

January 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Every new year comes along with new possibilities and potentials. Some of them are obvious. Others will make themselves known as the year goes along. Still others will remain hidden from us and will evade our awareness. Having blind spots, after all, is part of being human.

Blind spots. We all have them, but we wish we didn't. Depending on who you are you either miss the forest for the trees or you miss the trees for the forest. We are all proficient in some areas and deficient in others. One of the worst things we can do is fault ourselves for our deficiencies. Most of the time they just can't be helped.

Really, the main deficiency that all of us need to focus upon is the fact that we all fall short of our Lord's perfection and glory. Try as we might, we will never get there. It's like trying to get to the top of Willis Tower by jumping as high as you can. It's not going to happen.

This is precisely why the glory of our Lord must come to us.

And come it did! It came to us a newborn child in the person of Jesus. This child, this Savior, removes our greatest blind spot and help us to see the manner of love that our Heavenly Father has for us. We are called His children. And we proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness and blindness into His marvelous light. We are given sight.

Spend this year in gladness and joy because the Lord has revealed Himself to you in human flesh with His grace and everlasting life! Love one another just as God in Christ Jesus loves you.

In Christ,

Pastor Hoag



JANUARY 2020



*We begin by saying thank you to so many.....*



**Thank You!** Christmas services require the work of a lot of people. Some get their names in the bulletin. Many do not. We could try and list them, but inevitably, we would miss someone. So, whether you came and helped set up the tree, folded bulletins, swapped out candles, ushered, set up communion, cleaned up after communion, set up flowers, donated flowers, sang or played an instrument, a very warm and heartfelt THANK YOU! May the love that you showed be reflected back to you a thousand times over in the year to come.



The Chancel Guild would like to thank those who purchased poinsettias to help decorate the chancel area for the Christmas services. The flowers were beautiful!

Biff & Debbie Aiken, Dunc & Allene Bachmann, The Buchanan Family, Tom & Jan Clark, The Cuthbert Family, Les & Ginny DeCarlo, Janet DeForest, Bob & Tammy Doerrer, Jan Falk, Pat Fuerst & Cheryl Baggs, Mike & Joanne Gardner, Bill & Sally Jackson, Tom & Wendy Kaun, Les & Cheryl Koenig, Paul & Robin Krol, Joe & Renee Lavazza, Jeff & Sharon Lorenz, Mike & Liz Lyman, Phil & Sharon MacFarlane, Al McCullough, Gary & Kay Purnell, Richard P. Sargent, Doug & Jan Schlak, Steve & Cindy Spiess, Steve & Rita Tinker, Rex & Jan Toepke, The Wheeler Family, and Daniel & Susan Willenborg.

## **An update from Church Council President, Jeff McDonald.**

You're probably expecting an update on the kitchen, and I won't let you down this month. We have made some great progress in the last month on the kitchen remodel project. Plumbing, electrical, drywall and flooring have all been completed and it actually looks like a kitchen now. Still to come are appliances, cabinets and probably a dozen more things that have slipped my mind, but I wanted to be sure to pass along that December was a month of significant progress for the kitchen. Special thanks to Jeff Lorenz, Dan Bay and Tom Buell for all of their efforts on this project to date, as well as to all others who have lent a hand in getting us this far. It promises to be a much nicer and more functional space when it is done, and that should be well in advance of our Lenten suppers and Easter breakfast this year. More to follow on this, but it's nice not to come to you to explain another unforeseen challenge with this project, and my hope is that those are all behind us at this point.

Aside from the kitchen (yes, we do talk about other things on council!), we are moving forward on a matter that is as much a sign of the times as anything else. Pastor Hoag learned in a recent meeting with other area pastors that Trinity is unique in that we don't have a company we use to conduct background checks on our employees or our volunteers who work with children (aside from preschool, where DCFS required these checks). I want to be very clear that our decision to move forward with conducting these checks is in no way in response to any sort of untoward incident at Trinity. We have been fortunate over the years to have never had a problem in this regard. But it is also clear that we are in the minority when it comes to the issue of performing background checks on our staff and council agreed that we should implement this in 2020 in hopes of making Trinity an even safer environment for all who attend. This truly is being done out of an abundance of caution and in the spirit of 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' If you are an employee or work with our youth, you will be asked to have a background check done this year. Please note that this request is being made of ALL such individuals in hopes of continuing to provide a safe and nurturing environment at Trinity.

Another sign of the times is that we have added the ability to make donations to Trinity online using our web site. This is another area where Trinity was unique and we identified a company who specializes in setting up churches for online giving. We will have the ability to collect funds for our general fund, our special projects (e.g. the kitchen), VBS registration, pre-school registration, etc. There really aren't any limits to what we can use this for, and we reasoned that simply having this capability is better for Trinity than not having it as online giving has become a very common thing for non-profit organizations. Here again, though, this is not in response to any sort of problem we had at Trinity. Our giving remains extremely generous at Trinity, but we wanted to add this additional functionality to our online presence. You will now see a "Donate to Trinity" button on our web page at [www.trinitynewlenox.org](http://www.trinitynewlenox.org) where you can preview or even use this function if you wish.

Speaking of our online presence, have you 'liked' Trinity's Facebook page yet? Bob Blecke, our current Director of Outreach, has been researching ways to better communicate online and has found that a more active social media presence can be a great way to better engage not only existing members, but potential new members as well. If you aren't linked to our Facebook page yet, please do so and you'll see more posts on this page than you have before. The initial response to this increased online presence has been very positive, and I want to thank Bob for the work he has done on this project.

In closing, I want to invite all members to attend our upcoming Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26th, following the second service. We will cover our 2019 accomplishments as well as

our 2020 plans, notably the budget. As has been the case for every year I have been on council, our budget for 2020 is higher than before. I believe we've settled on a reasonable budget for the upcoming year, but I'm always happy to discuss specific parts of the budget with anyone who cares to ask. Council members are simply the stewards of the generous giving that Trinity members are known for providing. If you have questions or concerns about how those funds are being managed, this is a great forum for expressing that. I hope to see you there.

### **2020 Church Council Officers**



Jeff McDonald, President; Kim Blecke, Secretary; Tammy Doerrler, Financial Secretary; Tim King, Treasurer; Bob Blecke, Director of Outreach; Dan Bay and Jeff Lorenz, Co-Directors of Property; Ed Tatro and Diane Sewing, Co-Directors of Spiritual Life; Judi Donovan, Director of Parish Education; Michelle Hoag, Director of Youth Ministry.



### **Annual Congregational Meeting**

**Join us on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, at 12:15 p.m. All members are invited to attend. Coffee and desserts will be served.**

### **SCRIP GIFT CARDS**

Thank you so very much to those of you who participate in the scrip card fundraiser. We greatly appreciate your support! There will be Scrip Order placed in January. Next order will be February 2020. Any questions can be directed to Angie Minett at [minett411@yahoo.com](mailto:minett411@yahoo.com) or [\(815\)467-2537](tel:8154672537). Also, check out [shopwithscrip.com](http://shopwithscrip.com) to learn more about this simple way to help the youth earn funds.



### **Looking for a College Scholarship?**

The Beta Sigma Psi Educational Foundation is an organization that serves the Lutheran community as part of the National Lutheran Fraternity for collegiate men and alumni. Our membership is made up of Lutherans from congregations across the United States, dedicated to Spiritual Growth, Scholastic Achievement, and Social Responsibility.

We are pleased to announce several scholarships that are available to Lutheran men who will be starting college in Fall 2020. Alumni from our chapters at the University of Illinois, Indiana University, and Purdue University will select well-qualified individuals to be honored with our **Christian Leadership Award**, a \$1,500.00 Scholarship towards the cost of tuition at the respective campus they will be attending.

Our National Fraternity is also offering the **Martin Luther Scholarship**. This \$2,000 award is open to young men who will be attending their first year at any accredited 4-year College or University. These scholarships are our way of giving back to the Lutheran Church and supporting her youth.

Applicants should be male, confirmed members of a Lutheran congregation, and starting college in the Fall 2020 semester in order to receive the award. There is no obligation to join Beta Sigma Psi or be related to a member in order to be considered. Students may apply for multiple awards. **Applications Due February 15 for priority consideration!**

Please let me know if you have any questions about our scholarships or Beta Sigma Psi in general.

Adam Rusch  
Chairman  
Beta Sigma Psi Educational Foundation  
<http://scholarships.betasigmapsi.org/>  
Email: [grants@betasigmapsi.org](mailto:grants@betasigmapsi.org)



**ALTAR FLOWERS:** A new 2020 Altar Flower Calendar has been posted. You can find it in the glass case hanging on the wall across the old office. If you would like to reserve a weekend for 2020 in memory of a loved one, to commemorate a birthday, wedding anniversary, or in celebration of God's blessings, please fill out a sponsor sheet. Sponsor sheets are located on a hook attached to the glass case housing the calendar. **Please do not fill in the calendar. Fill out a sponsor sheet and put it in the Chancel Guild mailbox in the general office.** Flowers are \$30.00 for both arrangements. If you would like a weekend already spoken for, it is sometimes possible to share the cost and arrangements with permission from the person already sponsoring. Chancel Guild members would like to thank those of you who sponsored a weekend this past year. We appreciate your efforts to help us enhance and beautify the altar area. If you have any questions, email Kay Purnell at [purnellk51@hotmail.com](mailto:purnellk51@hotmail.com) or call her at (815) 485-9017.

Flowers left in the refrigerator will be disposed of after 2 weeks.



Our Trinity Chancel Guild is changing a few things for 2020! Our new meetings time is on the first Saturday of the month at 9:00 am with the exception of January, February, June, July and August. February, June, July and August will be months of no meetings. In January, we will meet on the 5<sup>th</sup> after the 10:30 service to take down the Christmas decorations and have a short meeting.

Anyone who is looking for a way to be of service to our wonderful church is welcome to come on January 5<sup>th</sup> to help us take the decorations down. Or if you would like to speak to someone first without committing to a meeting, please call Denise Buchanan at 815-485-2729 or stop in the office.

Working on Chancel Guild is a great way to serve your church and it doesn't take a lot of time. We are a great group to work with and would love to have you as a member! Give us a try.



Thanks to the choir for the beautiful singing and music in our regular church services, as well as the Christmas services. The choir meets on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. and are always looking for additional voices.

Choir will resume practices on January 15, 2020 at 7:00 pm.



**Love. Grow. Serve.**

### **SOCIAL MINISTRY HAPPENINGS**

They will also be supporting Sole Hope again. They will be collecting old, clean jeans through January. There should be a box available to put any donations in this week. Cutting dates are as follows: Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm and Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 pm. Please bring a pair of very sharp scissors! More information about Sole Hope and a sample of the shoes will be on displaying in January.

The very successful Valentine Candy Sale will return on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. Stock up on homemade candy for someone special or just for yourself. Proceeds will go to the kitchen remodel project.

Next meeting will be held on January 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at Jan Toepke's house.



### **St. Matthew's.**

We are continuing to support St. Matthew's Lutheran church in Chicago by collecting donations of non-perishable food items, as well as household goods. Please place the food items in the collection box by the parking lot door. **The household items should be placed in the storage closet area located in the old bathroom by the lift.**



*If anyone is interested in helping with the hauling of these items to St. Matthew's, please contact the church office. Extra help is always appreciated.*



**MorningStar Mission Serving.** Trinity has been helping with serving meals at MorningStar twice a month for a number of years. We help by serving dinner on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of each month, and need 3-4 volunteers each time. If you are interested in volunteering, please sign the sheet on the hallway table, or call the church office. You must be at MorningStar by 3:45 pm. If you are not able to make those times/dates you may call them at 815.722.5780 or visit their web at [www.morningstarmission.org](http://www.morningstarmission.org) for other volunteer positions.

### SCRIPTURE READERS



We are asking you to become involved in our worship services, without committing too much time! Just read The First and Second Lessons!! To do so, place your name on the Sunday you would like on the sheets in the hallway. The actual readings are available ahead of time and may be acquired by contacting Pastor or the Church Office at 815.485.6973.



### GREETERS

Have you ever gone somewhere where you didn't know anyone? Imagine you are looking for a new church home and one of the churches on your list is Trinity. You show up on Sunday morning and no one speaks to you except the Pastor. Will you be coming back? Take a turn at greeting at one of our services and the result might be very surprising. Signup sheet for January is in the hallway.



**Wednesday Morning Bible Class** is held at 8:30 a.m. Please join this very interesting group.

**Thursday Evening Bible Class** is held at 7:00 p.m. Please join us!



## TRINITY PRAYER CHAIN

**PRAYER CHAIN: Share the love of God, faith and compassion with someone needing support in praying for health problems, sorrow, praise, thanksgiving. Receive a phone call; make a phone call, pray. Or would you like that kind of support for your prayer? All strictly confidential. Phone Pat Fuerst at 815-485-6441 or Ginny DeCarlo at 815-485-2001. You may also email Ginny at [vdecarlo1952@gmail.com](mailto:vdecarlo1952@gmail.com).**



Preschool Registration for the school year beginning September 2020. **Trinity members get priority registration and may register now.** Already enrolled students may register the first two weeks in January. Registration for new students will begin the third week of January. If you know of anyone who falls into one of these categories, please have them call the pre-school at 815.485.6973. There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$65.00 per student. The tuition per month for the school year beginning September 2020, will be \$115.00 for two day students and \$145.00 for three day students. Children must have turned 3 by September 1, 2020. For further information, please call Trinity Lutheran Church at 815.485.6973.



Wishing everyone a blessed and healthy 2020!

**Church office hours:** Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9-2 pm