



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

December 24, 2024
Christmas Eve

Announcements

Juice boxes are still needed at Street Help Shelter. The Welcome Centre Shelter for Women needs granola bars, fruit rollup-type items and another snack item for snack packs for children at the centre. Please leave donated items on the table in the Narthex.

Coming Up

Annual Congregational Meeting - Trinity's Congregational Council has set February 9, 2025, as the date for the next ACM. The meeting will follow the worship service and will include a potluck meal. The Annual Report will be available at the end of January. While all are welcome to attend the meeting, only active members can vote on any matters.

We Remember in our Prayers

In Residence: Cordelle

Members: Bunny, Donna, Ed, Edda, Joan, Susan, Connie, Lorraine, Brenda

Friends & Family: Anna, Asdis, Audrey, Dot, Jean, Mary, Randy, Roger, Rose, Frank, Tanya, Nash, Jeff

Thames Area Clergy: Rev. Stephen Gross, Interim, Trinity, London

Introduction to the day

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Hymns

ELW # 283 O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW # #276 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

ELW # 300 The First Noel

ELW #281, Silent Night

ELW #267 Joy to the world

Prayer of the day

Almighty God,
you made this holy night shine with the
brightness of the true Light. Grant that
here on earth we may walk in the light of
Jesus' presence and in the last day
wake to the brightness of his glory;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

AMEN

First reading Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep
darkness—

on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing
plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,

the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of
Midian.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping
warriors

and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his
kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and
forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do
this.

Psalm: 96

¹ Sing to the LORD | a new song;
sing to the LORD, | all the earth.

² **Sing to the LORD, bless the name |
of the LORD;
proclaim God's salvation from |
day to day.**

³ Declare God's glory a- | mong the
nations
and God's wonders a- | mong all
peoples.

⁴ **For great is the LORD and greatly |
to be praised,**

more to be feared | than all gods.

⁵As for all the gods of the nations,
they | are but idols;
but you, O LORD, have | made the
heavens.

⁶**Majesty and magnificence are | in
your presence;
power and splendor are in your |
sanctuary.**

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, you families | of
the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD hon- | or and
power.

⁸**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due
the | holy name;
bring offerings and enter the
courts | of the LORD.**

⁹Worship the LORD in the beau- | ty of
holiness;
tremble before the LORD, | all the
earth.

¹⁰**Tell it out among the nations:
“The | LORD is king!**

**The one who made the world so
firm that it cannot be moved will
judge the peo- | ples with equity.”**

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, and let the |
earth be glad;

let the sea thunder and all that is in
it; let the field be joyful and all that | is
therein.

¹²**Then shall all the trees of the
wood shout for joy at your com- | ing,
O LORD,**

for you come to | judge the earth.

¹³You will judge the | world with
righteousness

and the peoples | with your truth.

Second reading: Titus 2:11-14

¹¹The grace of God has appeared,
bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to
renounce impiety and worldly passions,
and in the present age to live lives that
are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³
while we wait for the blessed hope and
the manifestation of the glory of our
great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴
He it is who gave himself for us that he
might redeem us from all iniquity and
purify for himself a people of his own
who are zealous for good deeds.



Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

¹In those days a decree went out from
Emperor Augustus that all the world
should be registered. ²This was the first
registration and was taken while
Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All
went to their own towns to be registered.

⁴Joseph also went from the town of
Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city
of David called Bethlehem, because he

was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all

who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Sermon

Shepherding joy

Last Christmas Eve, I shared the story of Lutheran pastor Munther Isaac an acquaintance of mine in Bethlehem.

Isaac caused an international stir last year when he crafted a nativity scene entitled “Jesus in the rubble.”

The baby was laid in a manger of broken concrete that symbolized the destruction and terror the people of Gaza were experiencing as they faced barrages from the Israeli military.

The scene was recreated again this year.

The attacks and persecution have become a routine part of life for the people of Gaza and the West Bank. In the meantime, the people of Pastor Isaac’s congregation minister to the wounded and broken in whatever way possible.

God breaks into the routine ...

On our side of the world, I swung into our parking lot late last week.

I was between home visits and I wanted to grab a couple of things out of the office and to listen to the choir being put their paces before heading out again.

A young woman ... who was maybe 20 years old ... was walking up the side alley as I got out of the car.

She was rumpled ... her coat open against the chill of the day ... her jeans were torn ... there were smudges on her face and hands and her hair could use a brushing. Her voice was shaky and uncertain.

“Would you mind if I sat on your step for awhile?” she asked as I headed toward the door of the Fellowship Hall.

“Not at all,” I assured her.

I headed back out about ten minutes later ... recharged by the voices our choir ... I grabbed a gift card before I locked up the office ... hoping the young woman was still there.

She was.

We chatted for a few minutes. The woman is in the early days of recovery and they are hard days. There are fading track marks on her arm visible when she tugged at the sleeve of her jacket.

The support system she needs isn't fully in place yet and she is white-knuckling through the recovery process.

“Please pray for me,” she pleaded. So, we did.

Before heading to my appointment ... and I was forgiven for being late, by the way, I handed her the gift card so she could get some food or anything else she needed from the store.

When she looked at me, there was a hint of confusion that comes from a stranger offering to help ... but there was also a spark of joy in her eye. Not the exuberant jump-for-joy-type of joy ...

but the subtle joy that comes from being heard ... being noticed ... being known.

It's a joy that is easily shared and easily missed unless you're fully engaged and paying attention to the details.

I've been thinking about this encounter as I reflect on Isaac's nativity scene in Bethlehem. There are different types of rubble in life ... different terrors being felt.

That for some, rubble can sadly become quite ordinary.

Still ... God breaks into ... and through ... the ordinary.

The story of the nativity is probably the best-known story in the world. Even the most unchurched person knows it.

Today, Luke starts things off with a lot of bureaucratic talk about rulers and a census ... It all pretty ordinary stuff.

An unwed teenage mother and her fiancé travel to his hometown to take part in the census needed to make sure the proper amount of taxes are collected and troops are assigned correctly.

In Bethlehem, the couple ends up in a room off a back alley because that's the only space available to them.

And it's there that their baby is born.

In such a common occurrence ... it is a story that has been played out countless times and in countless places over the centuries. We are so comforted by its familiarity that we can miss things.

Now, outside of town, among the sheep in the darkness of the hills ... illuminated by campfires and stars, the ordinary story becomes extraordinary.

An angel appears to a group of shepherds ... shares the Good News with them ... a saviour is born ... a sign is given.

To stress the importance of this news a multitude of angels arrive celebrate before the shepherds.

The Good News that has come into the life of the world is first shared in a field with shepherds ... people at the edge of the community ... marginalized, broken people invited ... welcomed ... to bear witness to the wonder of new life ... the start of something different ... something transformative for the world.

And after they travelled to Bethlehem ... after they had seen and shared in the marvel of the birth ... the shepherds returned to their flocks and proclaimed that love had come into the life of the world ... and they proclaimed it with joy.

“I bring you great joy ...” words first shared by the angel ... took hold of their lives and began rippling through the world.

I bring you Great Joy ...

There’s a hymn ... “I Come With Joy” ... that is traditionally sung during the Advent season.

It was written in 1968 ... as a number of faith groups around the world were beginning a transformation... shedding some of the past that they recognized didn’t offer life or didn’t speak to the realities of people’s lives and needs... the people living in the rubble.

The hymn broke with the past view of communion ... and rather than use

Jesus’ suffering as its basis ... it uses as its inspiration the gift we have received and what that means for each of us. I come with joy ... because through Jesus’ birth ... death and resurrection each of us has been “forgiven, loved and freed.”

Our joy is anchored in these three acts ... it comes from the new life that we receive ... from the new life that is possible and promised ... because we are forgiven ... love ... and made free.

A new life that begins this evening ... right where the past life ends.

Like the baby in the manger ... we are each vulnerable to the hardships of life ... we can feel and experience the suffering and the sadness. But like the baby in the manger, we are also wrapped in swaddling bands of cloth ... kept warm and protected by God’s love ... a love that is active in our lives ... and is active in the world ... especially when we swaddle ... when we protect and comfort others.

Luke’s nativity story serves as a reminder that God often works beyond our line of sight ... that what we think of as ordinary can contain the extraordinary.

Something as ordinary as letting a young woman sit on a step.

And in those moments ... we are called to proclaim a love that lifts us ... a love comforts us and it is the love we are called to share as we enter into the rubble of life.

These are moments when God works through us ... when we live into our call to serve ... when we listen to the

brokenness in the world ... and ... like the shepherds ... share the promise ... the grace that comes through the manger and cross.

That is when the light shines its brightest... that is when new life becomes visible.

That is when joy is made known.

God's blessings and peace be with you this night and through all of your days ... Emmanuel ... God is with us ... has broken into our lives... the light has come.

Hallelujah!

AMEN

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever.

AMEN

Blessing

The Ancient One, enthroned,
the Crucified One, now risen,
the Indwelling One, poured out,
✠ bless you now and forever.

AMEN

EVEN MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS...

We are in the process of reviewing and updating our membership records. If you would like a visit from Pastor Chris, please call the church office and leave a message. Pastor Chris would be happy to visit and bring you communion, if you have difficulty attending church services.



**TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE PROGRAM**

AUTHORIZATION

I hereby authorize *Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 1215 Parent Avenue, Windsor, ON N8X 4J1, to cause a cheque to be drawn on my account, each month as a contribution by me to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, as follows:

Total *monthly* contributions to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of:

_____ (\$ _____ .00) per month

Distributed as follows:

Current Giving/Benevolence	\$ _____	per month
Global Hunger and Development Agency (GHDA)	\$ _____	per month
Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)	\$ _____	per month
ELCIC World Missions/Volunteers in Mission	\$ _____	per month
Specify _____	\$ _____	per month
Specify _____	\$ _____	per month
Specify _____	\$ _____	per month
Total Monthly Giving:	\$ _____	per month

Contributor's name _____ Envelope # _____

Bank/Trust/Credit Union Name _____

Branch Address: _____

Account Number _____ Type of Account _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

This authority may be changed or cancelled by the contributor at any time.

To ensure accuracy, a sample cheque marked "VOID" must accompany this form.

The transfer of contributions to the ministry of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church will begin in the month *following* receipt of this authorization.