

JAN 2026

Sunday, January 4

Communion

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalm 147:12-20

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

Gospel: John 1:1-18

Bishop Stephen Herr preaching

Sunday, January 11

Baptism of Our Lord

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Second Reading: Acts 10:34-43

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

Pastor Joel Petruschke preaching

Sunday, January 18

First Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7

Psalm 40:1-11

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Gospel: John 1:29-42

Pastor Joel Petruschke preaching

Sunday, January 25

First Reading: Isaiah 9:1-4

Psalm 27:1, 4-9

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

Pastor Joel Petruschke preaching

Report from Senior Pastor Petruschke



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Happy New Year! As we begin the New Year, I want to talk about a "character" in the Christmas story that often gets overlooked. This past Advent season, during the Midweek Advent Events, we talked about the various characters in the story of Jesus' birth. We talked about the shepherds and sheep, the star and the wise men, and the innkeeper and the animals. I mentioned at the last Midweek Advent Event that Mary and Joseph probably didn't visit an inn, but instead they visited a "guest house" of some family or friends. So those are the characters we talked about during the Midweek Advent Events. But there is one "character" we did not mention.

Now, this "character" of which I speak appears twice in the story of Jesus' birth. The first appearance is in Luke 1:39 where Mary is traveling to visit Elizabeth. The verse reads, "In those days Mary set out with haste to a Judaea town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zachariah and greeted Elizabeth." The second appearance is in Luke 2:16, where the shepherds, having been visited by the angel while keeping their flocks by night, travelled to Bethlehem to see the child that had been born. The verse reads, "So they (the shepherds) went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in a manger."
(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-T 8:00 - 4:30

FRI 8:00-3:00

So, who is the "character" I am referencing? It is "Haste." Now, obviously, I am being facetious. "Haste" isn't a real character. Haste is a descriptor about how both Mary and the shepherds travelled. These persons travelled with haste, with speed.

I joke about there being an additional character in story of Jesus' birth, but nonetheless this phrase "with haste" is worth considering. For you see, there is an urgency to the Gospel. We are now in the liturgical Year A, Matthew's Gospel. And, there are a number of places where the word "immediately" appears in Matthew: 4:20 and 22, 8:3, 14:31, 20:34, 24:29, and 26:74. The Gospel of Mark is even more replete with the word "immediately." Things happen particularly quickly in Mark's Gospel. There are some 17 occurrences in Mark's Gospel of the word "immediately."

Why the urgency? Why all the frantic activity? Why the frenetic pace? Because the "Time is fulfilled." Time in this case being "kairos" time, God's time. And so, now is the time to be ready to receive the Lord. This is the time to be urgent about the Gospel, about sharing the Good News, about proclaiming God's love in the world.

With the New Year, it is most appropriate to speak of time. Another year has come and gone. A new year is beginning. And it is the time when people are thinking about what changes they may make in their lives. And so we are reminded in the Bible that it is time to make haste. Now is not the time to put things off, especially those things that might help usher in God's kingdom.

Perhaps, we have been hesitant to reconcile with that other person. Perhaps, we have been waiting for whatever the reason to say, "I am sorry," or to say, "I receive your apology." Perhaps, we have been stalling to embrace a healthier spiritual life, putting off true repentance. Perhaps, we have been delaying changing our heart so that we give up our self-interests, so as to put the interests of others first. Perhaps, we have not considered the in-breaking of God's kingdom right now, and instead have pushed this notion of God's kingdom off into some distant future. We say, "Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps..." when we should be thinking, "Now, now, now."

And, perhaps, we have not considered the prayer of early Church, "Maranatha," which translates, "O Lord, come." It is a prayer of deep longing for Jesus' return. It appears at the end of I Corinthians (16:22). "Maranatha" also appears in the Didache (10:14), an early Christian writing (written between the late 1st century and A.D. 150). How often do we actually pray for the end time to come? How often do we actually pray for Jesus' return? More likely, we don't like to think about that, do we? But if we are faithfully and sincerely praying for Jesus' return, then there is an urgency about our Christian mission and ministry. There is an urgency to help usher in God's kingdom and that right soon.

So, this is my New Year's wish to all of you. That we would consider the urgency of God's mission. That we would welcome the "character" haste to be with us, not that we would hasten through life, but that we would be more intentional about what we say and do that serves to proclaim the Gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ. Because why should we wait a single moment more to extend God's grace in the world. Maranatha? *O Lord, come.* Make us urgent about the Gospel.

In Christ,
Pastor Joel Petruschke

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.



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. Thank you to all who serve.



SENIOR COMMUNITY WORSHIP

Communion at Willow Valley – Wednesday, January 21
at 3 p.m., Manor North Auditorium

Communion at Woodcrest – Every other month at 1 p.m.

Next month's service is on Feb. 19

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.

What is Your Resolve for 2026?

As we come out of the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Happy New Year celebrations no pounds, starting an exercise program, and spending less on frivolous items are often on a list of resolutions. Here's a thought: Consider a resolution that is easy to measure, certainly is attainable, and won't cause you a ton of time or discipline (I retract that, it will take commitment).

I challenge you to join me in embracing this:

I, (name) _____ hereby resolve to make these five changes in 2026.

- Be more habitual in giving the passerby a smile and hello. It's really easy to do with very little effort needed. Something as simple as that can make a difference to the person you greet.
- Take time, even if it's just five to ten minutes, to read a Bible passage. Reflect on it and pray about it. There are plenty of daily resources to help you with this.
- For those of you who use social media – commit to making only POSITIVE comments.
- For those of you who do not use social media commit to this alternative - when talking about another, if you can't say something nice...you've heard it countless times from Trinity's pulpit, and read it in scripture – that darn tongue gets us in a ton of trouble.
- As you begin your day, or before you head out to work, the supermarket, the drugstore, ask God to guide your thoughts, works, and words.
- Compliment someone, even the stranger. That's a lovely garden, a beautiful scarf, a friendly smile, or a fine looking dog you're walking. We all like a compliment now and again. Go ahead, make someone's day.

There you have it, five simple resolutions (one is an alternative). Who knows, you may be in for more than a pound and be up to having 7, 8, 11 or more. I'd suggest that these aren't a bad place to start. Go ahead; be bold in your resolve.

Mission Statement, Core Values, and a New Trinity Logo

We've now been reciting Trinity's new mission statement before the liturgy each week. And, that is a wonderful time in the service to do so. The word liturgy is defined as the work of the people. Our mission is just that - work by us, God's people. Next is to drill down on our core values. We had a wonderful Forum in November, shared some core values, and welcomed input. The Mission and Vision ad hoc small group looks to finalize these in the New Year, followed by a process to establish a new logo for Holy Trinity.

FROM HOLY TRINITY'S ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER

Open Choir Every Sunday in January

If you love to sing, please consider coming to church a little early on Sundays in January to participate in the Open Choir! Arrive at 8:45, we'll prepare a simple anthem, and then sing it at the Offertory that day in worship. Prior singing experience is not needed or expected, and all ages are welcome!

Singing What We Say

The Communion Liturgy begins with a dialogue between pastor and congregation:

"The Lord be with you."

"And also with you."

"Lift up your hearts."

...etc.

This exchange can be spoken, but it can also be sung to a simple melody. This type of singing, or "chanting," isn't quite *song* (there's no beat or rhyme), but it's not really *speech* either. There can be many reasons to chant dialogues and prayers.

Regarding aesthetics, words are "elevated" when they are chanted-- they are set apart as more important than what is spoken.

Regarding practical realities, chanting had an advantage in the large, reverberant churches of Europe-- chanting on steady, carefully chosen pitches helped keep the echoes from clashing and muddling the words.

Here at Trinity we don't have the issues that come with cavernous acoustics, but we *do* honor our heritage as a singing people by "elevating" important moments with chanting. This is why we sing, "the Lord be with you," "And also with you," at the start of the Communion Liturgy.



Until now, the organ had been accompanying the congregation's portions of the dialogue. This was to add some support as we grew accustomed to this practice. But, beginning this year, we will be singing this dialogue without the organ, or *a capella*. Not only is this how it would have been done in Martin Luther's time, but it also better embodies the nature of chant as "elevated speech."

So what, exactly, is "elevating" about chanting, anyway? Well, consider this-- when we speak in unison as a congregation, there's a unity of message, but really it still sounds kind of garbled. This is because all of our voices speak at different pitches. When we all sing on the same pitch, however, our voices unite in a way that's physically measurable. The compression (sound) waves literally synchronize and augment each other. Suddenly the whole truly becomes more than the sum of its parts. This is powerful; not only in symbolizing our unity (or commUNION) with each other, but literally and physically uniting and amplifying our proclamation as a people.

In chanting the dialogue together simply and *a capella*, we allow our many voices to become one. This small change helps us embody our unity more clearly as we prepare to receive communion.

Chris Prestia

EDUCATION

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.

Jan. 4 Lower Susquehann Synod Bishop Stephen Herr

Jan. 11 Let's Listen, Let's Talk: Movies and the Christian Faith with Pastor Joel

Jan. 18 International Ministries – Howard Good – 2026 Valentine Project

Jan. 25 Silvia Cavanaugh/Nelson Polite (First of a two-part series on Lancaster and the Underground Railroad)

FAITH TALK: From Advent Longing to Paul's Letter to the Romans

During December, Faith Talk centered on the season of Advent, using Doug Frazer's devotional *Advent – From Darkness to Light*. Together, we followed the biblical movement of Advent itself—beginning with our deep need for a Savior and ending with the sure hope of Christ's return.

We started by facing Scripture's honest diagnosis of the human condition: sin has entered the world, the Law exposes our condition, and apart from Christ we are not free. From there, Advent led us to the heart of the Good News—the Incarnation. God does not leave us in our darkness; He comes to us. The promise of Immanuel is fulfilled as the Word becomes flesh, borne by Mary, guarded by Joseph, announced by angels, and foretold by the prophets.

In the third week, our focus shifted to life with the Messiah. Salvation is not only a future hope but a present reality. We explored what it means to abide in Christ, to live as God's children rather than slaves, to walk in newness of life, and to bear fruit—not by our effort, but by Christ's faithfulness working in us through Word and Spirit.

Advent concluded by lifting our eyes to the glorious completion of God's saving work. We reflected on Christ's return, the final judgment, the resurrection of the dead, and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Advent ends not with uncertainty, but with hope: "Surely I am coming soon."

In January, Faith Talk will begin a careful, unhurried study of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Often described as Paul's closest expression of a systematic theology, Romans lays out the heart of the Christian faith: sin and grace, Law and Gospel, justification by faith, life in the Spirit, and God's saving purpose in Christ. We will read the letter slowly, chapter by chapter and verse by verse, allowing time to meditate on the text, ask questions, and reflect on how these truths give clarity, comfort, and assurance to Christian believers.

Faith Talk meets each Sunday and remains a welcoming, discussion-based setting where questions are encouraged and the Gospel remains central. All are welcome to join the conversation.

Faith Talk meets after Fellowship, about 11:00 a.m. each Sunday, normally in the Library in the Parish House. We also operate a Zoom link if you would like to attend remotely.

You can attend with this Zoom Link: <https://millersville.zoom.us/j/3024219881>

Meeting ID: 302 421 9881

By Phone 646-558-8656 meeting: 3024219881#

Each class session is independent, so we encourage you to attend when you can.

You can also find Faith Talk discussions on all of our previous series

at <https://www.youtube.com/@FaithTalk-HolyTrinity>

Holy Trinity's 2026 Valentine Appeal

Each year, the International Ministries Committee (IMC) selects a project for Holy Trinity's Valentine Appeal. It is our congregation's opportunity to partner with our international brothers and sisters in Christ to demonstrate Christ's love to those in need of physical and spiritual healing and to make a positive impact on the communities in which they live. This year, the IMC selected "Advanced Medical Training of West Bank Doctors" at the Nazareth Hospital, Israel.

According to the Nazareth Project web site <https://nazarethproject.org/our-work/advanced-training-west-bank-physicians/>, this program enables up to five West Bank physicians per year to receive advanced training in General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Orthopedic Surgery, and Radiology. *"The goal of the Advanced Training Program is to provide the Palestinian physicians with an opportunity to learn and advance their knowledge while preparing them to pass the medical board exams of the Palestinian Authority. They will then serve their communities in the West Bank."*

The Nazareth Project has set a 2026 goal to raise \$60,000 for this worthwhile program. During the Adult Forum on **Sunday, January 18th**, Howard Good, Executive Director of The Nazareth Project, will give a presentation about the Nazareth Hospital and how this program makes a positive impact on the doctors and the communities in which they serve in the West Bank. Please plan to attend and learn more prior to the Valentine Appeal collection on **February 15th**.



Children's Christmas Program, December 14, 2025

JAN. SCRIPTURES

Jan 1 Luke 2:15-21
Jan 2 Psalm 72
Jan 3 Hebrews 11:13-22
Jan 4 John 1:1-18
Jan 5 Hebrews 11:32-12:2
Jan 6 Matthew 2:1-12
Jan 7 Ephesians 3:14-21
Jan 8 Ephesians 4:7, 11-16
Jan 9 Psalm 72
Jan 10 Acts 9:19b-31
Jan 11 Matthew 3:13-17
Jan 12 Acts 10:44-48
Jan 13 Acts 8:4-13
Jan 14 Matthew 12:15-21
Jan 15 Galatians 1:6-12
Jan 16 Psalm 40:1-11
Jan 17 Luke 5:1-11
Jan 18 John 1:29-42
Jan 19 Acts 8:26-40
Jan 20 Hebrews 10:1-4
Jan 21 Matthew 9:14-17
Jan 22 Galatians 1:11-24
Jan 23 Psalm 27:1-6
Jan 24 Luke 5:27-32
Jan 25 Matthew 4:12-23
Jan 26 Ephesians 5:6-14
Jan 27 Philippians 2:12-18
Jan 28 Luke 1:67-79
Jan 29 1 Peter 3:8-12
Jan 30 Psalm 15
Jan 31 John 13:31-35

CHILDREN, FAMILY AND YOUTH MINISTRY



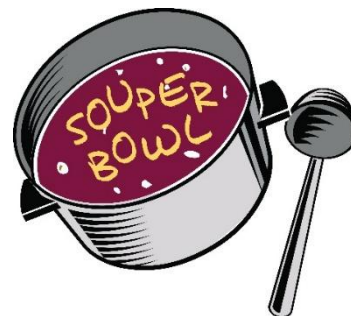
Happy New Year Holy Trinity! During this post-holiday time, Holy Trinity will be holding a food collection drive to benefit the Lancaster Food Hub! The shelves at the Food Hub have been depleted by holiday demands. Let's show our neighbors at the Food Hub God's love and have some fun while doing it!

The NFL playoff teams for the Super Bowl will be finalized after the week 18 games conclude on Sunday, January 4, 2026. You can vote on which team you feel should be in the playoffs on Sunday, January 4th! On Sunday, January 10, bins decorated with the football team logos who are in the NFL Super Bowl playoffs will appear in the Narthex of the church and outside the church office.

Now, unlike the NFL - your food donations to the Lancaster Food Hub can keep your favorite team in the running to win Holy Trinity's "Soup"-er Bowl! The more food you donate the more points your favorite team scores! Each food item is one point. (When donating a bulk pack of 8 cans of soup - you just scored 8 points for your favorite team!)

On **Sunday, February 1**, the two teams who scored the most food donations during the Holy Trinity "Soup"-er Bowl playoffs will be announced, and these two teams will go "head to head." Keep on donating to help your favorite team win Holy Trinity's "Soup"-er Bowl!

On **Sunday, February 8** (which is Super Bowl Sunday), the winner of Holy Trinity's "Soup"-er Bowl will be announced following worship, and thanks to your generosity the real winner will be the Lancaster Food Hub!



Join us following worship on **Sunday, February 8** for a special all ages "Soup"-er Bowl Party. Everyone is invited to make a crock pot of soup to share. Soup can be dropped off in Fondersmith Auditorium before worship on Sunday, February 8. A signup sheet will be posted in the church narthex for soup. We'll also play some soup trivia and other games. We ask everyone to wear their favorite football jerseys and sports gear to Worship on February 8.

Items the Food Hub needs most:

- Individual meals in cans or trays with "pull-tab" lids (i.e. ravioli, beef stew, mac and cheese, etc.)
- Meal helpers (Hamburger Helper, rice sides, taco kits, etc.)
- Cans or pouches of tuna/chicken
- Individual canned fruit with "pull-tab" lids or cups
- Soup
- Peanut butter and crackers
- Cereal (low sugar)

If anyone is interested in helping to drop off the donated food at the Lancaster Food Hub during the week of **February 9, 2026**, please contact Rachel at rachel@trinitylanaster.org.

God's Peace,

Rachel Kramer,

Director of Children's and Family Ministry

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				¹ Office Closed	² Office Closed	³
⁴ Communion 9:30 Worship Open Choir 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Education	⁵	⁶ 9:45 TWIST	⁷	⁸ No Choir rehearsals in Jan.	⁹	¹⁰ Kay Lingle Funeral 2 pm visitation 3 pm service
¹¹ 9:30 Worship Open Choir 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Education	¹² 6:30 Vestry meeting	¹³ 9:45 TWIST	¹⁴	¹⁵ 4:30 MLK Scholarship meeting	¹⁶	¹⁷
¹⁸ 9:30 Worship Open Choir 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Education 5 pm MLK Service	¹⁹ Office Closed MLK	²⁰ 9:45 TWIST 2:00 Discipleship	²¹ 3 pm Willow Valley Worship	²²	²³	²⁴
²⁵ 9:30 Worship Open Choir 10:30 Fellowship 11:00 Education	²⁶	²⁷ 9:45 TWIST 3:30 Worship & Music meeting	²⁸	²⁹	³⁰	³¹

Jan 2026

Office hours Mon- Thurs. 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Fri. 8:00 – 3:00 p.m.

717-397-2734



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

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Deaths

Kay Lingle on November 29, 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



**LOWER
SUSQUEHANNA
SYNOD**
WHERE THE HUNGRY ARE FED
AS WE HAVE BEEN FED BY CHRIST.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America