AM to Noon

The cemetery is always 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 9:00 AM at the cemetery, 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!

## Trinity Tidings, July 2026

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



Join Us!

**Sunday, July 26, 11:00 AM**

**Pastor's Birthday/Retirement Worship and Picnic at Emery Park!**  
(2084 Emery Road, South Wales, NY)

### ELCA Prayer Ventures, July 2026\*

- † Give thanks and pray for our LGBTQIA+ neighbors and siblings in Christ – our children, parents, siblings, elders, friends, co-workers and leaders. Pray that we will be persistent advocates and catalysts for intentional inclusion, full participation, and the valuing of diverse gifts and perspectives in the church and society.
- † Lift up prayers of thanksgiving and praise to God for being an ever-present and dependable source of strength, courage and hope, particularly in times of struggle and crisis.
- † Ask God to strengthen and expand the work we do together through Lutheran Disaster Response as it provides emergency relief, supports disaster recovery and helps communities develop disaster preparedness and resilience. Give thanks that this work – our work – is mindful of people's spiritual, physical, emotional and social needs, including food security, shelter, self-sufficiency and community.
- † Remember in prayer those who serve in the military and are currently deployed overseas to areas of conflict and war. Pray for their safety, for the Spirit to strengthen their faith and hope, and for the support of their families and faith communities to comfort and renew them.
- † Pray for leaders, diplomats, mediators and others involved in peacemaking and reconciliation efforts around the world, especially in the Middle East, Russia and Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen and Haiti.
- † *Independence Day and Semiquincentennial Celebration*  
Today we celebrate the history and independence of the United States as well as the long history of Native Americans in North America before the birth of our nation. Pray for the wisdom and resolve we need to ensure freedom, justice and equity for all people – in our nation and around the world.

### 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.

## Trinity Tidings

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### Mission for July: Lutheran Charities of WNY (LCWNY)

"Our Mission is simple: Caring for and supporting individuals, families and communities by building valuable connections to create synergy and empowerment."  
[from: [www.wnylutherancharities.org](http://www.wnylutherancharities.org)]

#### LCWNY: Who We Are

"For over 40 years, Lutheran Charities' primary mission has been to support Western New York communities with kindness, compassion, justice and generosity, joining people where they are with what they need.

By underwriting grant funding for local agencies throughout the year, Lutheran Charities helps provide education, food, health care, social support and more to our neediest and underserved neighbors in Western New York.

A generous endowment covering operating costs allows us to channel 100% of donated and contributed funds into community partner programs, each of which is fully vetted and submit quarterly progress reports."

A small sampling of agencies receiving grant funding includes the following. Check out the website for the complete list!

TOL Sandwich Ministry	Grassroots Gardens WNY
Augustana RIDE Program	The Tool Library
Jericho Road – Vive Center	Haircuts for those in Need
St. Timothy's Child Care Center	Lord of Life Adult Day Health Center
Leveling the Playing Field	Lutheran Youth of WNY

To make a donation, please use the marked envelopes found on the table in the narthex or use [Tithe.ly](https://tithe.ly) through the TOL website. If using the mail, please enter "Lutheran Charities WNY" on the check memo.

### June Mission, Thank You!

Your continued support of the TOL Sandwich Ministry is greatly appreciated! Donations will help reduce the costs of food and supplies needed to deliver sandwiches to Friends of Night People.

**The Support Group for Grieving 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, Diane and Jean.

## My Musings by Diane Schmidtke

### TRAVEL

“Life is made for good friends and great adventures.”

*Anonymous*

In May Charlie and I spent eight days driving around Canada with our Dutch friends. We met them 57 years ago in New Orleans at Tulane University. They moved into the student apartment next to ours, and from there and then, an enduring, enriching friendship began.

Over the years both couples have been back and forth across “the pond” many times, with and without our children. We’ve traveled extensively in Europe: 11 different countries with various cities in each. We also have seen seven National Parks in the western US and Canada, and traveled down the Mississippi River from Minnesota, ending in Nashville. We’ve driven from Florida to Savannah to Charleston and Washington DC, from Tonawanda to Maine.

This time we picked them up at the Toronto airport, and the next adventure began. We headed to the St. Lawrence Market, where we saw and heard and interacted with all manner of humanity as we walked the aisles and perused the amazing produce, cheeses, meats, coffees, teas, and native crafts at hundreds of stalls. The world surrounded us! Standing in a long coffee line, I turned to the couple behind me and asked what language they were speaking. Their English was perfect; their Hindi was melodic. According to Mark Twain:

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow mindedness.”

Amen! Onward to the Capitol!

Serendipity always strikes when we’re together; this time, we unexpectedly discovered that Ottawa was celebrating Victoria Day and their Tulip Festival! What better place to be than with the Dutch among the tulips on Parliament Hill, a lovely park setting overlooking government buildings in Gothic Revival architecture. Stunning! It was here we listened to a busker singing “Sweet Caroline.” My heart sang, and so did I!

Next stop: Niagara on the Lake. Again our hearts were full as we witnessed “the world” surrounding us at the Butterfly Conservatory. While it poured outside, we basked in sunshine. People of every variety standing still to take a photo, or to hope for a “landing,” then smiling and sharing a lovely insect with a stranger. Joy!

“Traveling—it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.”

*Ibn Battuta*

*(While our travel adventure has ended, Pastor Fred’s and Anne’s is expanding and extending West... what joy and adventure await them... we send them off with gratitude and love: Carpe Diem!)*



*Used with permission.*

### “Christ in Our Home”

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

## Words Matter

Communication is the number 1 problem in human relationships.

Why do words matter?

Why do we misunderstand others?

Come and experience the challenge in communicating with different cultures.

### Join us!

**Adult Retreat - October 2, 3 and 4**

**Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center**

**Retreat Coordinator: Charlie Schmidtke**



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).

*[Photos and memories from the 2025 Retreat are posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. Stop by and take a look!]*

### ELCA Prayer Ventures, July 2026\*

- † Remember in prayer adult vocalists and musicians attending the Lutheran Summer Music Choral Gathering at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn. Pray for the Spirit to stir their joy in singing, making music, expressing their faith through song and inspiring the faith of others.
- † Who prompts joy in your life these days? What causes you to smile and laugh? Lift up prayers of gratitude and celebration for those people and things that lighten your spirit when life feels heavy and dark.

### Thank You, Received from Ronald McDonald House Charities of WNY

Dear Nancy and Trinity Old Lutheran Church,

Thank YOU for helping us keep families close.™ Thank you for the pull tabs you donated—we appreciate it!

Sincerely,

*Ronald McDonald House Charities*

A big Thank You to Nancy for delivering the tabs!

### ELCA Prayer Ventures, January 2017\*

Uncertain of what awaits us each day and what the year ahead holds for us, we ask God to grant us courage, hope and wisdom for facing the challenges and tasks that take us by surprise.



**Happy Independence Day!**

**Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke**  
**Study Notes: "Bible Canon"**

**Part V: John's Gospel and the Criteria for Including Books**

**John.** John, often called the beloved, was the youngest apostle. He wasn't married and was the brother of James, the major, and son of Zebedee and Salome/Mary. According to his gospel he, his brother (James), Peter and his brother (Andrew) were with John the Baptist when Jesus' was baptized. It was the Baptist who told them to follow Jesus, thus becoming his first apostles. John's gospel contains seven signs (like the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation) and its purpose is "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." His gospel is unlike the other gospels because it has lengthy passages about what Jesus was saying, especially at the Last Supper. In my view, it is more reflective and thoughtful and less a narrative about Jesus.

The gospel writer is actually anonymous and dates from a beginning in 70 CE and finishing around 90-110 CE. This means that it is unlikely that John wrote the final version that we have today. There was a Johannine community of believers who followed John's leadership. They maintained their Jewish traditions but were expelled from Judaism because they followed Jesus and proclaimed him to be the Jewish Messiah. This community lasted until the second century when debates caused rifts because some of the members seemed to follow in the wisdom beliefs of Gnosticism. So, John probably inspired the gospel and other writings attributed to him, but they were probably actually written or edited by members of his community. Because the gospel has a complex history of composition, it is likely it was written by a number of people in a number of different locations. For example, the Catholic Bishops believe that the prologue seems to be an independent hymn that was adapted to serve as a preface. There are also some inconsistencies which lead to the conclusion that there was more than one author.

The gospel probably had a number of sources:

- 1) Oral tradition, especially John's stories and those within the Johannine community.
- 2) The Gospels of Mark and Luke.
- 3) Hebrew scriptures (because there are a number of quotations taken from these writings. They are more frequent than in any other gospel.)
- 4) Q documents

There is some agreement that the gospel has four major parts:

- 1) The prologue, which tells that Jesus is the Word of God.
- 2) The Book of Signs, which tells of Jesus' ministry.
- 3) The Book of Glory, which tells how he prepared his disciples for their coming life without him (especially what he said at the Last Supper).
- 4) The Epilogue, which includes a conclusion setting out the purpose of the gospel and an addendum which tells of Jesus' post-resurrection appearance in Galilee.

The gospel is more individualistic than the Synoptic gospels, which seem to deal with the corporate nature of the church. This gospel emphasizes the individual's relationship to Jesus.

Starting with the idea of Logos in his prologue, John seems to connect Jesus with the wisdom concept from Hebrew and Greek traditions. It may also be connected to the Greek philosophical idea of Logos—one's meaning or purpose in life. Jesus' death in John is less about atonement for sin and sacrifice and more about Jesus' glorification and return to the father. In this sense, John's gospel may be a bridge between the Synoptic gospels and the Gnostic gospels.

**Criteria for Including Books**

There were continuing debates about which books should be included and how they were going to decide which ones were going to be canonized. Eventually they decided upon three primary criteria for judging whether or not a book should be included. It is difficult to know whether the criteria were used to adopt books in the canon or whether they were used to justify their final selections. There were endless debates and judgments made about the wide-ranging books and letters available for inclusion. Revelation, the Catholic Letters, Acts and the letter to Hebrews were hotly debated, but eventually were included. Some theologians included some and left others out. Other books were debated and eliminated, such as the Gospel of James and Thomas. There are other books that we have not discussed that were also considered, sometimes being included in one person's canon. Some of these works are: The Letter of Barnabas, the Gospel of the Egyptians and the Shepherd of Hermas.

Here are the official criteria that were used in determining the NT canon. A book or letter had to satisfy all three:

- 1) **True doctrine:** Of course, this was used by church leaders who decided what true doctrines were. Eventually the doctrines had to line up with the Nicene Creed. All Gnostic works were automatically eliminated.
- 2) **Widespread Usage:** This was based on how popular a book was and who was involved in using the work. There were many books that fit into this category, but because they failed one of the other criteria, they were excluded. This was especially true for the Gnostic gospels that were popular and widely used.
- 3) **Apostolicity:** This required that books be based on what the apostles said and what was included in the oral tradition of the apostles. The apostles were limited to the 12 males "called" by Jesus and does not include any female voices to be included. Thus, the Gospels of Mary Magdalene, the Infancy Gospel of Mary and other letters were never seriously considered.

In conclusion, there really is no one bible. Our bibles are compilations which have complex histories and conflicting agendas. BUT they are our gateway to understanding God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They serve as an inspired guide for our lives. For Lutherans, our road to salvation is through Sole Fide (faith alone), Sole Gracia (grace alone), and Sole Scriptura (scripture alone).

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**Operation Christmas Child**

The suggested donations for July are blue/black ink pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, colored pencils, pencil case. Please place your donations in the bin located in the hallway. Thank you so much!

*Kelly and Debbie*