

DEC 2025

December 7

Second Sunday of Advent Communion

First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Second Reading: Romans 15:4-13
Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12
Preaching Pastor Joel Petruschke

December 14

Third Sunday of Advent Communion

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
Second Reading: James 5:7-10
Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11
Preaching Pastor Joel Petruschke

December 21,

Fourth Sunday of Advent Communion

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25
Preaching Pastor Joel Petruschke

December 24, Christmas Eve Communion

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14
Gospel: Luke 2:1-20
Preaching Pastor Joel Petruschke

December 25, Christmas Day

First Reading: Isaiah 52: 7-10
Psalm 98
Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-12
Gospel: John 1:1-14
Preaching Loren Good

December 28, 2025

Service of Lesson and Carols
Preaching Pastor Joel Petruschke

Report from Senior Pastor Petruschke



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The holiday season is upon us, and with the holiday season comes all sorts of traditions. There are traditions like putting up a Christmas tree in our house, hanging stockings on the fireplace mantle, and decorating our homes with lights. Why do we do such crazy things at this time of year? Why do we bring a tree indoors, hang socks, and light up our house? We might say because it is pretty and festive. And, that's okay. But there is more to it than that. Traditions are wonderful, but if we don't know the meaning behind the traditions, they lose their significance. Jaroslav Pelikan, a former Lutheran theologian said, "Tradition is the living faith of the dead. Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living." In other words, knowing the meaning behind our traditions keeps alive our connection to the past, and enriches the present; it is the living faith of the dead. Whereas, doing things just for the sake of doing things, that is, traditionalism, results in dead symbols and meaningless customs; it is the dead faith of the living.

The tradition of bringing a Christmas tree into the house was believed to have originated from an early Roman, pagan festival where an evergreen tree was brought into worship to symbolize the life of the pagan god even in the midst of death. Of course, an evergreen tree stays green even while everything else around has died.
(cont.)

Mission Statement

We are by God's Grace a Community Connecting with Christ's Love for the World.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

31 South Duke Street
Lancaster, PA 17602
717-397-2734
church@trinitylanaster.org
M-F 8:00 - 4:30

We can see how Christianity came to adopt this tradition, because Christ brings new life in the midst of death.

The tradition of the socks comes from a legend in which St. Nicholas, a true historical person and a bishop, tossed three bags of gold into the window of a poor family. The three girls in this family had no dowry in order to marry, and so the gold would serve the purpose. The bags of gold supposedly landed in three socks that were hung to dry by the fireplace. Again, we can see how Christianity came to adopt this tradition as its message is about sharing gifts and serving the poor.

The lights on homes and everywhere else began with the burning of a yule log in 1184 in Germany. It was a source of light and heat, in the darkest month of the year. December is the month with the shortest days. The abundance of Christmas and holiday lights helps dispel that darkness and gloom. And, it serves as a stark reminder of God's goodness to dispel the darkness of our sinful lives by the giving of the true light, Jesus Christ.



We are blessed with communal traditions, like these we have mentioned. But, we are also blessed with traditions specific to our families. One of the Christmas traditions my family had when I was growing up was sharing a meal called "olive chicken." (Let me know if you would like the recipe.) It was a recipe that came from my Uncle Francis, who has since died and was a wonderful chef at a Philadelphia restaurant. His recipe has been passed along through my family, and it is a meal that my family still enjoys together, and we fondly remember my uncle when we have the dish. The meal has meaning and significance for us.

I encourage you this holiday season to consider some of the holiday traditions in your family. Remind yourselves from where these traditions emerged. Share the stories about why you do these particular customs. And ask yourselves what meaning they still have for you. Hopefully, this exercise will create renewed meaning for your family.

Of course, if I may be so bold as to say our greatest tradition during this holiday season is the tradition to worship. The tradition of worshipping God gives meaning to the season itself. Worship reminds us that Christmas is about Christ's birth, the giving of a savior to God's people. Worship reminds us that God is good all the time to us his people, and this serves to constantly enrich our present. But worship also connects us to the past, when we realize the many, many generations who have praised God before us, and who have passed the faith along to us. For them, we give thanks, for they have tended the faith tradition on our behalf. Most of all, though, we give thanks to God for the gift of tradition itself. Merry Christmas to you all.

In Christ,
Pastor Joel Petruschke

DECEMBER 24 WORSHIP

3:00 p.m. Community Service
in Fondersmith Auditorium

6:30 p.m. Music & Carols

7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service
in the Sanctuary

DECEMBER 25 WORSHIP

9:30 a.m. Service in the Chapel

DECEMBER 28 WORSHIP

9:30 a.m. Lessons and Carols



Sunday Worship

Sunday morning worship begins at 9:30 a.m. and is held in the sanctuary.

Just for Kids

Every Sunday there are children's activity bags in the narthex. Please feel free to ask an usher where to find them.

Advent Series

Beginning **Thursday, December 4** and continuing on **December 11 and 18**, Holy Trinity will host an Advent Series focusing on three groups of characters from the Nativity story. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke recorded what we know of the Christ Child's birth. We'll talk about the Innkeeper and the Animals, the Shepherds and the Sheep, the Wisemen and the Star to unravel the mystery a bit. We will gather in Fondersmith at 6:00 p.m. for a potluck meal. Please bring a side dish or a dessert. Trinity will provide beverages. We will then begin worship at 7:00 p.m. After worship the choir will hold rehearsal. You are encouraged to take part and make this Advent Season an opportunity to grow in your faith and understanding.



New Music for Communion Services in Advent

A reminder that during the season of Advent, we will use a new musical setting of responses. Here is a youtube link <https://youtu.be/m1UHH2xMmpM> that you can access to familiarize yourself with the melody.

BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP

Breaking Barriers. Building Community.

Our Breakfast Fellowship continues to be a marvelous Holy Trinity Ministry. Food acquisition, preparation, and serving is led by Cathy Dobish. Informal worship is led by Doug Frazer, Tim Wentworth, and Loren Good. Pastor Joel Petruschke presides at Holy Communion once a month and Trinity's choir sings once a month. Linda Flick shares her talent on the piano each Sunday.

Winter Collection

Breakfast Fellowship is collecting socks, hats, gloves, and scarves to give to Breakfast Fellowship guests on **Sunday, December 21**. Please drop your donations off at the church office.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to gift wrap at Tanger Outlets from **through December 20**, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays only. You may choose any hours you want. Proceeds benefit Trinity's Breakfast Fellowship. To sign up, email Cathy Dobish at jdobish@verizon.net.



REPORT FROM THE VESTRY PRESIDENT

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Every year I wonder why November slips away so quickly. Maybe it's because we anticipate Advent and look forward to celebrating all that December brings. However, before we do that, I want to share with you what the vestry has been doing during the month of November.

We have concluded our Stewardship season with another successful pledge of time and talent from our dedicated congregation. Emy Belser led the way this year by organizing a committee and mission moment presenters.

Pastor Joel exceeded our expectations by challenging us to step into our roles in the church with our financial support as well as our dedication to committees and responsibilities. Thank you to both for their leadership.

After many months of working with our florist to enhance the appearance of the altar flowers, we have decided to contract with a new florist. On November 9th, Royers Flowers began providing the arrangements. Everyone seems pleased at this point and they are very easy to work with. There are many opportunities for you to contribute to the cost of the flowers by selecting a week to place them in memory of someone or to celebrate a special occasion such as an anniversary or birthday. Consider commemorating your loved one's birthday or baptism date as a reason to celebrate if other dates are already taken. For more information, please contact Anna Marie in the church office at 717-397-2734.

Each year, the Executive Committee evaluates the Pastor from the previous year. This year, we used a form provided by the ELCA for this purpose. We are pleased to report that Pastor Joel met and exceeded all of our expectations. It has been a joy to welcome him into all of our lives. If you would like to share anything about Pastor Joel, please contact a member of his Mutual Ministry committee.

Blessings to you and yours during this most blessed of Church seasons.

Susan Garofola, President of Vestry

STEWARDSHIP

As we wind down 2025, I wanted to thank my Stewardship team – Pastor Joel, Doug Frazer, and David Gorman - for their help and advice in getting our Stewardship message to the congregation. Thank you to Joyce Gundrum, David, and Doug for their thought-provoking Temple Talks. And thank you to Andrea Collins and Anna Marie Snyder who facilitated - in no small way - putting together the mailing, tallying results, etc. Thank you to all, and that includes our Trinity members who responded in a timely and generous manner. What a pleasure to work with caring, dedicated people.

We are truly blessed!

Emy Belser



SENIOR COMMUNITY WORSHIP

Communion at Willow Valley – Wednesday, Dec. 17
at 3 p.m., *Manor North Auditorium*

Communion at Woodcrest – Every other month at 1 p.m.
This month's service is on December 18
Eagle Commons Chapel

FROM THE WORSHIP AND MUSIC SMALL GROUP

An ongoing series on why we do what we do in worship, by Loren Good.

One Year Ends and Another Begins

As you read this we'll have already concluded a Church Year with the Celebration of Christ the King Sunday. That is an ending of sorts. At the same time it is a Beginning as well. We move onto the Season of Advent. Advent – from the Latin Adventus – meaning *To Come*.



And, that's what we will do, wait for the coming of the Christ Child. As Christians we've celebrated this season for 1500 years (give or take) watching, waiting, preparing, anticipating the celebration of God's coming in the form of the Christ child. But there's more as we also anticipate a final coming of Christ in the time to come.

So it Begins...Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, The Baptism of our Lord, The Transfiguration, The Annunciation, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Palm Sunday, all the days of Holy Week, Easter Sunday, The Ascension, Pentecost, Holy Trinity Sunday, All Saints...and finally right back to where we started above...Christ the King Sunday.

As we bask in the glow of the Advent Candles, please take the time to reflect on the Season. And, recognize that with each end there is a new beginning...now and always.



Holy Trinity's
300th Anniversary

DID YOU KNOW?

Memories of Christmas past are alive in our archives and in the hearts of members old and new. One new Pastor asked, "What is the best service of the year?" The answer was easy, Christmas. There have been live

nativity scenes on the front lawn, large trees inside and out, instrumental and vocal music, children's sermons, Sunday School programs, live animals in the Sanctuary, noon time chimes from the steeple, radio broadcasts, sermons that celebrated Christ's birth while challenging all to also remember his death. And, just like Christmas, so much more.





Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to order poinsettias in honor or memory of a loved one to be placed in the church on Christmas Eve, please call the church office at 717-397-2734 or email es@trinitylancaster.org by **Dec. 14**. The cost is \$20 per plant.

ORDER FORM FOR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS (Please Print Clearly)	
Name(s) of Person(s) to be honored or memorialized:	
<hr/>	
<hr/>	
Your Name:	
<hr/>	
Number of Plants:	Amount Enclosed:
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EDUCATION

FAITH TALK: Waiting in Hope, Walking in the Light

Faith Talk meets each Sunday. We are a small, discussion-based group - a safe place to ask questions and explore God's Word together. Our study during all of 2025 has been in Luther's Small Catechism and the weekly lectionary texts, though we always pause to take up whatever questions arise from the group. Grounded in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, we strive to keep our conversations faithful, clear, and engaging.

During November

We completed our study of Luther's Small Catechism with a focus on the Sacrament of the Altar, reflecting on the great comfort that Christ gives His true body and blood "for you" for the forgiveness of sins. This followed naturally from our earlier discussion of Confession and Absolution—another place where Christ personally delivers His mercy to His people.

We also continued our work with the lectionary readings:

Job 19:23-27a; Psalm 17:1-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Luke 20:27-38

We rejoiced in Job's bold confession, "I know that my Redeemer lives," even in the midst of suffering. The psalmist cried out for God's justice and protection. Paul encouraged believers to stand firm in the truth amid false teaching. Jesus silenced the Sadducees and proclaimed the God who raises the dead and is God of the living.

Christ the King Sunday – Jeremiah 23:1–6; Psalm 46; Colossians 1:11–20; Luke 23:33–43

God promised a righteous Shepherd-King who would gather His scattered flock. Psalm 46 reminded us that God is our refuge and strength. Paul presented Christ as the One through whom all things hold together. In Luke's Gospel, we heard the crucified King forgive the repentant thief and welcome him into Paradise—an unforgettable picture of royal mercy.

These November sessions completed our long journey through the Season after Pentecost, preparing us to turn our hearts toward the promise of Christ's coming.

In December

We will celebrate Advent together by using Doug Frazer's devotional book

Advent – *From Darkness to Light: Devotions for the Season.*

This devotional leads us week by week through the great themes of Advent:

Week One – Why We Need a Messiah - Humanity's fall, the weight of sin, the prophets' warnings, and our deep need for rescue.

Week Two – The Solution Revealed: The Incarnation -Immanuel's promise, the Annunciation to Mary, the Word made flesh, Joseph's obedience, and the prophecy that the Shepherd from Bethlehem would come to redeem His people.

Week Three – Life with the Messiah: Redeemed Life - New life in Christ, abiding in Him, walking in the Spirit, being formed as His Body, and living as God's children.

Week Four – The Solution Fully Realized: The Second Coming - Christ's return, the final judgment, the Day of the Lord, the new creation, and the great promise: "Surely I am coming soon."

Each Advent Sunday will draw from one of these weekly themes as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ's birth and for His coming again in glory.

This devotional, along with all of Doug's books, is available for free at:

<https://www.spiritusetlogos.com>

We meet each Sunday during the education hour. Each class stands on its own—you are always welcome, so come when you can. A Zoom link is also available for those who wish to attend remotely:

Zoom: <https://millersville.zoom.us/j/3024219881>

Meeting ID: 302 421 9881

Phone: 646-558-8656 (enter 3024219881#)

We meet at 11:00 a.m., or right after church, whichever is later, in the Library.

Join us as we wait in hope and walk in the light of Christ this Advent season.



SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP 10:30-11:00 a.m. in the Fondersmith Auditorium, prior to Forum.

SUNDAY FORUM

The Sunday Forum begins at 11:00 a.m. in the Fondersmith Auditorium.

Dec. 7 Pastor Joel – Let's Listen, Let's Talk: The Filioque.
(Forum meets in the Chapel)

Dec. 14 – Children and Youth Christmas Program

Dec. 21 – Christmas Sing Along Party Time!

Dec. 28 – Christmas Brunch following the Service of Lessons and Carols
(Be sure to sign up!)

CHILDREN, FAMILY AND YOUTH MINISTRY

As we enter Advent, many people's thoughts turn to their Christmas "To Do" lists. Let Holy Trinity help you give gifts that also make the world a better place! We are once again selling ELCA GOOD GIFTS this Advent season. This year, why not give your hard to shop for relative or friend a pig for Christmas? You'll actually be getting several people a gift: a pig in honor of your relative who already has everything, the gift of food to eat, and fertilizer to grow crops for a family in need! Our ELCA Good Gift Sale will start on **Sunday, Dec. 7** and run through **Sunday, Dec. 28**.

Sunday School families are decorating special Christmas trees: one in the narthex and one outside the church office. These Christmas Trees will be decorated with different barnyard animal and social service ornaments. The ornament can be purchased for the monetary amount noted on them. The money Trinity makes from the Good Gift sale will go to support ELCA World Hunger ministries around the world. Please write "ELCA Good Gifts" in the memo section on your checks and place them in the offering plate. Then help yourself to an ornament off the tree and/or a Christmas card to go with your gift.



You are invited to help us decorate our ELCA Good Gift Christmas Trees on **Friday, Dec. 5 at 5:30 p.m.** in Trinity's cafe for pizza, after which we will decorate the trees.



Mark your calendars for **Sunday, Dec. 14** for Trinity's Annual Christmas Program. Our Sunday School Children and Youth put on a Christmas play and all ages sing songs and play instruments. Be sure to join us following worship in Fondersmith Auditorium for a Christmas cookie buffet. A big THANK YOU to our lead fellowship volunteers: Deb Huber, Patty Epps, and Lori Good. If you are able to bake or purchase cookies for our Christmas Program on **Dec. 14**, please reach out to Deb Huber.

The Children's and Family Ministry is also grateful to partner with Trinity's Music Ministry in putting on this Christmas Program. We will be joined by members of our Adult choir in singing and playing instruments. It is such a pleasure to work with Joyce Gundrum and Chris Prestia - Trinity's music master minds! I hope everyone will plan to join us for worship and these special events during a very festive and busy time of year!

Please note that Children's Sunday School and Confirmation will go on a winter break. There will be no Sunday School or Confirmation offered on **Sunday, Dec. 21** and **Sunday, Dec. 28**. We will start class again on **Sunday, January 4, 2026!**

Be sure to join us for Christmas Eve worship on **Wednesday, Dec. 24**. The 7:00 p.m. service will offer a children's sermon.

Wishing a very Blessed Holiday Season to all Families!

God's Peace,

Rachel Kramer,

Director of Children's and Family Ministry

DEC. SCRIPTURES

Dec 1 Romans 6:1-11
 Dec 2 Hebrews 11:32-40
 Dec 3 Matthew 24:23-35
 Dec 4 Acts 1:12-17, 21-26
 Dec 5 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
 Dec 6 John 1:19-28
 Dec 7 Matthew 3:1-12
 Dec 8 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
 Dec 9 Romans 15:14-21
 Dec 10 Matthew 12:33-37
 Dec 11 2 Peter 3:1-10
 Dec 12 Psalm 146:5-10
 Dec 13 Luke 3:1-18
 Dec 14 Matthew 11:2-11
 Dec 15 Acts 5:12-16
 Dec 16 Jude 17-25
 Dec 17 Matthew 8:14-17, 28-34
 Dec 18 Galatians 3:23-29
 Dec 19 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 Dec 20 John 3:31-36
 Dec 21 Matthew 1:18-25
 Dec 22 Revelation 22:6-7, 18-20
 Dec 23 Galatians 3:6-14
 Dec 24 Luke 2:1--20
 Dec 25 John 1:1-14
 Dec 26 Psalm 148
 Dec 27 1 John 5:1-12
 Dec 28 Matthew 18:1-14
 Dec 29 Luke 19:41-44
 Dec 30 2 Corinthians 4:16-18



On Veteran's Day, Pastor Joel and Michael Ervin received a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Woodward Hill Cemetery Board for the help provided by the cemetery work crew from Holy Trinity. Jeffrey Hatfield presented the certificate.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9:45 TWIST 3:30 Worship & Music meeting	3 5 pm Executive Committee meeting	4 2 pm Visitation team meeting 4:30 MLK Scholarship Board 6 pm Advent meal, worship & Choir rehearsal	5 5:30 Good Gift Tree decorating	6
7 Advent 2 Communion 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Education 3 pm MFE Winter concert	8	9 9:45 TWIST	10	11 6 pm Advent meal, worship & Choir rehearsal	12	13
14 Advent 3 Communion 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship Children's Christmas Program	15	16 9:45 TWIST 4 pm Finata Credit Union event	17 3 pm Willow Valley Worship	18 1 pm Woodcrest worship 6 pm Advent meal, worship & Choir rehearsal 7 pm Piano recital, Heisey	19	20
21 Advent 4 Communion 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Education No Sunday School	22	23 7:00 p.m. Choir rehearsal	24 Office closes at noon 3 pm Community service 6:30 pm Music & Carols 7 pm Worship	25 Christmas Day Worship 9:30 Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27
28 Lessons & Carols 9:30 Worship followed by brunch No Sunday School	29	30	31 Office closes at 1 p.m. Office is closed Jan 1 & 2			

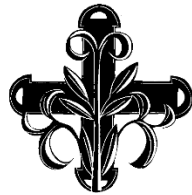
Dec 2025



Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity
31 South Duke Street
Lancaster, PA 17602

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Deaths

Sandra Womeldorf on November 2 , 2025

Ann S. Winter on November 15, 2025

Rev. Dr. Joel Petruschke, Senior Pastor; Christopher Prestia, Organist and Choirmaster;
Rachel Kramer, Director of Children's and Family Ministry; Loren Good, Lay Associate Minister;
Tanya Kevorkian, Archivist

For centuries, this has been a place of inspiration and courage. We are devoted to breaking barriers between people through social outreach and by providing a nurturing environment that embraces all viewpoints in hearty discussions about faith. We are passionate and unwavering in our pursuit to build a thriving community.

We are Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

Holy Trinity Church is affiliated with

