



Pastor's Ponderings

"Faith is the Bridge between where I am and where God is taking me."

This was written on an ELCA post several years ago and I saved it. Sometimes I find it is difficult to explain faith. How do we describe a belief in a God whom we cannot see, who made the universe (made up of 200 billion to 1 trillion galaxies), humbled himself enough to enter our earth as a baby, become a man, to suffer death, and rise from the dead at a specific time and place.

Wow! Daunting.

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1

"We walk by faith and not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

"For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and were all made to drink of Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:13

Jesus said, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." Matthew 17:20

Maybe if I say, just like I trust the love of my wife and children whom I cannot see sometimes, I trust God or I feel and know love, beauty, hope, peace, comfort, strength and so many things because of the magnitude of the creation and of the sacrifice and suffering Jesus made for me.

However I share my faith, I come down to a need, a desire, and in my weakness, the statement from Simon Peter who responded to Jesus after Jesus asked if the disciples wanted to leave him. Peter said,

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." John 6:68-69

Do I have all the answers? NO.

Do I presume to know what God wants? Sometimes. Through the help of the Holy Spirit and the example of Jesus.

Am I confident in the bridge of faith that is leading me forward? Yes.

May God bless your journey of faith.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Fred he/him/his



Barbeque / Baskets / Crafts Saturday, September 7

BW'S BBQ Chicken Dinner, 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM
Dine In or Take Out, \$15.00

Dinner Volunteers are needed! If you can help, please speak to Earlene.

Theme Basket Raffle, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Our BW's BBQ/Theme Basket/Craft Fair on **Saturday, September 7**, is rapidly approaching! We would greatly appreciate your help with our basket raffle by donating a basket, gift card, or items for a basket. Also, as I recently mentioned in Church, I thought it would be great if every person in our congregation donated at least one instant lottery ticket. What a great community-made basket that would become! (**Deadline for donations is Sunday, September 1.**)

Please see Debbie or me with any questions, or with any donations! Thank you so much!!

Kelly

Craft Fair, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM (If you have any questions, please call the church office at 716-836-4868.)

New! Emergency Action Planning Team

Under the guidance of Pastor Fred, a group of members has begun working on an emergency action plan for TOL.

Emergencies being assessed are fire, medical, power outages, weather, chemical spills and dangerous person events. The committee is also determining if specific training is required for any members/employees. A process for implementation and dissemination to the congregation and our community partners will be developed. If you have any questions, please speak to Pastor Fred or me.

Stephanie

Sermon Discussion/Input with Pastor Fred
Wednesday, August 28, 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.

Curtain Going Up

An upcoming 'TOL Theater Get Together' is being planned for November. Full details will be in the Sunday bulletins and September Trinity Tidings.

Trinity Tidings, August 2024

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 2015

Abundant summer crops and harvests are a wonder and blessing. We give thanks to God for the food that sustains us and the people who plant, grow, harvest, prepare and share it for the well-being of all people.

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ELCA Prayer Ventures, August 2024

- † Pray for those recovering in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl in the Caribbean, the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico and the Texas Gulf Coast region. Pray that their faith and the care and support of neighbors near and far will sustain their hope and reassure them that they are not alone in this time of suffering. Give thanks for the support of congregations, synods and Lutheran Disaster Response.
- † “Elisha said, ‘Give it to the people and let them eat’” (2 Kings 4:42). The food that Elisha intended for the hungry crowd wasn’t scraps or leftovers; it was from the “first fruits” – the first and best of the harvest that was offered to God. Pray that our generosity toward our neighbors in need will come from our first fruits for the sake of their dignity and well-being.
- † Be persistent in praying for peace, justice and reconciliation in the world, including in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, the Palestinian territories, Sudan, Yemen, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- † “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!” (Psalm 130:1-2). Make time today to pray from the depths of your inner being about those things that weigh heavily on you.

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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.

“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.



Trinity Tidings

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August Mission: Family Promise of WNY

This month’s mission will be to support Family Promise of WNY (FPWNY). The organization continues to serve homeless families in Buffalo at its location on Hickory Street, which functions as an emergency shelter that also enables families to stay together while in their care.

FPWNY Vision: “We seek to build a community that wraps homeless children and their families in hope.”

“We keep families together.” “We know that most shelters separate men from women and young children—leaving fathers and teenage sons with limited shelter options. We are one of only two shelters in Erie County that keep families of any makeup together through the crisis of homelessness. This is even more critical considering that over 70% of our guests are children.”

[from: FPWNY website at www.fpwny.org]

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The website contains information on FPWNY history, the shelter and its mission, ways to help and how to volunteer.

Please use the marked envelopes located in the narthex, or mail your donations to the church office (please indicate on your check that it is designated for Family Promise of WNY). Thank you for your support.

July Mission

Thank you to everyone for your donations to Lutheran Charities of WNY (LCWNY). They will be used to support the 23 local organizations that benefit from LCWNY—including TOL’s Sandwich Ministry and the RIDE Driver Program at Augustana LC.

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
- Pasta, Mac-and-Cheese
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Spaghetti and pasta sauces
- Cereal and other breakfast items (oatmeal, grits)
- Instant potatoes
- Paper products, feminine hygiene products

Gift cards (Tops or Wegmans) (mail to church office)



Adult Retreat—October 4, 5 and 6
Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center
Retreat Coordinator: Charlie Schmidtke

“Who am I?”

*Am I the same person I was 30 years ago?
Does our personality change as we get older?
How have I become the person I am?*

*These and other questions will be raised
during our time together.*

This will be a time for us to gather once 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.

Deadlines: Reservations, Sunday, September 22;
Payment, Friday, October 4.

If you have any questions, please contact Trinity Old Lutheran at 716-836-4868, Charlie at 716-694-1335 or through his email at schmidtkecharles@gmail.com. Information packets will be sent to everyone who registers.

Operation Christmas Child

The suggested donations for August are school supplies. This includes the following items: blue/black ink pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, colored pencils, soft pencil cases, markers, small notebooks, safety scissors, glue sticks and crayons.



Your items can be placed in the newly-marked bin located in the hallway by the bulletin board. Thank you so much!!

Kelly and Debbie

My Musings
by Diane Schmidtke

Weeds

Pulling weeds provides lots of action
When the roots come out, there is satisfaction!
When the stems have thorns there is sorrow and pain
It's then best to pull soon after a rain...

But today's little venture amidst all the greenery
Makes me wonder if we'll reclaim our former scenery
My arms are all scratchy, and oh my poor back,
I'm praying I didn't find the poison sumac!

The heat and humidity should be treated with care
That means stay inside and put on some air!
Or take a cool shower or read a good book
And find something quick and simple to cook.

The weeds will be waiting on a less humid day
For sure they won't decide to go on vacay!
In fact I am guessing that they'll be easily sighted...

Thanks to Mother Nature, the bees are delighted!!



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ELCA Prayer Ventures, August 2024

Praise God, for God provides all that is good and sustains us,
imploping us to use these gifts
to care for our neighbors in need.

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September Community Collection 2nd Annual Harvest House Diaper Drive/Baby Shower

During September, you are invited to “Help Harvest House Combat Baby Supply Scarcity” for families living at the federal poverty level when purchasing diapers is financially difficult. “...lack of diapers creates a work and school attendance impediments. Daycare facilities will not accept children who do not have a supply of diapers...” “Over 75% of families report that they periodically suffer from diaper scarcity.”

Join with St. Paul's Evangelical LC in Williamsville, Augustana LC and Lord of Life LC! Last year's drive was a “tremendous” success! Diaper donations are needed most, as well as other items such as baby wipes, pairs of socks, wash cloths and towels, bottles of lotion and ointment, and baby bottles.

[Information collected from Pastor Ashlin Marchese, Pastor at St. Paul's, Joe Somma, Co-Chair, 2nd Annual Drive, and the Rev. Ben Stuckey, Harvest House Outreach Chair, Letter dated July 2024.]

Please place your donations of diapers and other children's health supplies in the marked container in the main hallway near the bulletin board. Thank you for your support!

ELCA Prayer Ventures, August 2024 (Community)

- † Remember our neighbors who are most vulnerable to hot weather, including older adults, children, people who are ill and those without shelter. Pray that they will find public cooling centers and neighbors offering relief.
- † Pray for the Spirit's presence and work, which enable our words and actions as we stir hope, inspire faith in Jesus Christ and pursue justice and peace for all people.
- † Give thanks for the gift of Christian community, through which the Spirit unites us with siblings offering hospitality, encouragement, wisdom and skills for doing God's work in the world together.
- † Observe the world around us and give thanks for the multitude of little things that inspire our gratitude, stir our curiosity, make us smile, remind us of someone we need to reach out to, or draw our attention to God's presence in the world.

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“Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul,” wrote Martin Luther. “It is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us.” Praise God for the gift of music in your daily life and when you gather for worship.

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Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke
Study Notes: "Temple or Mount of Olives"

Part III: Jesus in the Temple, Continued

It would have been common practice when a caravan was moving that men travelled with men, women with women, teens with teens and the children went in packs grouped by age and interest. Think about the logistics of getting out of Jerusalem along with possibly 100,000 other people. I'm assuming not everyone left the day after Passover and not everyone would have headed to the Jordan River to travel north, but large numbers (maybe tens of thousands) would be leaving Jerusalem toward the east before going north, continuing east or even heading south. The confusion would be massive and 12-year-old boys were now seen as men. Remember Mary was probably 14 when she got married and gave birth to Jesus so a 12 year old "man" would be treated very differently from what would be the case today.

Luke says that they found him three days later sitting in the Temple. The usual calculation was that the family had travelled for a day going back to Nazareth. When they looked for their children after stopping for the day, probably for the evening meal, they discovered Jesus was missing. I can only imagine the panic that must have gone through them. Worry, anxiety, guilt, anger, and frustration were probably just some of the elements of the emotional torrent that ran through their hearts and minds. They would have spent an anxious night before heading back to Jerusalem or Hebron. It would have been too dangerous to travel at night. I wonder who went with Mary and Joseph. Did they take the other children with them or did they entrust them to neighbors or friends? I can't imagine them travelling alone, so who would have volunteered to go back? Remember, a normal trip would last almost two weeks (eight days in Jerusalem and three days travel each way). Losing two weeks of wages was a real sacrifice. The cost of staying in Jerusalem and making sacrifices at the Temple added to the cost of this annual pilgrimage. Now another six or seven days would add to the hardship for those going along. I believe they went to Elizabeth's first to see if he was still with John, where they had stayed. Even if they thought about going to the Temple directly, they would be hard pressed to find him in such a large complex. The ordeal would be daunting.

When they found him, I imagine most of you can relate to Mary's words: "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried, and we have been searching for you?" This part of the story makes sense—when we are worried or anxious, we become self-centered. When a child goes missing, the parents' lives become turned upside down. Diane and I lost one of our daughters at the Summit Mall when she was five years old. It was a relatively brief period of time but the rest of the world stopped. We were frantic, going from store to store and asking for an announcement on the loud speaker. Our focus was on finding Kris and trying to cope with the emotional havoc we were experiencing. For Mary and Joseph, they could not imagine what was going on. They had to deal with their worry for three days—that's a parental eternity. Jesus' response may seem to be a little flip: so, what did you expect, mom and dad? I'm doing my job here in the temple, don't you know that? Can't you hear a teenage attitude creeping in here?

This story, however, also has a different lesson. It's not just about the parents and about their sense of loss. It's not about how we might feel in a similar situation. This is a

transition story from Luke's passages about Jesus' and John the Baptist's births to Jesus being baptized by John and calling his first apostles. The transition in this story was from Jesus **being born** into the world to Jesus **doing** his Father's bidding and becoming a responsible Jewish adult. This story underlines that Jesus came to us not as Mary and Joseph's son; he came as God's son who would teach us how to live and would die for us. Jesus' response makes sense in that context: "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I would be in my father's house?" The implication is that he was beginning his teaching and showing the world a different way of interpreting God's laws to his chosen people. The story ends with three important points: Jesus went back to Nazareth and obeyed his parents; Mary thought about all that happened; and lastly, Jesus became wise and grew strong. The Gospels tell us nothing about what happened from this story until Jesus was baptized by his cousin. However, the followers of Thomas the Apostle know what happened. We'll start that story next month.

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Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke
Monday afternoons, 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM
TOL Fireside Room or on Zoom



The schedule for 2024-2025 is listed below.

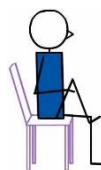
2024

September 23	Adam, Eve, and Lilith
October 7	Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar
October 21	Isaac and Rebekah
November 4	Jacob, Leah, and Rachel
November 18	David, Bathsheba, and Abigail
December 2	Elizabeth and Zachariah
December 16	Mary and Joseph

2025

January 13	Boaz and Ruth
January 27	Joseph and Asenath
February 17	Hannah and Elkanah
March 3	Hosea and Gomer
March 17	Samson and Delilah
March 31	Ester and King Xerxes
April 14	Priscilla and Aquila
April 28	Paul, Lydia, Thecla and Phoebe
May 12	Jesus and Mary Magdalene

New this Fall! Chair Yoga with Leanne



Leanne will begin a new Chair Yoga class on Tuesdays at 5:45 PM! If you aren't able to do floor yoga, this class is for you. Watch the Sunday bulletins and Tidings for more information. If you have any questions about the yoga classes offered by Leanne at TOL, please contact the church office (716-836-4868). Oasis Yoga is a TOL Community Partner.

Wishing everyone a continued safe and happy summer!

