

February 2017

Dear Friends of Trinity,

The Holy Scriptures do not contain advice on how to live a more comfortable and easier life. It does not tell us how to reduce stress or straighten out our finances. It is not a life coach nor is it a therapist. As much as our therapeutic and narcissistic culture demands this to be so, the Scriptures do not comply. I wish it did. If I wrote my own Bible it would be completely different, and most likely contain all the latest pop psychology, pithy sayings, and word mashups that I could muster. But I didn't write one and it's a good thing that I didn't. God has already taken care of that.

What does the Bible contain? From a bird's-eye view, it commands love for God and others, and demands that we carry it out to perfection. Laid out on its pages for all to see is the abject failure of people trying to do just that. They kill. They steal. They lie. They commit adultery. They worship gods that don't exist. They ignore the poor and marginalized. They bribe judges. They engage in dishonest business practices. They are only in it for themselves.

Does any of this ring a bell? It should, because it is precisely the story of you and I! But doing these things and being that way seems so natural, doesn't it? It's as if we're supposed to do these things because the urge to focus solely on ourselves is so rooted within us. As much as we seek glory for ourselves we end up being closed in and trapped. Actually, a better word to use is enslaved. The Bible has an even more precise word: dead! Trapped, enslaved, and dead. Try clawing your way out of that!

We try. We make up our own rules and standards to lift ourselves out of death, slavery, and entrapment. We can try to improve our lives all we want by sheer resolve. But the fact remains that we have a big problem wrapped around our necks. "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me," wrote King David in Psalm 51. It's like being born with an inherited disease whose symptoms come pouring out of our lives. There's no way out.

Only until we see the hopelessness of trying to get ourselves out of the bind will the name of Jesus start to sound like music to our ears. Jesus is the way out! "God made him (Jesus Christ) who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God," declares St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21. In other words, Jesus became our disease and gave us his perfection so that we could be declared cured! Jesus was trapped and hung dead on a cross to release us from slavery and give us life. Only being rooted in Christ Jesus and made new creations are we freed from our sinful condition through the forgiveness of sin and now able to love others as we are loved God, "for it is God who works in [us], both to will and to work for his good pleasure," writes St. Paul again in Philippians 2:13.

To God alone be all glory, honor, and worship!

In Christ,
Pastor Hoag



FEBRUARY 2017 NEWSLETTER

President's Report

Our long-awaited railings were recently installed on our new steps outside of the Narthex. I was going over notes from last January and found that the railings were "almost done" at that time. Suffice it to say, no one is happier to see those railings go in than I am.

Special thanks to our property committee for enduring the various changes we had to comply with along the way. If you haven't seen them, please make the time to do that.

They are beautifully done and I dare say they were worth the wait. They are on our Facebook page but they are best seen in person. The finished product absolutely exceeded my expectations and hopefully you will agree that they enhance the beauty of our house of worship while adding functional safety at the same time. We'll arrange for a landscaping clean-up day later in the Spring to help finalize and further beautify our front entrance. Please keep your eye out for that in future newsletters.

We are hoping to have a good turnout again this year for the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 29th. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the details of what goes on at Trinity and to hear about what all of our various groups do for us. It is open to all members and you're welcome to come and simply observe or you can come and ask questions. We hope to see you there! And since we'll be reviewing what we did in 2016 and what we have planned for 2017 at that meeting, I will keep this month's message short and just encourage you to join us on Sunday for the annual meeting. Like last year, we are hosting a potluck meal after the second service and our meeting will commence at the conclusion of our meal.



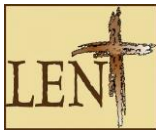
Contribution statements for income tax purposes are available for members using the offering envelopes. If you have not received a statement in previous years and would like to request one, please contact the church secretary or Janice Prospero. If you received a statement in the past you are on the list to automatically receive one each year.



Trinity is now wheelchair accessible. The lift is up and running. The fifth pew from the front on the South side has been removed, to allow room for wheelchairs. Anyone who wishes to use the lift should use the entrance on the South side of church.



February Sign-Up sheets for Readers, Greeters and MorningStar Mission are on the hallway table! Please help by taking a turn.



LENT BEGINS March 1, 2017

Ash Wednesday Service will be on March 1st at 7:30 p.m.

Lenten services will be held each following Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m.

Lenten Series 2017

In commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, we will have a special sermon series during the Lenten Midweek Services.

Have Mercy on Me, O God: Martin Luther on Psalm 51 is the title of the series.

Psalm 51 is the great lament Psalm of King David when he was confronted by the prophet Nathan about his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah the Hittite.

Luther wrote at length about the Psalm three times during his life and gleans so much meaning and significance about the nature of repentance, the knowledge of man, and the knowledge of God. Each week we will explore portions of Psalm 51 and hear Luther's great insights for our own Lenten journey of penitence and being embraced by the great mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

Ash Wednesday, March 1: When Mercy Is All That We Can Ask For (Psalm 51:1-2)

Midweek 2, March 8: God's Judgment is Justified (Psalm 51:3-5)

Midweek 3, March 15: God Seeks Truth (Psalm 51:6-8)

Midweek 4, March 22: A New Creation by the Mercy of God (Psalm 51:9-13)

Midweek 5, March 29: God Opens Lips to Praise His Mercy (Psalm 51:14-15)

Midweek 6: April 5: Sacrifices by the Mercy of God (Psalm 51:16-19)

Social Ministry



Social Ministry is just completing the selling of TJ's Pizza and Desserts (same company as last year), with the proceeds going to Regenerations, a part of Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois' foster care program. Ordering has been extended to February 5th. Thanks to everyone who placed orders and helped to benefit our organization. Delivery date is Thursday, February 23rd between 4:30 – 6:00 P.M. If you cannot pick up your order at that time, you can pick it up on the following Sunday after one of the services.



Trinity Pre-School – Registration for Fall Pre-School is now open. Please tell your friends and neighbors. There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$60.00 per student. School year beginning September 2017 the tuition per month will be \$105 for two day students and \$130 for three day students. Children must be 3 by September 1, 2017. For further information, please call Trinity Lutheran Church at 815.485.6973.

Pre-School Board Meeting – Sunday, February 19th at 11:30 a.m.



MorningStar Mission: The next serving dates for February are the 6th and 20th. If you are interested in helping, please be sure to sign up on the sheet on the hallway table, so we know we have enough helpers to serve.



Chancel Guild: The next meeting will be **Monday, February 6, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.** All ladies of Trinity are invited to visit. Hostesses are Lois Dobbs and Doris Bay.



Candy Bars for sale! Rita Larson is selling Fannie May candy bars for \$1.00 each. The candy bars are available after services or in the church office. Please deposit your payment in the envelope inside the candy bar box.



THESE MAKE GREAT VALENTINE GIFTS!

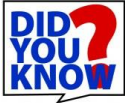


Women's League will have their Birthday luncheon at Williamson's Restaurant in New Lenox on Route 30 on **Tuesday, February 28th at 12:30 p.m.** Separate checks will be issued. Call Pat Fuerst at 815.485.6441 or Ginny DeCarlo at 815.485.2001 for reservations.



Scrip Fundraiser - This is a gift card fundraiser - they are the same gift cards you can purchase from retailers, including over 300 brand-name grocery, department stores, restaurants, gas stations, hotels, home improvement, etc. **We order the gift cards at a discount, and you pay face value for the gift cards. (For example, you pay \$25 for a \$25 Speedway gift card - the youth group obtains the card at a discount and keeps the difference.)** You can purchase gift cards by filling out an order form (located by the youth bulletin board) or by placing your order online at shopwithscrip.com. If interested in placing orders online, you will need an enrollment code. Ask Angie Minett for the code or stop by the church office. Direct any questions you may have to Angie Minett at minett411@yahoo.com or [\(815\)467-2537](tel:8154672537).

The next deadline for turning in orders along with payment is Monday, February 6th at noon. The cards will be ready for pick-up at church the following weekend (February 11th and 12th).



Trivia Night and Silent Auction - Saturday, February 25, 7:00

p.m. - Who will be this year's "Trinity Trivia Titans"? Bring a team or come join a team for Trivia Night! \$5 per person, up to 10 people on a team. Loads of fun every year! **We are looking for silent auction donations - any item or basket would be welcome.**

Thank you to everyone who has been supporting our efforts!
Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

High School Service Event – Monday, February 20, at 10:00 a.m. Meet at church to put together kits for Lutheran World Relief. Bring money for lunch afterward.

High school youth - Our English District has two Servant Events this summer near Akron, Ohio and Lincoln, Nebraska. Dates are July 13-16 or July 20-23. Cost is \$150; you pay half, youth group will pay half. We would need a couple of adult chaperones too. Contact Michelle Hoag by February 6 if you want to attend.



Bible Classes. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend one or both of these classes. Classes meet in the church library

Wednesday Mornings at 8:30 a.m.
Sunday Mornings at 9:15 a.m.



Thrivent Members! Thrivent members: 2016 Choice Dollars® Expire on March 31, 2017

Giving back has always been important to Thrivent and our members, and the Thrivent Choice® program provides eligible participants the opportunity to recommend where to distribute some of Thrivent's charitable outreach funds. Our church is an eligible recipient. There are two easy options for directing Choice Dollars: Online: www.Thrivent.com/thriventchoice. or Phone: 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" at the prompt.



St. Matthew's Outreach. We are still collecting food, clothing and small household items for St. Matthew's Church. Please place food items in the bin at the top of the stairs coming in from the parking lot. Other items should be carefully placed in the storage room at the East end of the church basement. If you are interested in helping take these items to St. Matthew's please contact the church office at 815.485.6973.

Thanks to Sandy and Chuck Peters, Virgil Switzer and Midge Meents for recently delivering all the extra Christmas Trees, decorations, food and rummage to St. Matthews.



ALTAR FLOWERS: Flowers are placed on our altar every Sunday to enhance and beautify our altar area in memory of a loved one, to commemorate a birthday, wedding anniversary or in celebration of God's blessings. The flower order forms are attached to the cabinet in the hallway outside the church office. If you would like to give altar flowers, complete the form and place it in the Chancel Guild mailbox in the church office. If you have any questions, please call Kay Purnell at 815.485.9017 or email her at gpurnell3@hotmail.com. The cost of the flowers is \$9.00 per vase or \$18.00 for both vases. The flowers may be picked up after the Sunday service.

Rummage Sale

We are considering hosting a rummage sale in April and we're looking for a volunteer to coordinate and run this. If you would be interested in this, please contact the church office, Pastor Hoag or Jeff McDonald. The plan is to have a weekend where members can set up a table with items for sale (like a garage sale, but you don't need to clean out your garage - you can bring your items to Trinity instead). We might have a preview night on Friday before the sale for members only and then the sale would be on Saturday and Sunday. We were hoping to have some portion of sale proceeds be donated to Trinity for our various projects. Various other details are flexible. If you would like to coordinate this effort and arrange the times and other details of the event, we would appreciate your efforts. This is a great opportunity to get involved at Trinity and we think the scale of this opportunity will be fairly easily managed. If you would like to run with this, please contact us.

Church office hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm