



TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

N E W S L E T T E R



NEW YEAR, NEW MERCIES

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning." — Lamentations 3:22–23

As we step into 2026, we celebrate a fresh start and a faithful God. May this new year be filled with His hope, peace, and purpose.

SCRIPTURE KEYS TO A JOYFUL NEW YEAR

Hold fast to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)

Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)

Pray earnestly every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18)

Pray for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)

Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Neglect not your talents and opportunities (Galatians 6:10)

Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Work diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Yield your members to righteousness (Romans 6:11, 16)

Exercise yourself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)

Aim at sinless perfection (Hebrews 6:1)

Redeem the time (Ephesians 5:15, 16)

— Gus Nichols



TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Trinity Times

STAFF

Rev. Kathleen D.R. Harkness.....Pastor
Kelsey Nilsen.....Administrative Assistant
Jeremy Wolfe.....Music Director
Judy Zellner.....Sexton
Charlene Wolfe.....Treasurer
Brenda Hashagen.....Financial Secretary
Vera Deacon.....Parish Nurse

CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS & MEMBERS

Betsy Nilsen.....President
Jen Wolfe.....Vice President
Laura Bader.....Secretary
Ann Donley.....Member
Bill Hashagen.....Member
Kelsey Nilsen.....Member
Pat Weaver.....Member
Ethan Wolfe.....Member
Judy Zellner.....Member



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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR HARKNESS



A PRAYER OF PRAISE

*O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.*

*Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.*

1 Chronicles 16:8-9

It seemed good to me and the Holy Spirit to begin the New Year with a *Prayer of Praise*. In this new year I'd like us to focus our attention on the positive things we encounter in our lives, on our faith journeys, and with our church. Not only is our country entering its 250th anniversary, but we at Trinity are also entering our 275th anniversary as a congregation.

The tendency is for us to want to look backwards and lament what we once were. I encourage us to do the opposite; to look forward into our future and rejoice on what we can become. Let us focus on how Trinity can become an integral force of love and care for our community. I believe we have already begun that task. Let's keep the momentum going!

Let us pray:

Gracious Father, we rejoice in the rich heritage we have shared over the last 275 years. You are certainly worthy of our attention, praise, and love. You have done amazing things in bringing us through difficult times and supporting us through the good times. We are confident you will continue to do so. Ignite a flame in us that we may illuminate the darkness and bring light and life to our world, our community, and our congregation. Keep us from tearing each other down and help us to look for and uplift the gifts that each of us share. Give us the courage to make your goodness known and to never be ashamed of our faith in you.

We ask that you bring peace to our friends, health and comfort to those who are suffering from chronic illnesses, and fortitude and positivity to those who look forward to our future. Thank you for all the wonderful works and all that you have done for us over the year and all you will do through us in the future.

In Jesus' name, amen.

WORSHIP WONDERS

WITH PASTOR HARKNESS

The Wonder of Crossing One's Self

I am particularly interested in your questions about why we do what we do in worship. Please send me a note on what you would like to know. You may send me a text, put a note in my mailbox in the office, or send me an email at pastor@trinitypv.org.

This month the topic is: ***The Sign of the Cross***. When I was first called to my former congregation, I'd have people ask me why I crossed myself? They'd say, "*That's so Catholic. Why do you do it?*" Having graduated from seminary, it seemed like a normal thing to do. But I could understand where they were coming from because before going to seminary, I never would have thought about doing it. I might have thought the same thing, but actually it is ecumenical. It is used by the Orthodox and Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and is slowly increasing in use among mainline Protestants.

So What Is It? The sign of the cross, whether traced over the body or on the forehead, is a sign and remembrance of one's Baptism. *The Use of the Means of Grace* (The ELCA's set of instructions for the practices of word and sacrament) says of this gesture, "*These interpretive signs proclaim the gifts that are given in the promise of God in Baptism itself. Some keys to their interpretation are given in the Holy Scriptures. The laying on of both hands with the prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit is a sign of the pouring out of the Spirit of God to empower the people of God for mission. The sign of the cross marks the Christian as united with the Crucified.*"

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The Wonder of Crossing One's Self

The sign of the cross is also a remembrance of the death and resurrection of our Lord: the center of our faith. It is a treasured part of our heritage as Lutherans, because the practice was encouraged and used by Martin Luther himself. Luther made provisions for using the sign of the cross on at least three occasions.

How Is It Done? Lutherans trace the sign of the cross over their bodies from forehead to lower chest, then from shoulder to shoulder and back to the heart; and others trace a small cross on their foreheads.

When Is it Done? *"In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* or *"Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever."* These words begin the orders for Confession and Forgiveness. The rubrics (directions in red italics) that accompanies these words say: *"The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins."* It is used during various parts of worship such as: invocation, absolution, blessing, or when receiving communion. It means that we belong to Christ. It also reminds us of God's grace and presence. This practice is a visible sign of faith, rooted in Lutheran tradition. It is meant to comfort, bless, and remind worshipers of God's love and promise.

- **At Ordination.** In his order for the Ordination of Ministers of the Word, Luther says of the benediction: *"The ordinator blesses them with the sign of the cross."*

- **In Daily Prayer.** Luther instructed his followers to make the sign of the cross at both the beginning and the end of the day as a beginning to daily prayers. In *The Small Catechism*, in the section on morning and evening prayers Luther says: *"When you get out of bed, bless yourself with the holy cross and say 'In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.'"* This same instruction is given for bedtime.

I hope this has answered your questions about why we make the sign of the cross.

FINANCIAL REPORT

TLC Ministry Support

As of 11/30/2025

As a church, we need to keep track of our financial results in relation to both the annual budget and our actual expenses. In order to give a full and accurate picture of how we're doing, both are presented below:

Support compared to Budget:

Total 2025 Annual Budget	<u>\$169,362</u>
Support required to date to meet our ministry budget	\$155,249
Actual Support received year-to-date	
(including parsonage & New Vitae rent and interest income)	<u>140,674</u>
Difference between budget and support received - over/(short)	<u>(\$14,575)</u>

Support compared to Actual Expenses:

Actual Support received year-to-date	\$140,674
Actual expenses year-to-date	<u>147,237</u>
Difference between expenses and support received - over/(short)	<u>(\$6,563)</u>

Charlene Wolfe, Treasurer

JANUARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS



	January 4	January 11	January 18	January 25
Acolyte & Crucifer	Kyla Meterko	Laura Bader	Christopher Mager	Ethan Wolfe
Ushers/ Greeters	Pat Weaver Emma Wolfe	Alex Nilsen Rhett Nilsen	Alex Nilsen Rhett Nilsen	Emma Wolfe Judy Zellner
Lector	Jen Wolfe	Jeff Wolfe	Betsy Nilsen	Judy Zellner
Cantor	Jen Wolfe	Charlene Wolfe	Jen Wolfe	Charlene Wolfe
Communion Assistants	Kyla Meterko Pat Weaver	Laura Bader Kelsey Nilsen	Ann Donley Christopher Mager	Kelsey Nilsen Judy Zellner
Tellers	Pat Weaver Ethan Wolfe	Laura Bader Jen Wolfe	Ann Donley Kelsey Nilsen	Jen Wolfe Judy Zellner
Sunday School Assistant	Jen Wolfe	Kelsey Nilsen	Ethan Wolfe	Charlene Wolfe

JANUARY IMPORTANT DATES

JANUARY 1	New Year's Day
JANUARY 4	Worship Service - 9:00 am Confirmation @ Trinity - 5:00 pm
JANUARY 8	Choir Practice - 7:15 pm
JANUARY 11	Worship Service - 9:00 am Church Council Installation
JANUARY 13	Bible Study Resumes - 1:00 pm
JANUARY 15	Choir Practice - 7:15 pm
JANUARY 17	Church Council Retreat - TBA
JANUARY 18	Worship Service - 9:00 am Confirmation @ Riegelsville - 5:00 pm
JANUARY 19	Church Council Meeting - 7:00 pm
JANUARY 20	Bible Study - 1:00 pm
JANUARY 22	PALM General Meeting @ Durham - 7:00 pm Choir Practice - 7:15 pm
JANUARY 23	Family Game Night - 6-8:30 pm
JANUARY 25	Worship Service - 9:00 am
JANUARY 27	Bible Study - 1:00 pm
JANUARY 29	Choir Practice - 7:15 pm





IS BACK!

JOIN US ON
FRIDAY, JANUARY 23
6 PM - 8:30 PM

FOR A NIGHT OF FUN AND
FELLOWSHIP. WE WILL HAVE PIZZA
AND SNACKS. BRING A FRIEND
AND YOUR COMPETITIVE SPIRIT!



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Are you stepping into a leadership role in your congregation? Perhaps you're serving on your Church Council and want a clearer sense of what that entails. Or maybe it's your turn to guide your congregation as President, Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary. Whatever your role, we have an exciting opportunity just for you!

You are warmly invited to join us for a gathering of Church Council Officers.

Whether you are new to the role or a seasoned professional, this event promises to be a morning of inspiration, connection, and equipping for the vital work you do in your congregation.

Saturday, February 21, 2026

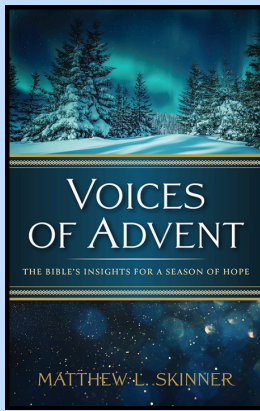
United Lutheran Seminary
Brossman Center, Benbow Hall
7241 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia

Registration will begin at 8:00 am in Benbow Hall with a full breakfast provided. Program will begin at 9:00 am and end by Noon.

You will hear from our Vice President, Cheryl Lafferty and Bishop Bryan Penman. Pastor Karl Richard, our Synod's Secretary and Mrs. Janet Neff, our Synod's Treasurer will give presentations specific to the roles of secretaries and treasurers in breakout sessions.

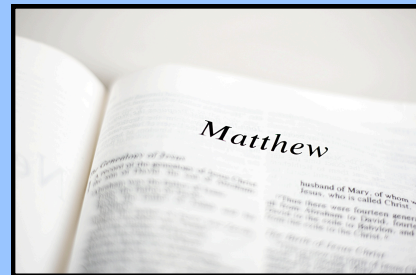


**SCAN HERE
TO REGISTER**



The final Adult Forum discussion on *Voices of Advent* will be held after the worship service on Sunday, January 4.

UPCOMING BIBLE STUDIES

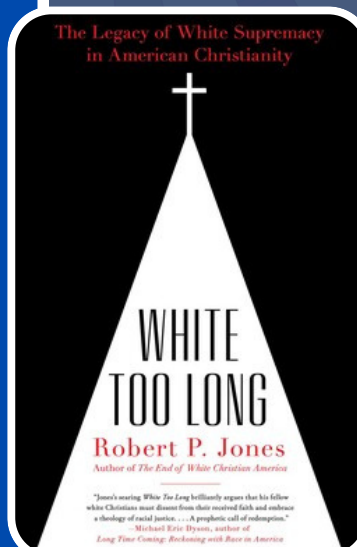


Bible Study on Matthew is resuming on Tuesday, January 13 at 1:00 pm.

Pastor Harkness is a member of the Synod's Anti-Racism Team and will be helping to lead a Zoom-based book study on *White Too Long* by Robert P. Jones.

Sessions will be held on January 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2026, from 7:00–8:30 PM on Zoom.

If you are interested in participating, please register by January 6, 2026, by emailing antiracism@sepa.org.





JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

5 - Shirley Wolfinger	17 - Evelyn Hari
9 - Bob Mager	17 - Briana Steich
9 - Les Zellner	20 - Donna Reiss
11 - Roxanne Miller	22 - Juliana Burke
12 - Levi Cressman	22 - Linda Keller
14 - Kelsey Nilsen	26 - Darwin Fluck
15 - Dawson Nilsen	

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

19 - Richard & Evelyn Hari
31 - Robert & Alice Cressman



JANUARY BAPTISM ANNIVERSARIES

4 - Jeff Wolfe	16 - Megan Hashagen
8 - Mason Steich	31 - Annaliese Allen
12 - Jeremy Wolfe	31 - Bob Mager
16 - Inge Hart	Jen Wolfe



LIVING NATIVITY RECAP



Our Living Nativity on December 6 was a wonderful success! With participants from several PALM churches, the performances at 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. welcomed about 70 attendees across both showings. We were grateful for the positive feedback—especially appreciation for offering an earlier performance time. Thank you to everyone who participated, attended, and helped make this meaningful event possible.





Prayers

- For people of the Ukraine
- Our country
- All people in the Middle East

Homebound Members

- Robert & Alice Cressman
- Bob & Phyllis Labs
- Sue Lehman
- Eileen Moyer
- Sandy Rehrig
- Warren Strawsnyder Jr.

Friends and Families Who Mourn

- Barbara DeWitt (Nilsen)
- Kenny Heckler (Wolfe/ Heckler)
- James Adams (Meterko)
- Anna Weaver (Cressman)
- Jean Houck (Catino)
- Tim Feury Jr. (Nilsen)

Healing for Members

- Eileen Catino
- Nancy Scheerbaum
- Bob & Phyllis Labs
- Robert Cressman
- Judy Zellner
- Rick Wolfinger
- Les Zellner

Healing for Friends and Family

- Caron Ruhf (Donley/ Grasic)
- Elanor Titus (Meterko)
- Jim D. (Deacon)
- Pat Bader (Bader)
- Thelma Broadhecker (Helm)
- Kelly McGuire (Wolfe)
- Sandy Wolfinger (Wolfe)

If you would like your prayers added to our list, please e-mail them to office@trinitypv.org