

HOLY TRINITY TIMES

DECEMBER 2019

The Holy Trinity Times is the official monthly publication of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
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PASTOR'S COLUMN: Christmas, Present

Dearly beloved in Christ,

When I arrived at Holy Trinity nearly two years ago, I walked into a lot of anxiety. Anxiety over money, over the future, over service times and schedules, over the building. When I was introduced to you at that first gathering and potluck, I recall that the first two comments thrown in my direction were, "We are tired of continually being asked to dig into our pockets" and "We are not getting rid of the Wednesday night service." Not questions, but statements of anxiety.



I welcomed those as honest expressions of fear. Fear of the future. Fear of not having enough— not enough money, not enough people, not enough of whatever it takes to be a viable congregation. I understand a bit about how this way of thinking developed over the years. In fact, when I recently went back and read the superb essay on Holy Trinity's history written for our 50th anniversary in 1963, I realized that this congregation has *never* had enough. From the very beginning we were short of funds. Our forefathers and mothers cut corners, did heavy labor themselves instead of hiring professionals, made do with less, and operated for many years as a two-point parish because they couldn't afford a full-time pastor--and when they could, there were still dark months when the pastor was forced to go without a salary.

I will admit to you that at times I have been caught up in this anxiety. But thanks be to God! – for coming to us like a beacon in the night this Advent are the words of the prophet Isaiah, which will shine on us for all four Sundays in Advent. There is no greater messenger of hope. For Isaiah calls us continually to look to the day when nations will "beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks" (December 1), when "the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid" (December 8), when "the desert shall rejoice and blossom" (December 15) and when "the Lord himself will give [us] a sign" (December 22).



That sign, of course, is the birth of the one through whom all creation is being reconciled in God's love. This great act of reconciliation isn't just about us, or animals, making peace with one

another. It's about the hope that is ours, right now. Christian hope isn't about the future, it's about the conviction we have *in the present* that God is with us, Emmanuel, and will give us whatever we need.

As we look toward what could be a momentous year in 2020, let's beat our own swords into plowshares—that is, turn our own internal weapon of destruction into instruments of possibility. What if all our anxiety was converted to joy? Let's try giving ourselves that Christmas present, and see what God can do.

As we await the birth of our Savior, please remember that each of you is a beloved child of God and that God made you exactly the way you are for his purpose. May you be filled with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Raabe



*You are
Invited*

. . . . to run for Church Council!

I am excited to let you know about opportunities for Holy Trinity members to guide us into the new year and beyond. At the Annual Meeting on January 26 we will be holding elections for three Council seats. This may be just the chance you've been waiting for to find out what is *really* going on here, to locate your purpose in this congregation, and to exercise your gifts for creativity and leadership. Or, if you have strong feelings about how things are going or how you think they should be going, then step right up: This is the place for you.

Election to the Congregation Council carries with it the respect and trust of your constituency, the entire membership of Holy Trinity. The value of your willingness to make a contribution to our life is significant and appreciated.

Your gift of time and service draws on your expertise, enthusiasm and energy. Serving in this way means that you are a member in good standing, that you regularly attend worship, and that you are involved in congregational life. It means that you commit yourself to discover through prayer and discernment what is best for this congregation. You assist the pastor in nurturing the spiritual life of the congregation. You are a leadership presence and a conduit for conveying member comments and concerns to the Council. Officers, including President, Vice-President and Secretary, assume additional responsibilities that are critical to good order of the church.

Please speak with me or write to pastor@holyltrinity-marshall.com by the end of this month if this sparks the desire in you to serve in this way. -- Yours in hope, Pastor Raabe



Wednesday, December 18 from 6-8 p.m. All are welcome!

What is “A Night in Bethlehem?” A Night in Bethlehem is a living nativity story that guides you through the story of the birth of Jesus. We invite you to bring friends and family to experience the sights, sounds and excitement of a first century marketplace as it would have been on the very First Christmas Eve. Listen and watch as the scene comes alive before you. The marketplace will also offer games, prizes and refreshments. Please come and share the spirit of Christmas! (No worship service or Confirmation that evening.)



THE STARLIGHT PROMISE: November 10-December 18, 2019



Three weeks until December 18 to be part of “The Starlight Promise.” It’s simple: Make a promise between you and God to increase your giving by \$5 a week or whatever you can manage. To mark your promise, hang a star in the deep blue sky in the narthex and take a card as a reminder. Then, starting on December 15, take home your star or one like it to hang on your Christmas tree. Include this increase into your 2020 pledge (cards will be coming soon). or put it into action it right away.

Why are we doing this? Every so often when the subject of money comes up, I hear people say “We’re doing fine, aren’t we?” Who wouldn’t think so? We have lights, we have heat, our worship services and educational programs keep happening week after week.

But the actual answer is no, we are not doing fine. Giving in 2019 was down almost completely across the board. A large percentage of our active givers have reduced their offering significantly, and almost the same number on our membership roster give nothing. As a result we are quickly approaching a position where we cannot meet our financial obligations. This includes \$1,000 in critical mission support for the Synod, something that is expected of all congregations but which we have *never* done before. And just think of how much the Synod has done for us!

One issue is that we have been relying too heavily on our exhausting, labor-intensive fundraisers. Because we use these to cover our giving shortfall, there is nothing left to give to the world outside our doors.

The Starlight Promise invites you to change your way of thinking. Instead of a mindset of scarcity, let’s put on an attitude of gratitude for all that God gives us—which is, literally, everything. And it is well known that generous people are the happiest people on earth. So grab a star from the bowl, pin it in the sky, and let’s see what God can do.

“Give thanks in all things, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

CHURCH NEWS

Christmas Eve Worship: Readings and carols by candlelight on December 24 at 3:30, 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. Please invite friends and extended family to join you on this holiest of nights. Invitation cards may be found on the prayer table in the narthex.

Annual Meeting: Our very important Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday January 26, 2020 following ONE WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:00 am. All members are expected to attend! We are sweetening the deal for you this year with a potluck following the meeting, including plenty of kids' activities. We will elect three new council members and consider shortening Council terms to two years from the current three.

The Holy Trinity Women's Book Group will be meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday December 2 at the parsonage and again on December 16. The book *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way* by Lysa Terkeurst has been the focus of their discussions. Please let the office know if you'd like to participate; we can order a book for you.

Pastor's Christmas Party at the Parsonage: Please join Pastor Raabe, her husband Bill, and their "children" for some old-fashioned Christmas cheer from 5:00-8:00 pm. on Friday, December 20. Drop in for a few minutes or stay awhile. We hope very much to see you there.

Stuff those stockings: Vande Walle's candy bars are back! They can be purchased at Wednesday or Sunday services, or whenever the office is open. They are \$1.00 each, or pick up a tote for \$40.00 to sell to your family, friends, and coworkers.

Electronic Giving: Please consider giving electronically. It saves you effort in bringing weekly offering envelopes, it saves us money on the cost of those envelopes, and it helps us all to stay on track with giving through all seasons of the year. On your smartphone, just go to the App Store or Google Play to download the free "GivePlus Church" app and follow the instructions. There you can designate not only the amount but the time frame (monthly, weekly), plus you can go back in and change the amount of your gift anytime. You can also do one-time giving by text message by texting **608-709-0483**. After you enter your information, simply put the dollar amount in the message line and press Send.



New Time! Pastor's Weekly Coffee Hour Thursdays at 12 noon.

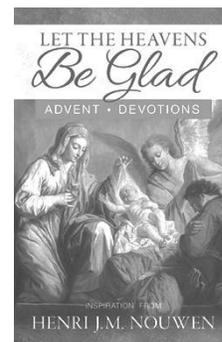
Pastor Raabe is now hosting a weekly coffee hour at Paradiddle's Café in Waterloo, 1003 N. Monroe St., every Thursday. Reconnect with members, make new friends. Bring your ideas, hopes, and dreams for Holy Trinity, or let's just solve the world's problems together. (Please note: No Coffee Hour on December 5 or 26; we resume January 2.)

NOTE: The church is now locked after office hours. If you need to get in at another time, please call the church office to make arrangements.

Sunday worship helpers (greeters, ushers, lectors, communion assistants) are always needed. There's a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, along with one for snacks and coffee-making for each service.

Deepen your experience of the season with Advent calendars featuring daily Bible readings, and devotional booklets inspired by the beautiful writings of Henri Nouwen. Find them at Welcome Desk.

Offering Envelopes If you are giving electronically and no longer wish to receive weekly offering envelopes, please e-mail htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com and let us know that; otherwise you will continue to receive them. Thank you.



Thrivent Choice Dollars -- Attention all Thrivent members: You are now required to register for Thrivent Choice annually. If you are a Thrivent customer, Thrivent Choice Dollars have been accumulating throughout the year. Please direct Choice Dollars several times during the year to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church by simply following these steps:

1. Visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice
2. Click on "Choice Dollars" and log in
3. Search for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Marshall
4. Click on "Direct Now" or
5. Call the Thrivent Member Center at 800-847-4836

When prompted say "Thrivent Choice", then say "Choice Dollars," and a representative will process your request.

Electronic newsletter To save paper, you may prefer to receive this newsletter electronically if you do not already. Just e-mail htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com and let us know that.



Your Parsonage All Holy Trinity members are warmly invited to use the parsonage at 224 Howard Street for church-related gatherings, whether one-time or ongoing.

The fellowship hall is available for parties and gatherings Please call the church office at 655-4246 (or email the office at htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com) with the date and time you are interested in reserving and we'll get back to you. There is a \$25 fee per event to Holy Trinity members for reservations booked after November 1st.

Our web site, holytrinitymarshall.com, is regularly updated with all the latest news and information that you might need. Please use it and write to us with suggestions.

Thanks to those who took our recent Facebook poll! First five responders, don't forget to claim your free candy bar. Look for more of these on our Facebook page.

Coming Up at Holy Trinity

***AA meetings** are held every Tuesday evening at 7:30 pm.

***The Women's Book Group** meets at the parsonage on Monday, December 2 and 16, at 6:30 pm.

***December confirmation classes** will be held ONLY on December 4 and 11. All confirmands will take part in "A Night in Bethlehem" on December 18 and should be at church at the usual time of 5:15 pm. Regular confirmation classes will resume January 8 at 5:15 pm.

***Choir practice for Christmas Eve** will be held at 6:15 on December 9, 17, and 19. If you are interested, please come to two of these three and let Pastor Raabe know which dates.

***Coffee with Pastor @ Paradiddle's** at noon on December 12 and 19.

There will be a Cookie Walk on Sunday December 8 Donations of 2 dozen cookies (or more) are needed to be sold at the Cookie Walk. Please have your donations of cookies to the church kitchen by 8:30 am on December 8. If you have empty Cool Whip containers, please bring them to the church kitchen anytime as they are needed for the Cookie Walk. Thank you!

The 3yr-2nd grade Christmas program will be at the 10:30 worship service on December 8.

WELCA meets on Tuesday December 10 at 12:30 pm for a potluck lunch and Bible Study. All women of Holy Trinity are invited.

Church Council meets at 6:00 pm on Tuesday December 10. Members of Holy Trinity are invited to attend any meeting.

The 3rd-6th grade Christmas program will be at the 10:30 worship service on December 15.

"A Night in Bethlehem" will be presented on Wednesday December 18 from 6:00-8:00 pm.

Christmas Party at the parsonage hosted by Pastor Raabe and family will be December 20 from 5:00-8:00 pm. Stop in for some Christmas fellowship.

There is no Sunday School on December 22 and 29; classes resume January 5 at 9:00 am.

There will be no quilting day or quilt tying in December due to the holidays.

Christmas Eve Worship services will be held at 3:30, 5:30, and 7:30 on December 24. There will be no Christmas Day worship services.

The December Second Harvest Food Bank will be Friday December 27 from 2:00-4:30 pm. This ministry provides much-needed food to area families and is open and available to all people. Volunteers are always needed for the following, so come help out and bring a friend:

- 12:30 pm *Unload the Second Harvest truck; all food is moved by hand jack (we are especially in need of someone to help with this)*
- 1:30 pm *Set up food for distribution*
- 2:00-4:30 pm *Distribute food*
- 4:30 pm *Break down boxes, move pallets, and vacuum carpets*

Registration for recipients begins at **1:00 pm**. There will be limited seating in the narthex between 1:00 and 2:00 pm; otherwise, church doors open at 2:00 pm.

Second Harvest has released new rules for those who volunteer: If in need, volunteers are permitted to receive food from the mobile food pantry. They must follow the same intake process, take the same volume as other guests and receive no preferential treatment. They may act as a proxy for someone in need. Volunteers are to assist with the distribution of food and then at the end of the distribution join in the line as guests, following the same intake process and taking the same amount of food as all guests are permitted.

Upcoming Second Harvest Food dates are January 31, February 28, March 27 and April 24.



Council Highlights – November 5, 2019

- Holy Trinity member Dave Kiersten of Paragon Heating & Cooling in Marshall surprised us with a generous offer to maintain our church heating systems for around \$200.
- An order of Vande Walle’s candy bars is for pickup in Appleton. If they sell well, we can order more. We make a \$12 profit on each tote of 40 bars.
- Pastor shared news of the Thanksgiving Eve joint service here with five other area congregations. Pastor Robb Kosky of St. Paul’s Lutheran in Waterloo will preach. Messages were left inviting the Baptist church in Marshall but no response.
- The main work for the December 10 meeting will be creating a draft of the 2020 budget. If we can't balance the budget, what is the alternative?
- Richard Tooley has agreed to fill Chad Chadwick’s seat for the remaining year of that term. Three seats will be up for election at the Annual Meeting on January 26.
- Pastor has asked Council members to submit brief summaries in their assigned areas as activities occur. Elesa, events; Barb, pastor-parish relations; John, finance (John had already created a summary of expenses and income, and distributed copies of it at the meeting); George, worship; Cheri, Bible study/small groups/spirituality; Susy, Christian education; Kayla, youth. Liz Vent has offered to take notes and help with other business aspects of the meetings, including structure and timing.
- Giving challenge, “The Starlight Promise,” will be launched on November 10.
- The Annual Meeting will be January 26, 2020 with one service at 10 am. followed by a potluck and then the meeting. Looking for two non-voting members to supervise children’s activities.

- Pastor is still working with Grinnell to see if they can increase our insurance coverage to that quoted by Church Mutual (at a much higher rate).

YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL

Elesa Kinder, President	608-333-2238, elesa.kinder@gmail.com
Barb Anderson, Vice President	608-655-8090, pmohrmann3031@charter.net
Kayla German, student rep	608-655-4422, kaylgerm@marshallschools.org
John Baneck	608-512-5947, baneckj@ayresassociates.com
George Socha	608-770-1745, gsochasr@gmail.com
Susy Pawl	608-655-3437, susypsuffles@gmail.com
Cheri Harwood	608-469-2142 mac9harw@gmail.com
Richard Tooley	608-235-8482 tooleyr@charter.net



COMMUNITY NEWS

RSVP Driver Services Program in the Marshall/Cottage Grove area urgently needs drivers. If you are interested and/or need more information, please contact Mary Schmelzer at 608-441-7896 or mschmelzer@rsvpdane.org.

The Salvation Army's Dane County Red Kettle Campaign has begun and runs through December 24. Bell ringers are needed at over 60 locations throughout Dane County. Proceeds benefit community services. To sign up visit www.ringbellsdane.org or call 608-250-2283 to schedule over the phone. If you have questions, email redkettledaneco@gmail.com. This is a wonderful way to volunteer during the holiday season.

Marshall-Waterloo Food Pantry The Marshall/Waterloo Food Pantry is located in the lower level at 117 E. Madison Street (Hwy. 19) in Waterloo. (Please use the door in the alley.) People may visit the food pantry once each month. Hours are Wednesdays from noon-1:00PM and again Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 PM. Saturday hours are from 9:00-10:00 AM.

FoodShare Helpline 877-366-3635 Many individuals and families are struggling to make ends meet. FoodShare Wisconsin may be able to see your food budget stretch further. This Program is for anyone with low or no income. It includes working people or those receiving Social Security, SSWI, SSDI, or Unemployment. Call the FoodShare Helpline today to complete a confidential pre-screening and make an appointment for free application assistance.

Cold weather season is here sooner than we expected. Do you need help paying your energy bill? The Wisconsin Home Energy Plus Program may be able to help with winter heating bills. **Find out if you qualify by calling Wisconsin Home Energy Plus Program at 1-866-432-8947 OR in Dane County call Madison phone 267-8601.**

thank you

Our thanks and gratitude to those who gave so much of their energy and time in November for the sake of this body of Christ! These include our secretary Kathy Schluter, our organists Carol Johnson-Hohol and Candy Lauby, Altar Guild members, those serving on Council or other leadership teams, Women of the ELCA, our faithful Sunday School staff for their work with our youth and preparing them for the upcoming Christmas programs, and to our hard-working Second Harvest Food Bank volunteers. Thank you to our Property Committee for all the work they do to maintain the church and parsonage, and to those who plow the snow. Thanks to everyone who made desserts and assisted at the joint Thanksgiving Eve worship service. Shout-out also to the member who purchased the new rack for our folding chairs, those who purchased paper for bulletins/newsletters, brought donations for the high school food pantry, prepared the newsletter for mailing, ordered supplies and cleaned the church, watered the plants, kept track of church finances, counted money, took photographs, brewed coffee and provided weekly snacks, baked bread for communion, provided assistance at worship such as ushering, reading, or helping with communion, put information in the Courier, handled fellowship hall rentals, and took out trash.

Apologies to those who may have been missed.
Know that each and every one of you is very much appreciated!



Contact the church office at 608-655-4246 or htcstaff@holyltrinity-marshall.com

--To schedule weddings, baptisms, or other events

--If your name is spelled incorrectly, your address has changed (post office charges church when things are sent to an old address), you no longer wish to receive the church newsletter, or you wish to have the newsletter e-mailed to you

--Especially to let us know if a member of your family is admitted to the hospital or a nursing home or will be needing surgery

--You know someone who is a shut-in and would like a visit from the pastor

--A baby arrives in your family

--A death occurs in your family

--You know of someone to be added to the prayer list

--A member of your family is deployed

--You need a ride to worship or a church event

Pastoral Care Please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Raabe for any pastoral need, particularly if you are ill or must go into the hospital. She wants nothing more than to be present with you in person or in prayer. If you are hospitalized, upon admission, please be sure to say you are a member at Holy Trinity and we will be notified. Also, please call the office if you would like to receive a home visit with Holy Communion. This is an important part of our ministry!

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Staff office hours: Monday-Thursday, 9:00am – 12:00noon
Note: Church is now locked when the office is not open.

Kathy Schluter, office staff	htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com
Pastor Nancy Raabe e-mail	pastor@holytrinity-marshall.com
Pastor Nancy Raabe phone	(614)-214-2639 (cell), call or text; home, 608-839-0322
Web site	www.holytrinitymarshall.com

Find us on Facebook and keep up with all the news!



*Merry Christmas and Many Wishes
for a Blessed New Year
from Pastor Raabe, Kathy Schluter,
and your Church Council*