



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.

Pastor's Ponderings

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
1Thessalonians 5:11

I am leaving, but I still have you for a little while longer and want the transition and future to go well. So, I've been thinking about what to leave you with as you enter into this transition time. During this transition there will be a big need for all people of the congregation to be involved. I hope that each one of the members and friends of our congregations thinks about this transition as short term and how they can help it be successful. One way is to support and continue the servant ministries that are evident with each congregation. Another way is to use as an example, Geese. These are lessons I use in coaching leaders. It's helpful, and Anne and I like birds. Here are lessons that we can learn from Geese.



1. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for others behind it. There is 71% more flying range in a V-formation than flying alone.

Lesson: People who share a common direction and a sense of common purpose can get there quicker.

2. Whenever a goose flies out of formation, it quickly feels the drag and tries to get back into position.

Lesson: It's harder to do something alone than together.

3. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the head.

Lesson: Shared leadership and interdependence gives each of us a chance to lead as well as opportunities to rest.

4. The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson: We need to make sure our honking is encouraging and not discouraging (see Bible quote above).

5. When a goose gets sick or wounded and falls, two geese fall out with it until it revives or dies. Then they catch up and join another flock.

Lesson: Stand by your fellow members in difficult times and as well as in good.

I will be quacking from behind as TOL and Augustana and its people take on the challenges of transition and exploration of a bright future together with Good Shepherd.

Peace,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

Pizza Party – Change of Date!

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, June 28**, for a Pizza Party following the worship service. Please sign up on the main bulletin board. All are welcome!

Tri-Congregation Weekend, May 2-3

Several of us from TOL met with others from Augustana and Good Shepherd on Saturday, May 2 for a retreat/workshop and a chance to get to know one another better. Because of the tri-congregation services and picnics we've had over the past two years, there were many familiar faces. We felt like we were among friends with common ministries and mission. Pastor Aileen from Synod was our moderator and she asked us to think outside the box and imagine all the possibilities for a bright future, as well as addressing our hesitations and fears. She reminded us that our relationships are always more important than the issues. We're a church family and because of that, we can love one another and we will be given the grace to discuss and overcome stumbling blocks along the way. We spent the day in conversations and activities, which were fun and challenging. It truly was a day that exceeded our expectations.

The worship service the following day was beautiful, with approximately 100 attendees from the three congregations. Pastor Aileen led the worship, and her sermon was perfect for the occasion.

Going forward, we encourage everyone to take part in helping to determine our future by praying and, hopefully, taking an active role on a team or committee as more information becomes available.

Lanny and Nancy



Chicken Chowder Sale Success!

TOL's May Chicken Chowder Sale was a wonderful success! Through the sale, we raised just under \$1,300. A portion of the proceeds will be sent to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia (ELCZa) to help support its pastors, who earn approximately \$50 per month. As Paul writes in Galatians 6:10, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Please continue to keep the ELCZa, its ministries, and its pastors in your prayers.

Another portion of the proceeds will help pay for TOL's new chowder equipment. Thank you to everyone who contributed toward the purchase of the new kettles and burners – they worked wonderfully and will serve us well for years to come!

We are also deeply grateful to the congregation for donating the ingredients for the chowder, as well as the cash donations used to purchase chicken and beef. Thank you as well to everyone who helped chop vegetables, prepare the chicken, make the stock, and assist during the sale itself. Chowder has become a beloved tradition at TOL, and it is wonderful to see so many volunteers helping to carry that tradition forward. At TOL, chowder is more than just soup – it is fellowship.

In Christ,
Matt

Trinity Tidings, June 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 TOL Sunday, June 7, 11:00 AM



ELCA Prayer Ventures, June 2026*

- † Give thanks to God for grandparents and older adults – their service and impact are significant. Pray that we support them with gratitude and encouragement as our siblings in Christ and as neighbors with wisdom, compassion and valuable gifts to contribute to the well-being and richness of congregations, communities and families.
- † Remember in prayer individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, that their faith, gifts and abilities will be valued and affirmed in the church and society. Give thanks for the work, services and advocacy of ELCA Disability Ministries and the Lutheran Services in America Disability Network.
- † *Juneteenth* This day of celebration, dating back to June 19, 1865, commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. Give thanks and praise to God for creating humankind in all its diversity, and ask God’s forgiveness for acquiescing to fear, suspicion, intolerance and unjust treatment of others. Pray for the Spirit to help us as we work to end racism and racial inequity in the church and society.
- † Pray that we will inspire others by exemplifying peace, justice, forgiveness, love and service in our communities, nation and world. Give thanks for ELCA justice and peace ministries and for resources, advocacy and initiatives that deepen our understanding of God’s justice.
- † *Mental Health Awareness Month* Pray for those who live with mental illness, that they will have access to appropriate medical help and will experience understanding, support, respect and total inclusion in the church and society as beloved and gifted children of God.
- † Pray that we will not accept violence as normal or too complex to confront and change. Thank God for the power and resources we have when communities work together to prevent violence and address its root causes.
- † Remember in prayer refugees, immigrants and asylum-seekers who fear war, violence, injustice, and political and religious persecution, and who seek safe, welcoming communities where they can flourish.

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.

The Support Group for Grieving Parents of children and grandchildren who have died meets on the 1st 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.

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

*ELCA Prayer Ventures, from www.elca.org. @Copyright & Trademark, 2026 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved.



www.trinityoldlutheran.com

June Mission: TOL Sandwich Ministry

“The TOL Sandwich Team Ministry has celebrated another anniversary! It has been four years since the start-up, and the “team” is still going strong. During this time, over 20,000 sandwiches have been made and delivered. We can be proud of this accomplishment. The Friends of the Night People, an agency on Hudson Street in Buffalo, is most appreciative. Buffalo has many hungry people who directly benefit. Thanks be to God that we can do this!” [Excerpt from Sharon’s article in the 2025 TOL Annual Report.]

The team makes 100 assorted sandwiches every week (bologna/cheese, deli turkey/cheese and peanut butter and jelly). Sandwiches are placed in separate plastic baggies and packed up for delivery by Dick and Lanny. New volunteers are always welcome! More information can be found in Sharon’s Annual Report article.

Your monetary support will help defray preparation costs. To make a donation, please use the marked envelopes found on the table in the narthex or use [Tithe.ly](https://tithely.com) through the TOL website. If using the mail, please enter “TOL Sandwich Ministry” on the check memo.

May Mission—Thank You!

Thank you for your donations to Family Justice Center of Erie County (FJC). Your support helps FJC continue its mission to provide services to victims of domestic violence.

† *Thursdays in Black* Pray for an end to gender violence and resolve to wear black every Thursday as a symbol of solidarity with the World Council of Churches’ global movement to resist attitudes and practices that permit violence and rape. Promise to advocate tirelessly for the safe, respectful treatment of women, men, boys and girls in homes, schools, workplaces and communities. [from: *ELCA Prayer Ventures, June 2026*]

Support for Local Food Pantries

Thank you for supporting the Community of Good Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo and Good Shepherd Lutheran’s pantry in Tonawanda—your donations 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).



My Musings by Diane Schmidtke

Wow!

I never know or plan what I'll write about each month for this column. I trust that the idea and the words will arrive before the Tidings' deadline! So far, so good...



Have you ever heard of the axolotl? It's a salamander, member of the amphibian family, known for its unique ability to regenerate many body parts. It is of great interest to scientists who are studying how this occurs and are hoping someday to apply what they discover to humans.

Recently, I happened upon a segment of Steve Hartman's "On the Road" where he interviewed Jessica Whited, a Harvard professor, who, with her team, is working diligently on this. Their government funding suddenly had been discontinued—so very disheartening.

Enter Maryanne Cullin, a 6-year-old from Springfield, Massachusetts who is in love with axolotls. She finds them adorable and impressive and is very worried about their endangered status. When she heard about the situation at Harvard, she took matters into her own hands. She held a fundraiser where she presented a power point about her beloved axolotl and raised \$1,000 for the Harvard research team. Professor Whited was overjoyed! When interviewed, she said:

"Sometimes you know who's fighting for you in life, and sometimes you don't, and that's always the time you pause and go, 'Wow!'"

Yes, indeed!

I have had a couple of ongoing health-related issues over the past year. The quote made me stop and consider all the known prayers and wishes, cards and emails, texts and calls, flowers and food, and offers of help that have come my way...so heartwarming and comforting.

But what about the well wishes that are unknown, the ones that embrace me without my knowledge, the ones that swirl me in serendipity? I take time to consider this and then feel even more blessed; I am wrapped in gratitude and grace as I say,

"Wow!"

Used with permission.

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 needs 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.



Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke (one more class before Fall)

Charlie decided to add a class on **Monday, June 1**. You're invited to join the class in the Fireside Room (or on Zoom) from **1:00 PM to 2:30 PM**. Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link. The topic is "Gospel of Mary Magdalene."



**Happy Father's Day!
Sunday, June 21**



Operation Christmas Child

The suggested donations for June are stuffed toys and dolls that are 10" or smaller. All donations can be placed in the bin labeled Operation Christmas Child located in the hallway. Thank you for your continued support!

Kelly and Debbie

TOL Theater Group Outing

We recently attended a hysterical performance of Dirty Rotten Scoundrels The Musical at the Ellicott Creek Playhouse on Saturday, May 2. It was a fun outing full of frivolity and fellowship. Plans are in the works to attend future performances. Stay tuned for more details! -- *Stephanie*

Niagara Chord Authority Spring Concert at TOL!

The acapella group is returning to Trinity Old Lutheran Church for a Spring Show, "Let the Music In," on **Saturday, June 6 at 7:00 PM**. We are so excited to sing for you as we have just returned from our regional contest with awards for "Most Improved Chorus" along with recognition for performance of our tunes! We would love to see you there. Tickets are \$10; children 10 and under are free. -- *Barb*

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.



Upcoming Events at TOL!

- ✓ **Saturday, September 19: 3rd Annual TOL Craft Show and Basket Raffle.** If you know of any crafters who might be interested, please let them know!
- ✓ **October 2-4: Adult Retreat at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center.** (Charlie Schmidtke has posted a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.)



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.

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

Part IV: Gospels (Continued)

Matthew. His name was Levi. Jesus may have changed his name to Matthew (just like we have nicknames). Or his name was Matthew and he was from the tribe of Levi (an important tribe in Judaism), so his nickname may have been Levi. He was a tax collector who would have been required to be fluent in Hebrew and Aramaic in order to communicate with others. He was probably from Capernaum (maybe he worked on import/export taxation).

Matthew is not mentioned after Pentecost, but scholars believe he was martyred around 60 CE at Nadabah in Ethiopia. He may have been one of the followers who stayed in Jerusalem with Peter, James and John and maybe returned to Galilee now and then before going to Ethiopia. He may have been the brother of James the lesser (the apostle), and brother of Joses/Joseph (the sons of Alphaeus and Mary).

Who wrote Matthew? It was written in Greek and there is no indication that Matthew would have been fluent in Greek. So, it is most likely that disciples of Matthew wrote it and used his name for credibility. The primary sources for the gospel came from the Gospel of Mark and the Q documents. Some scholars believe that Matthew's sermons or memoirs were the source for what are called the M source, or Special Matthew, a source that was unique to Matthew. So, the writers of Matthew may have had this Special Matthew material, oral traditions, the gospel of Mark and the Q documents as sources for their gospel.

Q Documents. Q stands for Quelle, meaning source. The early followers of Jesus saw him as a teacher concerned with living in troubled times. Initially, Jesus' death wasn't seen as divine, tragic or even salvific. The gospels changed the original stories and gave a narrative about who Jesus was and showed that he was our Savior. The Q documents are not intent on having a mission either for or against Jews or Gentiles. The sayings were not intent on transforming the world or creating a new religion. There was no "Christianity." In fact, that word, Christianity, came out of Antioch decades after the Resurrection. Of course, the sayings in the Q documents shift and change depending upon how the writer or speaker uses them. In the first decades before the gospel writings, there were two principal groups of followers (the Armenian, Eastern Orthodox, Egyptian and Indian churches came later). First, the Nazarenes were apostolically based, primarily in Galilee and Jerusalem. They believed all men should be circumcised; all should follow the Jewish laws; they were predominantly fishermen, the rural poor and workers in Jerusalem; they followed Jesus' words literally; they lived communally, met in homes and shared stories, they shared the Eucharist, but there were some differences between those in Galilee and those living in Judea. The second group is referred to as Hellenic followers (principally coming from Paul, Luke and Barnabas). They were more urban, influenced by Greek thinking, didn't believe circumcision was necessary and believed strongly in forgiveness. They would meet in Synagogues and homes; women were more involved; they spread throughout Syria, Asia Minor and Greece; they were more interpretive than literal; they were not as Jewishly based and they began to adopt Christianity to pagan traditions, e.g., Christmas coming from the Roman festival of Saturnalia.

Q sayings can be interpreted to mean that Jesus was focusing on an apocalyptic transformation of the world or that he was a teacher with a humane ethics. So, the divide between Jesus' message as salvific or wisdom based finds its roots in

the Q documents. Of note is that 35% of Thomas' sayings are found in the Q documents. This is the wisdom influence. The problem is that the Q documents were written over time and by different authors, so the messages are not consistent. It is difficult to know whether the apocalyptic message (the end of the world and last judgment) was meant to motivate people to good behavior and following Jesus or was it used to support the wisdom message.

It is unclear how the Q documents were used by those spreading the good news in the early decades of the church. It is also unclear whether Mark's gospel provided a narrative to the sayings in Q or did they stand alone for many of the early followers. In the early days, was the Jesus movement one of reform, or revolt, or apocalyptic, or educational, or all of them?

Matthew's gospel passages focus upon non-Jews participating in the nativity story. The escape to Egypt connects Jesus to Moses and Jewish freedom. Jesus has come to save us just as Moses saved the Jews. The Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer and the Golden Rule may be the most quoted passages of the gospels and may be the reason why Matthew is placed first among the four gospels. Matthew's gospel was written to make sure that Jesus' followers understood that he was the Messiah and that their faith is anchored in the OT. This was important because more and more of his followers were Gentiles. It was probably written 15 years after Mark's gospel around 85 CE.

Luke. He was from Antioch where Paul stayed after his conversion on the road to Damascus. He was Greek educated, like Paul. His gospel and the Acts of the Apostles were written in Greek as two volumes of the same book, but they are now separated in the New Testament. One of the underlying themes of The Acts is why did a Jewish Messiah become the leader of a Gentile church. Luke's intent was to convince people to follow Jesus, especially Gentiles. The word Christian began in Antioch and was used to distinguish Jesus from Judaism and to indicate that people should follow Jesus, not the Jewish Laws. The books were written between 80-110 AD and were probably edited in the 2nd century by some of Luke's disciples. After the destruction of the Temple (70 CE) and the Jewish diaspora, the church became predominantly Gentile. It is possible that the Gospel was written first and earlier when Luke was with Paul in Rome and he or others wrote Acts much later.

Luke was probably a physician in the Greek style, meaning he studied Philosophy and classical literature. He started with Paul in Troas and traveled with him to Philippi, Jerusalem, throughout Caesarea, then to Rome. In Rome he may have served as Paul's lawyer and certainly as his physician because Paul was beaten, whipped, imprisoned, and stoned after being shipwrecked three times. It is unlikely that Luke wrote both the gospel and Acts; in fact, he may not have written either one, although he may have written a draft for both that was edited later.

Where did he get historical information about Jesus, including the nativity story? He would have heard the parables and stories second hand from the oral tradition of the early followers of Jesus. Luke's story has no Magi and no escape to Egypt. He includes shepherds of both sheep and goats. The shepherds in Luke illustrate a miraculous birth; one that is divinely ordained and blessed; and Jesus' destiny is to become the Good Shepherd. His message started with the poor and common folks. Luke's story adds divinity to Jesus' humanity. Luke's sources would have included oral tradition, the Gospel of Mark, and the Q documents.

Used with permission.