



Pastor's Ponderings

"Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10: 24-25

By now you know that I am retiring in July and most likely moving to Montana a little while after that. That is in the future, even though it is coming fast. Change will always occur and Jesus knew this and the early church did as well. We can worry or focus on the change, or we can be about ministry.

I think the preacher of Hebrews in the above quote has it right. We are always to be about love and good deeds. We are always to be about building community where we find ourselves. We are also called to be cheerleaders or encouragers of those who serve others. The others in the Bible, specifically in Matthew 25, are the least of these. They are called that because the least do not have what we have. Therefore, we are to focus our attention and our ministry on them; the naked, the sick, the imprisoned, the thirsty, the stranger, the homeless, the hungry and others who are scapegoated, forgotten or are struggling in our country or the world. Along with our focus, we are to encourage our community to begin and continue ministries that help us love our neighbors and do good deeds.



So let us continue to come together as a community amidst change and uncertainty and serve to the Glory of God.

Being provoked and provoking, I remain,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

Sermon Discussion/Input with Pastor Fred Wednesday, May 27 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.

ELCA Prayer Ventures, May 2026*

Pray for leaders, voting members and others as they gather for the Upstate New York Synod assembly, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel, serve our neighbors in need and work for justice and peace.



Chicken Chowder Fundraiser - May 16!

TOL's bi-annual chicken chowder fundraiser will take place on **Saturday, May 16 at Noon**. Chowder will be sold at the price of \$8 per quart.

A portion of the proceeds will be used to purchase new 80-quart stainless steel chowder kettles and heating elements. Approximately \$750 is needed to purchase two kettles and two outdoor burners. Having our own equipment at TOL will allow us to hold many more chowder sales in the future. The remaining proceeds will support TOL and its ministries.

Thank you to all who signed up to donate ingredients. Please bring your canned/dry ingredients to church no later than **Sunday, May 10** and place them in the specially-marked ingredient bin in the narthex. Fresh ingredients (potatoes, onions, carrots, celery) should be brought to church the week of May 11, but no later than Thursday, May 14, and left in the Fellowship Hall kitchen.

Volunteers are needed for our chowder preparation day on **Friday, May 15 (9:00 AM) and the day of the sale (8:00 AM to 1:00 PM)**. A sign-up sheet is available on the main bulletin board. For more information, please contact Matt.

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.

Upcoming Events at TOL!

- **Saturday, September 19:** 3rd Annual TOL Craft Show and Basket Raffle
- **October 2-4:** Adult Retreat at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center. (Charlie Schmidtke has posted a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.)

Watch for more details in the Sunday Bulletins and Trinity Tidings!

Three-Congregation Workshop and Worship

- ♥ **Workshop** at Good Shepherd, **May 2 from 9:30 AM TO 2:30 PM**. All members and friends of TOL are invited to this visioning and mission exploration workshop. Lunch will be served. Please use the sign-up sheet in the narthex if you plan to attend.
- † **Worship** at Good Shepherd, **Sunday, May 3 at 10:00 AM** (Note: no worship at TOL)

Trinity Tidings, May 2026

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

Three-Congregation Worship at Good Shepherd LC
2669 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda
Sunday, May 3 at 10:00 AM
(No service at TOL.)



ELCA Prayer Ventures, May 2026*

- † “Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me” (Psalm 31:2). Give thanks that God is with us through every twist and turn of life, strengthening our faith, inspiring our courage, guiding our journeys and renewing our spirit.
- † Pray for an end to war and conflict, that we might focus our attention and resources on those who are suffering, living in fear, yearning for stability or pining for home.
- † Pray for those who are suffering, grieving or seeking help. Ask the Spirit to guide your efforts as you respond not with judgement but with love, care and sensitivity.
- † Ask God to bless the work of ELCA Global Mission, Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA Advocacy Network, AMMPARO, ELCA Racial Justice Ministries and other programs and ministries of our church.
- † Remember in prayer students departing from their colleges or universities to seek employment, pursue their vocations, serve as volunteers, raise families, enlist in military service or otherwise face the future.
- † *Ascension of Our Lord* Ask for God’s patience as our faith matures, deepening our appreciation for what God has given all humanity through Jesus Christ. Pray that the Spirit will clarify for us God’s enduring love and forgiveness, the gift of salvation and how we might live in community.
- † Pray for our siblings in Christ, both in our congregations and around the world, who share our heritage and accompany us in our baptismal journeys as we do God’s work in the world together.
- † Pray that we will open our senses to the beauty, diversity and mysteries of creation – from microbes in the soil to vast mountain ranges to distant galaxies. Give thanks for God’s boundless power and rejoice at God’s handiwork in nature.

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

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



May Mission: Family Justice Center of Erie County (FJC)

The organization opened its doors in 2006 and has assisted thousands of local clients dealing with domestic and family violence. “Our comprehensive and collaborative service model tears down barriers to service, enabling our clients to heal and cultivate hope.”

“Core Values:

- Safety is a basic human right.
- Clients can take control of their lives.
- Collaboration and teamwork provide for optimal service delivery.
- Diversity and difference is valued.
- The cycle of relationship abuse must be broken.
- Offenders must be held accountable.
- Domestic violence is preventable.

[from: www.fjcsafe.org, 2026]

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.

April Mission: Thank You

Thank you for your continued support of the DRIVE Program at Augustana that assists immigrants and refugees with obtaining learners’ permits and drivers’ licenses through instruction and training. Your donations will help provide them with easier access to employment, healthcare, schools, neighborhoods and community activities.

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. Please place your donations in the narthex shopping cart or leave them in the elevator entrance during the week (Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:00 AM to Noon). Thank you!



Pizza Party! Mark your calendars for **June 7** for a Pizza Party following the worship service. All are welcome!

My Musings by Diane Schmidtke

Perhaps Love....

There are unexpected moments when things just seem to come together.

On Sunday, March 15 the choir sang an anthem called "By Our Love" written by Christy Nockels:

"...The time is now. Come church arise. Lead with His hands. See with His eyes.
Bind it around you. Let it never leave you.
And they will know us by our love..."

These words rang throughout the sanctuary and brought joy to both the choir and the congregation. There was spontaneous cheering and applause. The song has become an ear worm in my head. Each time I hum it, I feel the words. I am inspired to try harder, be a bit kinder, smile more, reach out...

Recently, and by chance, I have heard the song "Perhaps Love," several times. Written and sung by John Denver for his wife, Annie, he said it was his very best song. It came to him unexpectedly in 1981 when he was struggling and sad. While driving alone to Los Angeles, the song manifested:

"Perhaps love is like a resting place
a shelter from the storm
it exists to give you comfort, it is there to keep you warm.
And in those times of trouble when you are most alone
the memory of love will bring you home..."

We have moved from a cold, windy, snowy winter into Spring and from Lent into Easter. We hope to be surrounded by warmth as the days move on, and we definitely are surrounded by love through the promises of God in Jesus, his life and resurrection.

In this world of
trouble and turmoil,
struggle and sorrow,
confusion and collision,
there is LOVE.



"Bind it around you. Let it never leave you..."

Used with permission.

Thank You!

- ♥ On Sunday, April 12, we welcomed guest musician Robert to worship. It was once again a blessing to have Robert playing his cello while accompanied by his grandmother, Sue, at the piano. They have played together at many TOL services over the years. What a wonderful selection that Sue chose for the Postlude—"Blessed be the Name"—a most joyful, uplifting end to worship! Thank you Sue and Robert!
- ♥ On Sunday, April 12, Karen let everyone know that 54 boxes of healthy cereals had been collected for the pantry at Good Shepherd. Thank you for your donations!
- ♥ Thank You to the Weaver's Guild for donating a used stove for the Fellowship Hall kitchen. A big Thank You to Frank and Eric for installing the stove!



Mother's Day, May 10

ELCA Prayer Ventures, May 2026*

- † Memorial Day Remember, mourn and give thanks for those in the military who gave their lives for justice, peace and the freedom of our country and all nations. Pray for the safety of those currently serving in the military and for the well-being of their families.
- † Day of Pentecost Give thanks for the Holy Spirit, through which we invite people of all nations, races, genders, cultures, languages and ages to believe in God's love, mercy and presence in the world. Praise God for the rich diversity of humanity, which yields a variety of gifts for sharing the gospel, serving our neighbors and growing the church.
- † Pray for the Spirit to stir in us a spirit of love, mercy and peace that prevails when conflicts and personal differences motivate us to harm, discredit or dismiss one another.



Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke

You're invited to join the last class until Fall on **Monday, May 11**. The group meets 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 "Spain and France — James (Major) and Mary Magdalene."



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 is in need of 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.



Operation Christmas Child

The suggested donations for May are washcloths and dental floss. Also, we are always in need of empty baskets (new or used in good condition) for our basket raffle in September. We put quite a few baskets together ourselves and they are much-needed items.

All donations can be placed in the Operation Christmas Child bin located in the main hallway. Thank you for your support!

Kelly and Debbie

Thank You!

- ♥ Easter Joy!! Thank you to all who purchased Easter plants for the sanctuary; and for the special music offered by the TOL Voice and Bell Choirs, as well as Matt and Lacy's accompaniment.
- ♥ Thank you, thank you to all who generously helped at our Lenten soup dinner. To the soup/chili makers, the set-up/clean-up crews, the dessert makers, and to Sharon for bringing the bread/butter. I appreciate each and every one of you!!! With a total of 50 guests at our dinner, we had plenty of food and drinks for everyone thanks to all of you.--*Kelly*

Part IV: The Gospels

Gospels. These are writings of the "Good News" about Jesus. There were so many contenders for inclusion and we have discussed in other issues a number of the gospels excluded from the canon. The Council of Nicaea did not close the canon and end all debates, but it clearly set the table for what was acceptable to the church leaders attending the Council. We'll discuss the Council in a later issue. Let's talk about the four gospels that were included. I'll cover them in the order they were written, not the order that we find in the bible. The first three are called Synoptic Gospels because they are so similar in structure, content and wording. John's gospel is very distinct.

Mark. There was no apostle named Mark, but there was a Mark who was included in the 70 disciples sent to preach the word. The consensus is that the writer was anonymous but the gospel has been attributed to John Mark. It was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, maybe in Rome. The gospel was the first one of the gospels. John Mark was an interpreter and friend of Peter, and he went with Peter to Rome. Peter was martyred in Rome somewhere between 64 and 68 CE. The Gospel of Mark has the most references to Peter and clearly signifies Peter as the leader of the apostles. This emphasis is one of the reasons that John Mark is considered to be the author by many scholars and theologians, although there remains considerable debate today about whether he really was the author. However, it seems as if John Mark's mother owned the room where the Last Supper took place and where the apostles hid after the crucifixion. Barnabas was a close friend of Mark, and Peter was a cousin of Barnabas' father. John Mark went with Barnabas and Paul and then with Peter to Rome. The Coptic Church believes that John Mark went to Egypt and founded the Coptic Church. They believe that he was an African Jewish native. His family's home was burned and they moved to Jerusalem where he learned Greek and Latin.

One of the major debates about this gospel and all the others centers on what sources were used.

Divine Revelation. A common belief is that the words of the gospels (and even the other books of the bible) are given to the authors directly from God. God divinely reveals to the authors what they are to write. In this case, the gospels can be taken literally because they are words from God. Most scholars do not start from this belief; rather, they will examine evidence, especially historical documents and the culture and language of the time, that helps interpret the gospels. Theologians are split because some will begin with the belief in Divine Revelation, while others will take a more scholarly approach. Note: Divine Revelation and divine inspiration are not necessarily the same. Divine revelation means God reveals the true words to the author, while divine inspiration is something that can occur to anyone. Being divinely inspired does not guarantee that the inspiration is literally what God has said. If you believe in Divine Revelation, then the words of the Gospels should be taken as literally true—God's words are the truth. If Divine Revelation gives the absolute truth, then you don't need to listen to anything else I have to say because my assumption is that the gospels are words **about** Jesus and God, not **from** God. Thus, they are words about Jesus, the Good News, and God's expectations for the faithful. Since they are words about God and Jesus and not their words directly, then understanding the other possible sources for these words makes sense. One of my issues with divine revelation rests in the following: if the gospels are the words given directly by God, then why are

there four different versions of Jesus' resurrection and why do we have Matthew's gospel telling us that Jesus and his parents went to Egypt, while Luke's gospel tells us that they went to Nazareth? Why would God reveal such inconsistencies? So, I'm assuming that a literal reading of the gospels may be problematic and that there are other sources that helped and inspired the gospel writers. I want to be clear that my comments are opposed to traditional Roman Catholic doctrine.

Oral tradition. Since Pentecost, Jesus' followers began spreading the Good News. At first there were no creeds, no writings, few Gentiles, Saul was persecuting those Jews who were following Jesus and his followers were basically found in Galilee and Judea. The primary belief was that Jesus' return was imminent and he would bring a new world order. Over the first few decades after Pentecost the stories of Jesus began to spread throughout the Mediterranean world and beyond. The center for Jesus' followers began in Jerusalem with James, his brother, and Peter and John organizing the church. They set up a community in which the people shared their possessions and gave food, shelter and clothing to people in need. For them, following Jesus meant being a good Jew first. (Luke outlines this activity in the book of Acts.) As the apostles began to spread throughout the Mediterranean area and Saul became Paul and began spreading the good news throughout Asia Minor and Greece, the oral tradition became more influential. There still were no creeds and the first writings were from Paul or his disciples to particular churches. At first, these writings weren't widely spread. So, the Oral Tradition became the primary source for believers. Of course, the problem with oral tradition was the diversity of messages and the variety of beliefs about Jesus and how his followers were to behave. In fact, we've seen that there were beliefs that Jesus was two persons (a divine logos and a human body), or that he was one person with two natures (divine and human) or that he had one nature with two characteristics (divine and human) or that he was merely divine and used a body to get his message across to humans. Was Jesus' return imminent or was 1,000 years like one day to God? There is no doubt that oral tradition was a significant source of information for Jesus' followers. This was especially true in the first few decades after his death, since the first writings didn't occur until 30 or 40 years after the Resurrection. In addition to the oral tradition, we have also seen that there were different centers for Christianity (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Byzantium/Constantinople, Armenia, and India). This diversity became a problem for Constantine, the Emperor of Rome, who was preoccupied with order; thus, he called the Council of Nicaea to organize Christianity and establish what the "real," "true" beliefs should be. Thus, we have the Nicene Creed which outlines what is true and acceptable for Jesus' followers. We'll talk about the Council in a later issue.

Other writings. There is some evidence that Peter's sermons may have been written down by John Mark and he used them to help put together his gospel. Did any of the other gospels or letters not included in the bible have an influence on the gospel writers? That is very difficult to know. The other gospels would also have the sources that Mark had. In addition, since Mark was the first gospel written, it is very likely that Matthew and Luke based their narratives on his gospel. This use of common sources and using Mark's gospel explains why Matthew, Mark and Luke are synoptic—similar in theme and story lines. They share many miracle stories and parables. Often bibles will give cross references among these three gospels. I'll review the other gospels next month.

Used with permission.