



December 2025 Volume 28, No. 12

Trinity Lutheran Church

A welcoming faith community
living together in God's love to
share the joy of Jesus Christ.

TIDINGS

Children's Christmas Pageant

Please join us for the Shared Children's Christmas Pageant on **Sunday, December 14** with a cookie reception to follow. Speaking of cookies, **please bring your favorite cookie to share during Fellowship.**

Alternative Christmas Gift Fair

The Alternative Christmas Gift Fair is an opportunity to shop for Fair Trade gift items and to donate to local, national, and international non-profits. The event will only be held **Sunday, December 7, from 8:30 am-12:30 pm**. Set up Saturday afternoon. There will be several returning nonprofits. The Fair is put on by the 301 Faith Partners who are looking for volunteers to help with planning, and Saturday setup and/or on the day of the event. If you want to help, please contact [Patti Smith](#) or 970-988-8529.

Poinsettias

You are invited to remember family and friends this Christmas with a suggested donation of \$12 for poinsettias that we will display right before Christmas. Your name and intentions ("In memory of ..." "In celebration of ...", etc.) will be listed in the Christmas bulletins. If you would like a poinsettia to take home or to a shut-in, they will be available on a first-come, first-served basis after the Christmas services of all three congregations are over. If you would like to remember or celebrate someone with poinsettias, please email [Amanda](#) by **Monday, December 15**.

Adult Forum

December 7: Kathy Gauger will lead a discussion of the Christmas stories in the Gospels, and the way customs and songs have reshaped the narrative over time.

December 14: Kathy Gauger will follow up on the previous Adult Forum to look at how the whole story of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ is retold through worship each Sunday and through the church year.

December 21 & 28: No Adult Forum, Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Christmas Eve Worship Services

3 pm & 5 pm Candlelight Service

Staffed nursery will be available at the 3 pm Service.

Advent Mid Week Service & Supper

Save the Dates! Join us **Wednesdays, December 3, 10, & 17** for Holden Prayer at 6 pm followed by Soup Supper at 6:30 pm.

Holiday Office Closure

The Trinity office will be closed from December 24-January 1; however, staff will still be working remotely if needed, to complete their weekly tasks. Office voicemails and staff emails will be checked periodically, if there is an emergency or an immediate need, please call the after-hours emergency number 970-400-7252. This closure over the Christmas break allows Trinity staff time to spend with family and friends during the holiday season, coinciding with a slower business period. It also provides a chance for staff to rest and return to work refreshed in the new year.

Donation Corner

Prayer Cards Small Group needs:

- #5 - 1/2 invitation envelopes
- All color card-stock paper
- Any other scrap-booking paper or supplies, even stamps!

Quilting Small Group needs:

- We will always collect donated fabric, Fabric, & more FABRIC.

Thrivent Action Teams: Are you an eligible Thrivent member and have choice dollars available to direct? There are a number of groups that count on the Thrivent Action Teams.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH



www.trinitylutheranfc.org

Phone: (970) 482-1226
After Hours Emergency:
(970)-400-7252

OFFICE HOURS
MON-THURS 9AM-3PM

WORSHIP TIMES
SAT: 5 PM | SUN: 10:30 AM

Senior Pastor: Rick Reiten
pastorrick@trinitylutheranfc.org

Associate Pastor.: Kaari Nieuwlandt

Office Admin: Deana Andrist
office@trinitylutheranfc.org

Financial Manager: Brenda Moore
bmoore@trinitylutheranfc.org

Director of Communications & Volunteer Coordinator
Amanda Backsen
amanda@trinitylutheranfc.org

Church Musician: Carrie Hansen
carrie@trinitylutheranfc.org

Director of Choir: Tessa Espinosa
choir@trinitylutheranfc.org

Director of Handbell:
bells@trinitylutheranfc.org

Saturday Worship Leader
Clinton Ellerbe
saturdayworship@trinitylutheranfc.org

A/V Technician: Claire Pickerel
claire@trinitylutheranfc.org

Sunday School: Jennifer Reeve
childrensminister@stpauls-fc.org

Nursery Coordinator
Tiffany Klijewski
tiffany@trinitylutheranfc.org

TLC Preschool Director
Brenda Harju
brenda@trinitylutheranfc.org

Pastor's Ponderings ~ The Christian Century's Narrative Project

Trinity has always been a well-read, well-informed, academic, theologically astute congregation. While this characteristic continually keeps me on my toes, it is beneficial as I continue to learn and grow alongside you. Thank you!

To that end, *Christian Century* magazine has invited us to pilot a program with them for the next year. We are looking for four people to join with eight others (four each from St. Paul's and Mary of Magdala) to form a small theological reading group, called Community Reading Circles. The group would meet once a month.

You will be provided with a free year of the magazine, meet once a month, and engage in thoughtful conversations around faith, public life, and the big questions shaping our culture.

The Narrative Project responds to prevailing stories that dominate our church; by lifting up alternative stories of faith that are vital, inclusive, and rooted in Christian witness. They believe that action-oriented storytelling and theological reflection are the keys to taking these stories public.

I am excited to be included in this pilot – given we find 12 people across our congregations, who also commit to this opportunity. Are you interested? Send an email to: pastorrick@trinitylutheranfc.org

As for the things that you have learned and received
and heard and noticed in me, do them,
and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:9

Congregational Meeting, Recap, update, results, all the info!

Results from Congregational Meeting

Associate Pastor - All votes yes

Compensation package - All votes Yes

Ministry Funds Plan - 87 yes votes | 0 no votes | 4 abstained

Preschool closure - 78 yes votes | 16 no votes

Letters of Agreement - Lease

To approve the Letter of Agreement with MOM: 92 yes votes | 1 no votes | 1 abstained

To approve the Letter of Agreement for SPE: 90 yes votes | 3 no votes | 1 abstained

SafeLots - 75 yes votes | 15 no votes | 4 abstained

Congregational Meeting Recap [HERE](#).

Introducing... Associate Pastor Kaari Nieuwlandt

Meet our new Associate Pastor! Pastor Kaari Nieuwlandt was approved unanimously to serve with us, starting December 15. We are excited to welcome her and her husband Walter to this community!



Small Groups

Sermon Discussion Enjoy a discussion of the weekend sermon to share where we see God present in our lives. Join us most **Mondays at 12 pm** in Fireside Rm.

Male Spirituality Carrying on the work of Fr Richard Rohr and Illuman we will utilize the power of ritual, image, and story to expand the depth and breadth of love in ourselves to make a difference in the world, using a circle of structured sharing. Join us most **Mondays at 6:30 pm** in Room 5.

Bible Study meets **Thursdays from 9:30-11 am** in Room 2. We will NOT meet on December 25, January 1, 2026 and will resume Thursday, January 8. We will continue our journey of transitioning from the Mosaic Covenant to the New Covenant, reading chapters from Matthew and the book of Romans in the New Year.

301 Quilters meets **Fridays from 10 am-12 pm** in Room 2. If you'd like to join us, please come!!; NO experience needed, NO need to have been coming last year, NO worries. Hope to see the old familiar as well as new faces. We're a fun and caring small group that has a purpose of aiding those in need.

Trinity Readers will meet on **Monday, December 1 at 9:30 am** in the Fireside Rm to discuss the book *A Dog Called Hope: A Wounded Warrior and the Service Dog Who Saved Him* by Jason Morgan; The incredible story of a service dog who brought a devastated warrior back from the brink and taught him how to be a true father. Questions, call Cheryl Smith at 970-218-5750.

Men's Breakfast All men are welcome to join at the Breakfast Club (Ft. Collins) for discussion and fellowship on the **1st Tuesday (December 2) at 7:30 am.**

Birdhouses Join us on the **2nd Tuesday (December 9) at 4:30 pm** in Room 2 to build and decorate bird houses and feeders to raise funds for Habitat for Humanity. Ages 8 and up invited!

301 FP Get-Togethers take place the **2nd Thursday (December 11) at 3:30 pm.** Location is picked closer to the date so watch the e-News for brewery. All gatherings are informal and no RSVP needed.

Pub Theology V.3 will meet **Thursday, December 18 at 5:30 pm** at Stodgy Brewing, 1802 Laporte Ave. We will explore a variety of texts and discuss how we live out our relationship with God and support each other along the way.

TGIF (One Friday a month at 6:30 pm) - *Note*, Hosts can opt for a Friday of the month that works for them. Come, kick back, relax, and enjoy an evening connecting with others from the Trinity family and meet new faces! Bring yourself, an appetizer/dessert and a beverage you'd like or would like to share. If you have questions and or would like to sign up to host, please contact Liz Johnson or 402-320-3699. On break for December but join the fun on **Friday, January 9: Rebecca & Andrew Roland!** An RSVP to the host is appreciated but not necessary to attend.

Chapter Two Book Group is an open small group for 301 Faith Partners and the wider community, new participants are always welcome to join the casual discussion. No long-term commitment required! If you have trouble finding any of the books and would like Trinity to order a copy for the library, please let [Maddie Fairfax](#) know at any time. On break for December but join us on **Thursday, January 29 at 6 pm: Lady Tan's Circle of Women** by Lisa See.

2026 Starts a New Year with TGIF!

Thank you to All who Hosted and to guests who came to enjoy TGIF in 2025! 2026 is around the corner and in order to keep this small group going I am looking for people to host once again! We meet the **2nd Friday of each Month at 6:30 pm**. However, if another Friday in the month works better to host than the 2nd Friday, that's great too! Please let me know what month would work for you in 2026 to host TGIF! Thank you! Sincerely, Liz Johnson lizj8485@gmail.com.

Stewardship Update

The Trinity stewardship team wishes to once again thank the congregation for your generous support of the last two stewardship campaigns. Your investments in our various ministries have positioned our church to move forward with confidence as we conclude 2025 and look forward to 2026, which includes welcoming our new associate pastor Kaari Nieuwlandt to our church family.

As you know, the fall stewardship campaigns take place in order to assess what we can anticipate will be congregation donations for the next year. There is an emphasis on asking folks to make a pledge for their intended giving. It is really the only way to begin building a budget (Ministry Fund Plan) for the next year. We also realize, for a variety of reasons, not everyone feels they can make a pledge. Many families and individuals prefer to make their donations at the end of the year.

With this in mind, here are some numbers we wanted to share with everyone. The 2025 budget (MFP) calls for \$439,400 in congregation donations. As of October 31, 2025, congregation donations totaled \$319,304. Therefore, we need \$120,096 by year end to reach the congregation support goal. November and especially December are historically months with the most donations to the church so we are optimistic of a strong finish for the year.

Grace and peace, Trinity Stewardship Team

Year End Contributions

Please get your 2025 donations in early! You will be able to put your donations in the offering plate the weekend of December 27/28 and they will count for 2025. For those of you with internet access, you can easily make your donation through our website at trinitylutheranfc.org (until midnight 12/31). Do you use the Venmo platform? We are listed as [@Trinity-LutheranFC](https://www.venmo.com/Trinity-LutheranFC). If you prefer to mail your contribution, please be aware that check theft has occurred, we strongly encourage in-person or online giving whenever possible. If you do mail your donation, ensure it is postmarked by 12/31/25.

DECEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	1 9:30am Trinity Readers 12 pm Sermon Discussion 6:30 pm Male Spirituality	2 7:30 am Men's Breakfast 5:30 pm Soc/Eco Justice 6:15 pm 301 FP SEJ
7 9:30 am Alt Giving Fair 9 am Education for All 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	8 12 pm Sermon Discussion 6 pm Property 6:30 pm Male Spirituality	9 4:30 pm Birdhouse Bldg 6:30 pm Executive
14 9 am Education for All 10:30 am Worship <i>Shared Children's Pageant</i> 11:30 am Fellowship	15 12 pm Sermon Discussion 5:30 pm Trust 6:30 pm Male Spirituality	16 6:30 pm Council
21 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	22 12 pm Sermon Discussion 6:30 pm Male Spirituality	23
28 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	29 Office Closed 12 pm Sermon Discussion 6:30 pm Male Spirituality	30 Office Closed

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 5:15 pm Bells 6 pm Advent Service 6:30 pm Supper 7 pm Choir	4 9:30 am Bible Study 11 am FP Clergy Mtg 3 pm Spanish Beg. 4 pm Spanish Intermed	5 10 am Quilting	6 5 pm Worship 5:45 pm Fellowship
10 5:15 pm Bells 6 pm Advent Service 6:30 pm Supper 7 pm Choir	11 9:30 am Bible Study 3 pm Spanish Beg. 3:30 pm FP Get Together 4 pm Spanish Intermed 4 pm Finance	12 10 am Quilting	13 5 pm Worship 5:45 pm Fellowship
17 5:15 pm Bells 6 pm Advent Service 6:30 pm Supper 7 pm Choir	18 9:30 am Bible Study 3 pm Spanish Beg. 4 pm Spanish Intermed 5:30 pm Pub Theology 7 pm Immigration	19 10 am Quilting	20 12pm Sweet Treats 5 pm Worship 5:45 pm Fellowship
24 Office Closed 3 pm Christmas Service 5 pm Christmas Service	25 Office Closed	26	27 5 pm Worship 5:45 pm Fellowship
31 Office Closed	1 Office Closed	2	3

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

December 6/7 Vicki Volbrecht / Lindsay Reiten

December 13/14 Vicki Volbrecht / Shared Service

December 20/21 / Anastasia Reiten

December 27/28 Vicki Volbrecht / Tessa Espinosa

Pull Me OUT! HANG ME up!!
PUT ME ON YOUR FRIDGE!

Sky Ranch in December

FUNDRAISER AT CULVERS Join Us For Dinner at Culvers (918 S. Lemay Ave., Fort Collins) on **Tuesday, December 2, from 5-8 pm**. 10% of all net sales go to Sky Ranch, so invite all of your friends and family to support our ministry! Dine-In, Carryout, Drive-Thru, "Curdside", Door-Dash, and Uber Eats!

ADVENT RETREAT on **December 5-7** up at Sky Ranch. Treat yourself, bring a friend or come as a family! All are invited to the mountains to pause, reflect, and prepare your heart for the coming of Christ. Join us for a weekend filled with worship, and time to grow closer to God and one another. Enjoy festive activities like Christmas cookie decorating, special crafts, games, and joyful fellowship. Let this special time at Sky Ranch help you enter the Advent season with peace, gratitude, and anticipation for the birth of our Savior.

Lutheran Campus Ministry (LuMin)

Somehow, we are in Week 11 of the fall semester, and our campus ministry at LuMin is going strong! Victoria, our amazing interim minister, has been leading student activities and worship on Wednesday nights, where we've seen a five-fold growth rate in student participation compared to last spring, which is incredibly exciting! **Student dinner is from 6-7 pm on Wednesday nights**, with drop-off at 5:30 pm. You are always welcome to stay and enjoy dinner with us so we can all fellowship together! If you have interest in bringing meals on Wednesday nights, please reach out to our meal coordinator sgrandia@msn.com or (970) 667-8785 (and please plan on bringing a vegetarian option as well!). As Sarajane says, let's feed the souls and stomachs of our students at CSU!

Our other program, the Student Housing Security Initiative (SHSI), hosts dinners on Tuesday nights, from **6:30-8 pm, with dinner drop off at 6:00 pm**. If you have interest in donating dinners to SHSI, please use our [SignUp Genius](#). Please note as well that we have some gluten free and lactose intolerant students in the group this year, so be sure to bring options for those students if you plan on donating meals.

Finally, it is hard to believe, but December is fast approaching, and that means Giving Tuesday (December 2) and Colorado Gives Day (December 4) are almost here! In a time of year when Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals dominate our minds, please consider supporting the wonderful work LuMin is doing as we strive to continue providing an inclusive space for fellowship, self-expression, and faith building, not only on those days but throughout the entire year. To make a donation, please click [HERE](#). Thank you for your continued support!

301 FP JET ECO Tip of the Month

Which uses less energy: microwave or toaster oven? Microwave ovens generally use less energy than toaster ovens for short, simple tasks like reheating or cooking popcorn. They're faster, which means less energy consumption over time. Toaster ovens, on the other hand, may be more efficient when it comes to small baking or broiling tasks that would otherwise require a full-sized oven. They use more energy per minute, but can be more effective in certain use cases. So, if you're primarily reheating or cooking basic meals, go microwave. But if you like to toast, roast, and bake without heating your whole kitchen, a toaster oven could be your new best friend.

For ultimate energy and space savings, some home cooks use both—a compact microwave for speed and a mini toaster oven for texture and flavor. Choose based on what fits your habits and counter best.

The Joint Ecological Team (JET) meets as needed to plan educational events, bike to work day, volunteer opportunities, and advocacy. If you have any suggestions for future Eco-Tips, please email them to [Amanda](#) in the office. Our next meeting is **Tuesday, January 27 at 5:30 pm**. Be sure to check out the JET table and bulletin board in the NW corner of the Fellowship Hall!

Living a Christ-Centered Life Through Music, Justice, & Compassion

By Herbert Jones

Let our passion for music and faith inspire everyone around us, and together we can build a more just and compassionate world. In today's world, a world that often seems divided and fragmented, the call to live a Christ-centered life stands as a beacon of hope. It invites us to ground our values in the teachings of Jesus and to extend His love to the world through justice and compassion.

The Christ-Centered Life

Living a Christ-centered life, in music ministry and as we care for others, means harmonizing justice and compassion in every note we sing and every action we take. While we may face challenges, discord, and disparities, we can create solutions that resonate with hope and unity. We must let the power of music be a beacon of light, inspiring everyone to join in a symphony of love and grace. Together, we can transform every challenge into a beautiful melody of positive change. Living a Christ-centered life also means using the gift of music to touch hearts as lives become transformed. As we music ministers and directors navigate challenges like fostering unity and encouraging diverse expressions of faith, remember that our role is pivotal. Our leadership can create a harmonious community where justice and compassion thrive.



Birthdays



Tiffany Klijewski	12/2	Gregg Hargis	12/7	Patty Heyse	12/20
Gerry Olsen	12/2	Dylan Miller	12/9	Scott Makinen	12/20
Emmaline Little	12/3	Katie Garman	12/13	Susan Schairer	12/21
Jim Frye	12/4	Nadine Hunt	12/13	Anastasia Reiten	12/22
Merry Hulse	12/4	Ron Bend	12/19	Jackson Barron	12/24
Shirley Garvin	12/5	Annika Zuniga	12/19	Paul Johnson	12/24
Clint Borkowski	12/6	Nadine Cain	12/20	Diann Nygaard	12/24

Reverse Advent Calendar

What is a Reverse Advent Calendar?? Traditionally, Advent calendars are used to count down the days of Advent in anticipation of Christmas. In church we celebrate weekly the themes of Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy as we anticipate God's gift of Jesus. Most purchased Advent calendars start on December 1 and go until Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The Advent calendars consist of a series of doors or windows to open, revealing a picture, small chocolate or little gift for each day.

But the Reverse Advent Calendar is different! Instead of receiving a daily gift, those taking part in a reverse calendar DONATE an item each day, thus giving instead of receiving. This year the Social and Eco Justice Ministry is offering a suggestion to participate by following this list of food items to donate to our Little Pantry or the Larimer County Food Bank.

You can also do this in a different way. It doesn't have to be food that you are donating. Maybe put \$1 in a basket each day for your reverse advent calendar and then donate the money to our Little Food Pantry. It is also completely fine to add an item every few days or weekly instead of daily. No matter how you choose to participate, consider doing something small for those in need this Advent season. We are blessed to be a blessing to others as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Put your food items in a box or bag that can be plain or decorated. You can bring the food items to church weekly or wait until Christmas Eve whichever works best for you. We will have a table in the fellowship room for donations. To see the full list of food items click [HERE](#).

Thank you for your participation in this Advent ministry.

1-box of cereal or individual oatmeal packages
2-peanut butter
3-individual snack packages or breakfast bars
4-boxed potatoes
5-macaroni and cheese
6-canned, individual, or dried fruit
7-canned tomatoes
8-canned meat (tuna, chicken, sausages) or jerky
9-dessert mix or pudding cups
10-Individual servings of applesauce or fruit cups
11-individual bags of trail mix or nuts
12-shelf stable boxed milk
13-canned black, kidney, pinto, or refried beans

14-box of or individual packages of crackers
15-package of rice or stuffing mix
16-can of chili, stew, or pasta meal (SpaghettiOs or others)
17-package pasta
18-can of spaghetti sauce (*no glass jars)
19-can of chicken, beef, vegetable or other soup
20-individual boxes of raisins or cranberries
21-can corn
22-can mixed vegetables
23-can carrots or sweet potatoes
24-can green beans

Social networking

Social networking is just a fancy term for staying connected with people online - like modern pen pals, but faster and often with pictures! Think of it like the bulletin board at church or the chatter after coffee hour, JUST digital!

So why does Trinity want you to share our Facebook posts?!? Having people share posts is crucial for increasing our visibility and reach, ultimately boosting engagement and awareness. When someone shares our content, their friends see it in their newsfeed, exposing our message to a wider audience that might not otherwise see our posts. This expanded reach can lead to more likes, comments, and clicks, potentially driving traffic to our church, events/activities, and website. Help us spread our reach by liking and following Trinity's Facebook page [HERE](#)!

Council Meeting Highlights

- ✦ Three Trinity members are interested in being part of the SafeLots launch team, participating with 4 people from our 301 Partners. Council anticipates calling a congregational meeting in February or March to present the full program to the congregation for a vote.
- ✦ *Property Ministry will work with office staff on setting up and publicizing a process for posting flyers or announcements. Office staff should review and post new announcements. This would cut down on the randomness and the litter from tape and tacks.
- ✦ As part of Council's ongoing efforts to improve onboarding and leadership training, they are collecting ministry chair and officer position descriptions from council members. These documents will be part of the package given to newly elected people, and used by the nominating committee to clarify what these positions involve.
- ✦ The ELCA Synod has revised the church constitution template. Trinity needs to make constitutional revisions as a result. Council came up with a list of members who will be contacted and asked if they would work on this task force.
- ✦ As in past years, council will not have a business meeting in December but will have a TGIF-style get-together. This will be held at 6 PM on December 9 at the Jurgenson home.

Respectfully submitted, Marilyn Morrissey, Council Secretary (Complete minutes available in the office)

TLC 2025 Ministry Fund Plan Actuals		
	October 2025	Year-To-Date
Receipts:		
Offerings	\$ 23,289	\$ 319,304
SPE and MoM Building Use Donations	4,580	45,800
Building Use	1,447	18,116
Benevity Funds Released	1,450	14,275
Total Receipts:	30,766	397,495
Expenditures:		
Operating and Support	\$ 24,060	\$ 272,694
Ministries	5,738	89,014
Benevolence/Gifts (Synod, Sky Ranch, etc)	12,410	20,720
Total Expenditures:	42,208	382,428
Receipts less Expenditures:	\$ (11,442)	\$ 15,067
Total Checking/Savings as of 10/31/2025		\$ 191,765.71
Total Checking/Savings as of 12/31/2024		\$ 204,772.61
Difference		\$ (13,006.90)



TRINITY LUTHERAN
301 E. Stuart St.
Fort Collins, CO 80525
(970) 482-1226