

Trinity Tidings



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

The Reverend Frederick W. Kopp
Pastor

Volume 63

March 2023

Number 3

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

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:15-16

As we find out in these 40 days of Lent, Jesus understands us and suffering. Because of this, we are encouraged by the author of Hebrews to approach Jesus with boldness.

When we are struggling with guilt, shame, or a sin we have committed, we have a confidant to receive our confession and who promises us mercy. When folk find themselves "in too deep" we have a God who reaches into the darkness and gives us a hand to come out.

During Lent we focus on the power of Jesus and God's grace to lift us up and challenge us to move towards health and wholeness. We proclaim in Psalm 51. "Create in me a clean heart, Oh Lord." Every week we are encouraged to leave our "baggage" at the foot of the cross and leave worship as a "new creation."

Thanks be to God for the ability to start new with Jesus and help us use this blessing to heal and strengthen ourselves and our relationships with our fellow humans.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

I WILL NEVER
LEAVE YOU
Nor Forsake
YOU
HEBREWS 13:5

Bible Study: Discover the Book of Hebrews

Pastor Fred continues his Bible study on **Friday mornings (10:00 AM to 11:30 AM)** at Augustana Lutheran Church. You can attend either on Zoom or in person. Please join us for the remaining two classes (**March 3 and 10**).

Lenten Collection

During Lent, Pastor Jeremiah Smith (Niagara Frontier Conference Dean) has invited congregations to join in a friendly "competition"—and TOL has accepted the challenge.

This year's project is "RIP Medical Debt" (through a non-profit, medical debt-reduction organization) that assists New Yorkers facing overwhelming medical debt. For every \$100 donated, it can lead to \$10,000 forgiven. The goal is to reach \$10,000. For more information about the organization, please visit <https://ripmedicaldebt.org>. Watch for more details in the Sunday bulletins.



This issue contains the final installment of Charlie Schmidtke's Class Study Notes on Islam. His new series on "Who was the Real Jesus" will begin with the April *Tidings*.

No "Table Talk" in March!

It will resume on Wednesday, April 12 at 6:30 PM.

Annual Congregational Meeting & Potluck Lunch

Our annual meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 5**, following worship (in-church or on Zoom). The meeting will be preceded by a Potluck Lunch in the Fellowship Hall. Please use the sign-up sheet if you plan to bring a dish or dessert. Hope all are able to join us!

Valentines & Pizza Party Thank You

Wow, what a great turnout for our fellowship event! Delicious pizza and yummy desserts were enjoyed by all. It felt wonderful to be able to get everyone together again and reconnect after those long Covid years apart.

Thank you to all those who attended—and thank you to those who helped with set up, clean up, and donated refreshments. Without all of you these events would not be so successful.

I am so proud to be part of this Church family community!

In Christian Fellowship,
Kelly

Thank You...to the TOL choir for remembering Ukraine through song during worship on Sunday, February 12. Just as they did last year, the choir sang "By Our Love." At that time, "Diane Schmidtke described the choice as a tribute to Ukraine; that with heavy hearts 'we raise our voices in human connection.'"



♪ "If you're a singer, please join us!" ♪

TOL Choir

"Souper Bowl of Caring"

Thank you for your continued support! The food pantry at Good Shepherd LC in Tonawanda will greatly benefit from your donations. A big Thank You to Frank and Karen for delivering the 16 bags of groceries and monetary donations!

Trinity Tidings, March 2023

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



Mid-week Lenten Services & Soup Suppers

Below is the schedule of Wednesday Lenten soup suppers (6:00 PM) and worship services (7:00 PM) at TOL and area Lutheran churches.

March 1	Trinity Old Lutheran
March 8	Abiding Savior Lutheran (1534 Ruie Road, North Tonawanda)
March 15	Augustana Lutheran (3143 Eggert Road, Tonawanda)
March 22	Good Shepherd Lutheran (2669 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda)
March 29	St. Martin Lutheran (322 Old Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda)

ELCA Prayer Ventures, March 2023

Give thanks for mid-week Lenten meals that draw us together, that we might reflect on our humanness, find hope and comfort in God's love and mercy, and strengthen our unity as children of God and siblings in Christ.

©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.

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.

Friends of Night People Collection

- 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.

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



February Mission

Thank you for your donations to Hearts and Hands: Faith in Action. Your continued support of this organization is greatly appreciated!

March Mission: Family Justice Center of Erie County

"We have a few strong and enduring beliefs that guide the rightness of our decisions. They are our core values and are grounded in zero tolerance for domestic violence and absolute confidentiality for our clients." A number of Core Values include: "safety is a basic human right; diversity and difference is valued; the cycle of relationship abuse must be broken."

"Guiding Principle: Easily accessible services remove barriers and effect change."

[from: www.fjcsafe.org]

To make a donation, please use the marked envelopes found on the table in the narthex or use Tithe.ly through the TOL website. If using the mail, please enter "Family Justice Center" on the check memo.

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

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

ELCA Prayer Ventures, March 2023

- † **Woman's History Month** Remember, celebrate and give thanks for the contributions, achievements, leadership, wisdom and gifts of women and girls throughout history in the church, our communities and the world.
- † In January there were 52 mass shootings in our nation. Pray that God will hear our yearning for the peace, safety and transformation of our society for the sake of protecting life. Ask the Spirit to awaken us from the fear, numbness and feelings of powerlessness that can discourage us from taking risks and making sacrifices that will lead to consequential change in our nation.
- † Pray for people and communities impacted by flooding and storms in California and by tornadoes, flooding and severe weather across the southern United States. Remember those who grieve the loss of loved ones and homes, those suffering trauma and those in the long process of recovery, especially those without shelter and most vulnerable.
- † Pray that the invasion of Ukraine will end and that Russia will halt the violence that stands in the way of peace, reconciliation, recovery and healing. Pray especially for those who suffer most from the unrelenting misery, violence and destruction.
- † Remember in prayer people and communities recovering from the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. Ask God to sustain their hope, ease their grief and give them the resources they need for relief and rebuilding, especially in remote areas.
- † Pray that, as our neighbors suffer misfortune, poverty, hunger, homelessness or physical or mental illness, we will not judge them, blame them or decide where they do and don't belong but will instead respond as Jesus did, with boundless mercy, respect, care and hospitality.

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

Seasons' Readings—Spring!

Is it time to thin-out your collection of books or puzzles? If so, consider donating them to the TOL Book Sale! Please leave them in the box located in front of the desk in the Resource Room.

While you're there, please take a look at the items available!



Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Adult Ed. Classes led by Charlie Schmidtke Monday Afternoons at 1:00 PM

This month we will continue our review of some biblical passages and sources not included in the bible as we look at who the "Real Jesus" was.



All are welcome to join us in the TOL Fireside Room and also on Zoom. (Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link.) The updated schedule is listed below.

Mar. 20	The Armenian Christian Church
Mar. 27	Mary Magdalene and Jesus
Apr. 10	What the Q documents tell us
Apr. 24	How the Gospels were selected and what was lost
May 8	The Council of Nicea and how Jesus was defined



Easter Plants

Easter Sunday is April 9. During March, Barb will place a sign-up sheet on the main bulletin board for those wishing to purchase plants. Available this year are: tulips, mums, lilies, and hyacinths. Please contact Barb if you need any further information.

Operation Christmas Child

The suggested donations for March are combs, brushes, hair items, barrettes, small cosmetic bags or drawstring backpacks.

Although girls appreciate these items (hair items/barrettes/cosmetic bag) more than boys, the combs, brushes, and drawstring backpacks are needed by all.

My own granddaughter's hair is constantly in her face unless it is put into a ponytail. So I see how much hair items would be appreciated by little girls. She also likes keeping her "beauty supplies" all together in some kind of zippered bag.



If you can help with any of the above items during the month of March, we would greatly appreciate it. They can be placed in the box labeled Operation Christmas Child located in the narthex.

Thank you so much!
Kelly and Debbie

"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.



Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke
Study Notes: Islam

Part 6 - Islamic Sects

Ali was Mohammad's cousin and son-in-law (he married Fatima, daughter of Mohammad and Khadijah). He was the first male follower and became the fourth Caliph and first Imam of the **Shiites**. The word Shia in Arabic means a group or supportive party of people. There were 7 or 12 legitimate leaders for Islam, which leads to divisions among the Shiites. The leaders were sinless by nature and their authority was infallible and came from God. Shiites believe that Mohammad appointed Ali as his successor when he gave his final speech. This claim is not accepted by most Muslims or historians. The leaders should be descendants of Mohammad. The 7 or 12 Imams are often seen as saints and pilgrimages to their tombs or shrines is a means for getting divine intervention. Today, the split between 7ers and 12ers continues. Some 12ers believe that the last Imam is still alive and is living in seclusion. They are awaiting his return and a restoration of Justice on earth. Iran is a majority Shiite country, but Shiites comprise less than 20% of all Muslims worldwide. All Shiites reject the belief in a meeting in which Abu Bakr was named Mohammad's successor. Ali was assassinated by a group who had originally been his followers. They believed that everyone involved in the civil war had become disbelievers and could only be redeemed by repenting their ways. Their version of Shia only exists in Yemen and Oman.

Abu Bakr was Mohammad's best friend and father-in-law. He led the group of Mohammad's most pious companions. He was elected by the leaders and became the first Caliph at a meeting in Saqifah. The word Sunni in Arabic means one who follows the traditions of the Prophet. **Sunnis** believe that the leaders are to be selected by consensus because there is no birthright for a leader. Trust is earned and can be taken away by the people. Sunnis comprise about 75-80% of the world's population of Muslims. There is an ongoing controversy over whether Mohammad or Abu Bakr completed the Quran. Sunnis are not in agreement over this issue. The Sunni/Shiite split caused a civil war with many complicated twists and turns over the centuries.

Uthman was another leader who emerged after Mohammad died. He canonized the version of the Quran that exists today. He had all personal copies burned because they may have contained errors. The Quran is written in Arabic and uses one dialect as the standard version. Translations of the Quran are never authorized by any Sect.

The following is a sample of how cultures and countries diversify the Muslim world.

- **Indonesia** (the third largest population in world) is a non-Arab, non-middle east country which has the largest Muslim population in the world (87% is Muslim). The majority of the population is Sunni (99% of the Muslims) but has distinctive schools of jurisprudence. The range is from those who closely adhere to orthodox theology while still embracing modern learning and those who tend to follow the interpretations of local religious leaders and teachers. Indonesians are split into the Orthodox Muslims and those whose lifestyles are oriented toward non-Islamic cultures, usually adaptations

influenced by local cultures and perceptions (especially true in the archipelago islands).

- **Iran** is Persian, Shiite, ethnically and religiously isolated from other Islamic states. It is also governed by Sharia Law.
- **Turkey** is a non-Arab, Sunni, secular state.
- In the **United States** there are 5-10 million Muslims. Some are Arab, most are not. Most Muslims in the US are either converts or immigrants. Most Arab Americans are Christian.
- **Saudi Arabia** is predominantly Wahhabi, a very traditional form of Islam. Wahhab lived in the 18th century and was known for his strict observance of the Quran. He rejected all forms of polytheism including the veneration of saints. (Christianity is considered polytheistic because of the Trinity.) They advocate a return to the original form of Islam by adopting an Islamic Canon Law to govern the country. The Caliphates have had a long history, but they no longer exist in Islam. Wahabi gave Saudi Arabia a new religious identity. It believes that Islam should return to its "pure" form as practiced in the 7th century (Arab based practices). They do not accept Shiites as Muslims.
- **Kurds** are an Iranian-based ethnic group with four language dialects which are neither Arabic nor Iranian. Originally, they were Iranian nomads. They comprise 18% of the population in Turkey, 17% of Iraq, 10% of Iran, an unknown percentage in Syria and 1.3 million living throughout Europe. The majority are Sunni, with some Shiite and some Sufi.
- **Hezbollah** is a militant form of Iranian-based Shiism. They dominate Lebanon's government and is dedicated to destroying Israel. They have developed many humanitarian programs to try and change their image.
- **Pakistan** was created for Muslims during the crisis between Hindus and Muslims in India. It was seen to be a refuge for Muslims more than as an Islamic State. It is bordered by India in which Muslim ways were relaxed and tolerant and Afghanistan, which has rigid fundamentalist leaders along the border. Pakistan has a diverse population of ethnic groups which creates internal conflicts. A radical form of Islam has emerged in Pakistan with 60% of the radicals belonging to a sect called Deobandi. It is an austere form of Islam using traditional views of Sharia Law. It rejects any form of modernity and seeks a return to 7th century values. It does NOT support extremist forms of violence, however. The majority of the total population of Pakistan remains moderate, but silent. Most are the Barlevi sect which is a combination of Sufi and Hindu practices. The Sufis are a mystic form of Islam, which is peaceful, not violent, reflective and compassionate.
- **Nigeria** has a majority Islamic population in the north of the country. Sharia Law has become secular law in this area. It is imposed to "fight crime and corruption." The people believe that Sharia is actually freeing and not seen as an imposition. They completely espouse an eye for an eye system of justice.

Used with permission.