



Pastor's Ponderings

"I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."
(Genesis 9:13)

On my way to work, I saw a rainbow! It started faintly, then it became a bright, full rainbow! I needed this sign because I am getting overwhelmed with my friends and family being scared and hurt by our government's recent actions.

Many of these friends and family are directly impacted by the non-debated actions of this administration. My friends who are immigrants and asylum seekers are scared, even though they have the correct papers and have been vetted, but do not have a green card yet. My family and friends who are part of the LGBTQAI+ community are afraid that basic human rights will be taken away, and they are worried about their own and their families' futures. Many current leaders seem to be less welcoming and accepting of these peaceful/respectful/beautiful people. Even though we have a representative government, which can be plodding and slow at times, I am not seeing our representatives debate or seemingly address the changes taking place.

A family member of mine is employed at the United States Institute of Peace, which was set up in the 1980's to be a separate, nonprofit agency, pursuing peaceful measures in the world. This agency is bipartisan and not directly connected to the federal government. It has been taken over and is being dismantled. Civil servants are seemingly being treated like criminals. So, I need a rainbow to help me move forward in hope.

I hope that more people will be made aware of the hundreds of thousands of people and their families being impacted by cold and uncaring actions. As I move forward, I will try to emulate Jesus' statement to his disciples to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves." (Matthew 10:16). I will try to make an impact locally with the least of these in our community and move toward a future where Jesus' mission of service and love is done, and is reflected in my life and my community.

May God bless you and may the rainbows in your life keep you going and ground you in the grace and love of God.

Pastor Fred Kopp
he/him/his

Sermon Discussion/Input with Pastor Fred Wednesday, April 23 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.

Support Group for Grieving Parents

This group is specifically for parents of children and grandchildren who have died. It meets each month in the Fireside Room on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday (10:00 AM to 11:30 AM) and also on Zoom. Charlie and Diane and Jean coordinate the group. Everyone's grief is unique. Being able to talk about our children or grandchildren (of any age) in a safe space is a gift. For more information please call 716-694-1335.



Mid-Week Lenten Soup Suppers and Worship Services

Below is the remaining schedule of Wednesday Lenten soup suppers (6:00 PM) and worship services (6:30 PM). The theme is "Everything in Between."

This year's Lenten Collection will be to support the newly-formed "Refugee Partnership of WNY—Crisis Response" fundraising (a collaboration between Catholic Charities of Buffalo, International Institute of Buffalo, Jericho Road Community Health Center, Jewish Family Services of WNY, and Journey's End Refugee Services).

April 2 Trinity Old Lutheran
Topic: Lost and Found

April 9 St. Martin Lutheran
(322 Old Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda)
Topic: Faith and Works

Note: TOL will be hosting the Mid-Week Lenten soup supper on **Wednesday, April 2**. If you are able to help with making soups or desserts, please use the sign-up sheet on the main bulletin board. Thank you so much!



Guest Speaker Night!

Hosted by the TOL Women's Group (WWI)

All ladies are invited to join us on **Tuesday, May 13 at 7:00 PM** with Charlie Schmidtke as our guest speaker. I'm sure it will be a fun and enlightening evening! Please sign up on the main bulletin board.

Kelly



Deadline for Easter Plants!

For anyone wishing to purchase a hyacinth or Easter lily, please use the sign-up sheet on the main bulletin board. The **deadline is Sunday, April 13**. If you have any questions, please speak to Barb.

Trinity Tidings, April 2025

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



Holy Week Worship Schedule

Palm Sunday, April 13, TOL at 11:00 AM
Holy Thursday, April 17, St. Martin LC, 7:00 PM

Good Friday, April 18
(Tenebrae Service, Augustana LC, 11:00 AM)
(Tenebrae Service, TOL, 7:00 PM)



Easter Sunday, April 20

TOL at 11:00 AM
Augustana LC at 9:30 AM

Wishing everyone a Blessed Easter!

ELCA Prayer Ventures, April 2025*

- † Pray for lasting peace between nations and for the healing of people who suffer conflict, war and violence, especially in Ukraine, Russia, Gaza, Israel, Syria, Haiti, Myanmar and regions of Africa.
- † Pray for a spirit of humble generosity that recognizes and encourages the diverse gifts and contributions of our siblings in Christ, who give as they are able and are inspired by their gratitude towards and love for God.
- † Seek God's forgiveness and mercy for the times when we have hurt, offended or demeaned others, intentionally or unintentionally. Pray for the Spirit to grant us humility, penitent hearts and a compassion that stirs us to make amends and heal broken relationships.
- † Pray to the Lord for comfort, strength and renewed faith when you feel broken and worn-out.
- † Ask the Spirit for a faith that is certain and resilient, even when we don't fully understand or appreciate what God has done for humanity through Jesus Christ.
- † When you reflect on who might need your presence, comfort and reassuring words of love.
- † Pledge to bear hope, grace and newness in Christ to our neighbors in need, especially those who are poor, hungry, sick, imprisoned, unemployed or plagued by war or domestic conflict.

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, 2025 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved.

Mission for April: Augustana LC Driver (DRIVE) Program

This one-of-a-kind program began in 2007 at Augustana LC, led by Pastor Johanna, assists immigrants and refugees in obtaining Learners' Permits and driver instruction training, which enables them to more easily access employment, healthcare, schools, neighborhoods, and to participate in community activities.

From Pastor Johanna
(www.augustanaonline.org/outreach)

"Thank you for helping so many immigrants and refugees receive their learner permits and learn to drive so that they can: go to school, go to work, go to the grocery store, pick up their children, take their children to appointments and activities and so much more! It is so important to them. They are very thankful. Drive safely!" *Johanna*

Along with rising interest/participation in RIDE, costs rise as well. DRIVE also receives grant funding from Lutheran Charities of WNY. Your donations are most welcome! For more information, please speak to Pastor Fred or Pastor Johanna, or visit the Augustana website.

For your monetary donations, 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 "RIDE" on the check memo.

March Mission: ELCA Disaster Response, CA Wildfires

Thank you for your donations to support ELCA's response to the deadly and catastrophic wildfires in Los Angeles County, CA in January. Please pray for all who were impacted by the disaster and for all who continue to recover and rebuild their lives. ELCA's presence remains until the work is completed.

Support for Local Food Pantries

Your donations to assist the Community of Good Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo and Good Shepherd Lutheran's pantry in Tonawanda are greatly appreciated. Please place 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). Thank you!



Arbor Day, April 18
Earth Day, April 22



My Musings
by Diane Schmidtke

Just Peachy



We have a peach tree in our front yard. Almost every year it gifts us with hundreds of peaches. They all ripen at almost the same time so we scurry to pick and eat and share. This occurs toward the end of

August into September. Last year we were on a cruise to Norway and Scotland with our Dutch friends when the peaches were ready for harvest. We were able to pick about six dozen before we left. I had no time to peel and slice for freezing, but I googled and found out that you could freeze the peaches whole—right from the tree.

So I popped peaches into six bags in the basement freezer—and promptly forgot about them. Every now and then they would stare me in the face when I went to pull out some chicken or veggies for dinner. “I should do something with these peaches” was my thought, and then I’d walk upstairs and forget about them again. That is, until today, March 11, 2025.

It is a mild, sunny, pre-Spring day. Daffodils are peeking through the ground around our peach tree. Aha! Today I will thaw some peaches and make peach crisp!

The result: thawed peaches are easy to peel without a knife, a bit tart, but still carrying with them the magic of a summer day. Bring on the cobbler, the shortcake, the pie and the cream!!

Used with permission.

Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke

You’re invited to join the class on Monday afternoons in the Fireside Room (or on Zoom) from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link.

April 14	Priscilla and Aquila
April 28	Paul, Lydia, Thecla and Phoebe
May 12	Jesus and Mary Magdalene



Hope & Healing: Christian Cancer Support

For anyone on a cancer journey, Linda Sokoly (Ministry Leader) from Augustana LC is available to give support through emails, phone calls, texts or one-to-one in person conversations or prayer. Linda can be reached through the Augustana church email at augustchurch@yahoo.com or by calling the Augustana church office at 716-832-5720.



Coming to TOL on Saturday Evening, April 5!

Everyone from TOL is welcome to join The Queen City Contra Dancers of Buffalo for live music and dancing on **Saturday, April 5 from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM**. Check out the website at www.QCCD.org--it has all the information you need to know about this group!



ELCA Prayer Ventures, April 2025*

Easter Day Sing praise and thanksgiving to God! This is the day the Lord has made for us to gather as loved and forgiven children, celebrating our freedom from the bondage of sin and death.

Again, we rejoice and shout, “Hallelujah! The Lord, our savior, is risen!” The good news and power of Easter that we experience cannot be confined to a single calendar day.

Thank God for volunteers who respond to the needs of the church and society by sharing their time, gifts and passion. Pray that we will extend to people of all ages the invitation to serve God.

Pray for our neighbors who suffer hunger, lack reliable access to nutritious food and yearn for the support of caring communities, and thank God for our congregational, synodical and churchwide ministries that serve them without bias or judgment.

Operation Christmas Child



For the month of April the suggested donations are small toys (ball, slinky, small cars/trucks, plastic animals, yo yos, etc.). Any and all donations are greatly

appreciated. Please place your items in the bin in the hallway. Thank you!

Kelly and Debbie

“Christ in Our Home”

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

Ways to Give to TOL

Online: Download the [Tithe.ly](https://www.tithe.ly) app to your smartphone. For instructions, visit the website at www.trinityoldlutheran.com or call the church office at (716) 836-4868. **Giving by mail:** Please send your checks to the church and to the attention of the Financial Secretary.



“I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke and saw that life was service.
I acted and behold, service was joy.”

Rabindranath Tagore



Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke
Study Notes: Jesus and Judas

Part I: Jesus and Judas

Maybe we should look at Jesus and the apostles as if they are a mosaic that is like an onion containing layers of interconnected pieces. An outside view misses too much and we need to examine the inner layers and try to discover what they may mean from the inside. Maybe we have been given stereotypes of who the apostles were and these stereotypes may create blinders and blind spots. Thomas and Judas can be seen in a very different light if we look at them from their followers' points of view rather than from a Western, Roman Catholic traditional viewpoint. Maybe they are not a betrayer and a doubter. I've portrayed biblical characters during sermons and in performances in a variety of settings. My Judas' portrayal, for example, starts from the premise that his "betrayal" was really an act of faith. When I write a script, I try to get inside the mind of the character that I am portraying. For Judas I used the Gospel of Judas and tried to eliminate stereotypes of him being evil. Jesus called him as an apostle and He must have done so for a reason. What did Jesus see that our condemnation of him doesn't? I tried to portray Judas as a person in his own context. I don't know how successful this approach has been, but it has helped me try to look at Jesus in new ways: through the eyes of his contemporaries, and not always through "our" eyes.

Judas was born in Kerioth—south of Jerusalem. He was a Judean and all the others were Galilean (even Jesus). Judas probably thought of the Galileans as:

- 1) Racially impure because of the Assyrian invasion and the mingling of peoples over the centuries.
- 2) Samaria separated Galilee from Judea, thus isolating it and making it impure.
- 3) Politically they had separate governances from the time of the Kingdom of Israel.
- 4) Galilee had fertile land and good fishing, which created wealth and corruption.
- 5) Galileans were backward and unsophisticated.
- 6) Their dialect was mockable.
- 7) They were religiously too lax: e.g., improper observance of rituals, lack of pilgrimages to the temple, poor food preparation, inadequate theological leaders, which caused poor teaching of the Torah, etc.
- 8) Too much uncleanness to maintain necessary purity. Jesus seemed to disregard the strict observance of purity by eating and talking to people who should have been shunned. Judas probably attributed this behavior to Jesus' upbringing in Galilee and his lack of abiding by the strictness of Leviticus.

So for Judas, the center for Judaism is in Judea and Jesus and the others were outsiders. Judas probably believed that Jesus needed him to navigate the Judean ways. Judas would have had contacts to help find places to stay and know appropriate ways to behave. A reference to a Galilean usually meant the person was a fool, a sinner or a heathen. In fact, Judas would have heard more than once that nothing of any account could come from Galilee and especially Nazareth—a tiny, irrelevant place. Of course, Galilee was also noted for its revolutionaries and people proclaiming to be the Messiah. Judas probably felt that the apostles and Jesus needed him but they didn't listen to him

enough and resented his importance, especially because he was in charge of the money and daily management of the "group." From Judas' point of view the apostles would have resented the private time he had with Jesus. Neither Jesus nor Judas told the others about their private conversations and the spiritual matters they discussed. Here is how I see Judas' view of Jesus.

Jesus was charismatic, a great teacher and speaker. He was magical to be around. One problem was that he was a dreamer and didn't seem to understand the meaning of being a Messiah. Instead of leadership he asked his disciples to go out and preach and heal; Jesus depended too much on the weak and dysfunctional group he had chosen and who followed him around Galilee and Judea. He was a Rabbi but didn't focus upon the Laws and the Torah enough, which would have been difficult for Judas to accept. Judas also probably felt that Jesus didn't seem interested enough in rallying people to his cause; he let them decide rather than use the power he had to convince them to overthrow the Romans. This would have been hard for Judas to understand.

Judas was probably an Essene, having been baptized by John. It's the only reason I can imagine why he became an apostle. Maybe his baptism led to his following Jesus (since John told his followers to do so). Judas probably accepted the idea that Jesus was like the Essenes: a Son of light, preparing to fight the Sons of Darkness and preparing for the end of days. Like Jesus, Judas certainly mistrusted all Jewish leadership and felt that the Temple and its activities were too corrupted by the Romans. They both may have had a daily ritual and a strict code of conduct. Prayer was the center of their worlds.

Judas probably accepted the necessity for Jesus' ministry in Galilee. It made sense: there were poor areas and the people were heavily abused by the Romans and the Jewish puppet, Herod Antipas. The people were over taxed and basic services and rights were neglected. This treatment fit into Jesus' message of caring for the poor and giving them hope of a better life. It was also practical to stay in Galilee since there were places to stay, especially in Capernaum where Peter's mother-in-law was wonderful and helpful. Jesus also could play into the Galilean mistrust of the Jewish leaders, both Herod and those in Jerusalem. The message worked well in Galilee; it was a bit more difficult in Jerusalem. Common folk could resonate with Jesus, especially with the idea that the Jewish leaders cowed to the Romans to keep their positions. But it was dangerous to spread that message too loudly in Jerusalem. Judas would have been impressed with Jesus' attack on the money changers; it was a wonderful message for the common man, for the poor, and for those not in power. It didn't do Jesus any good with the Jewish leadership, however. I think Judas believed that Jesus went after the moneychangers to force the Jewish leadership to get rid of him. Judas saw it as calculated and necessary because Jesus always seemed to do things for a purpose or a good reason.

When Jesus dismissed his mother, brothers and sisters who came to talk to him, Judas saw that they were hurt. Judas probably respected Jesus' intensity and passion for his mission. Judas saw sacrifice as necessary for carrying out any of God's plans. This ascetic belief may have come from his Essene background.

Used with permission.

