

Holy Trinity Ambassador

December 2017

Christmas Weekend

No 5 p.m. Saturday Divine Service

9 a.m. Sunday Divine Service

Christmas Eve - Sunday
1 p.m. & 3 p.m. – Old #3

Christmas Eve Candlelight
7 p.m. – Holy Trinity

Christmas Day – Monday
9 a.m. with Holy Communion

New Year's Weekend

5 p.m. Saturday Divine Service

9 a.m. Sunday Divine Service

No New Year's Eve Service

Youth Cookie Sale

Home-made Christmas Cookie Sale on Saturday, December 9th from 10 a.m. - noon in the fellowship hall. Cookies will be sold by the pound, donations of cookies are welcome and appreciated. If you are donating cookies, please bring them to the fellowship hall by noon on Friday, December 8th or by 9 a.m. Saturday. Thank you for your support.

Oplatki

Oplatki (Christmas wafers) are available in the church office 8 a.m.-12 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Wednesday Advent Services 6 p.m.

**“Advent Preparation for Christmas:
Learning to Be Content”**

Gideon - Less is More – Judges 6 & 7
Mary – Thy Will Be Done – Luke 1
Paul – His Grace is Sufficient – 2 Cor. 12

Dec. 6th, Dec. 13th, and 20th

Soup supper from 5:00 – 5:30 p.m.
by the Board of Parish Activities

Preschool Nut Sale

Thank you to all for your orders! We have some extra nuts available for purchase! Check in the fellowship hall after services or Monday – Friday 8 a.m. - noon!

Preschool Fire Door

We have received \$12,312. in donations. The cost of the project is \$14,000. Thank you to all those who have given to these upgrades so we can continue providing quality Christian education to the Streator are preschool-aged children.

Ponderings in the Pasture- Pastor Gutz

On the morning of November 5th while other Christians were singing hymns or opening their Bibles or taking communion, a gunman was opening fire on the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Tex. It ended with 26 people killed including children. That is not a pleasant thing to think about. I don't want to think about it, but I have and I'm guessing that many of you have as well.

Such acts of violence defy reason. If it made sense then it would make sense. You can't make sense out of senseless events. As time goes on there will be more acts of violence. It has happened in the past and it will happen again. It could happen at a church or shopping mall or ball game or any place groups where people gather. This incident in Texas is not the first act of horrible violence neither will it be the last.

People committing violence is nothing new. In the first two chapters of Genesis you have the account of creation. The account of Adam and Eve disobeying God and eating the forbidden fruit is recorded in chapter 3. In chapter 4 you have the first murder. One brother murders another. Violence! Two chapters later in Genesis 6 it says, *"Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. (ESV) 6 chapters into the Bible and it says the earth was filled with violence! It's nothing new!*

Centuries later the prophet Habakkuk gave voice to a question we often ask. Why? *"O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise." (ESV) Habakkuk 1:2-3*

Violence. People committing violence. It's nothing new. And because of this violence - we grieve. Our hearts are troubled when we learn of tragedies. News reports and the constant barrage of media hold these things in front of us and we are troubled. Apart from the root cause of sin, we cannot explain why these things happen. God promises no answers on this.

When terrible things happen like what happened in Texas, or even closer to home when a loved one gets cancer or someone you care about is killed in a car accident we wonder why. Someone may say, "How could God let this

happen? If God is a loving God and a powerful God then why does He let these things take place?" People might even demand answers from us. "You're a Christian. You say your God is a loving God and a powerful God, why would he let this happen?"

What answer can we give? We don't know. We don't know. And it's okay to say that. "We don't know" is an answer. Not a very satisfying one but it is an answer and it is the truth. We simply do not know why God allows certain things to happen. We shouldn't think we can give answers where there aren't any.

But here's what we do know. We do not grieve as though who have no hope. *"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep." (1 Thess. 4:13-14)*

This is what we do know. We believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe in the resurrection of the physical body and the life everlasting.

God is still present and at work in our life no matter how the situation may appear. As Jesus hung on the cross on Good Friday, it appeared that God was nowhere to be found in the midst of failure, suffering, death and defeat. Where was God when these things were happening? We learn from God's Word that He was there. He was in the suffering and the dying. The resurrection on Easter demonstrated that the cross had in fact been His most powerful action to save us. Because we have seen God work in this way through Christ, we can trust that his love and care is true for us, even if the circumstances seem to provide little evidence for this.

This faith is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the living hope that carries us through the often unpleasant changes of this life. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. This conquers death and guarantees that our Lord Jesus will raise us on the Last Day and "will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself" (Philippians 3:21). If only for this life we have hoped in Christ we of all men are most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the death - the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Cor. 15:19-20)

Yes in the midst of death and violence we grieve. But we do not grieve as though who have no hope.

Church Council Meeting

October 31, 2017

Present: J. Zavada, V. McCollum, D. Gotch, Marsha Johnston, R. Kochis, J. Christensen and Pastor Gutz

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: Preschool income exceeded expenses. Church income and expenses decreased. Church remains in the black for the year.

Church Properties: Simplex completed fire door project. Esco checked the boilers and furnace. Don Oliver completed repairs to the parsonage garage and vent caps. Schmitt is contracted to do snow removal this year. Fire extinguishers have been checked.

Elders: Pastor declined the call from the Iowa church. The elders filled in leading services when Pastor Gutz attended his grandson's baptism. Elder duties for November were assigned. Discussed holiday service schedule.

Parish Activities: One cradle roll was prepared. Committee served cookies and coffee for Voter's Meeting. A Reformation brunch was served following the Sunday service. Parish Activities helped with preschool bake sale. Advent services soup assignments were determined.

New Business: The organ key that was sticking has been repaired.

Remember to pray for our shut-in members, those sick & hospitalized:

Bill Andree	Louise Novotney
Bryan Donner	John Repko
Ruth Harlow	Charles & Ruth Rinkenberger
Dirk Hoekstra	Mary Lou Rubis
Helen Kruger	George Tibbles
Donna Murphy	Anne Yednock

Christmas Gifts

Teri Lynn nuts and candy for sale.

Encourage your growth in faith.

The Lutheran Study Bible – regular print - \$40, large print \$45

Bible Covers - \$17

Book of Concord – Readers Edition - \$25

Faith Alive Student Bible - \$25

The Story Bible – Children's Bible - \$25
(Intended for preschool age children)

The Real Story of Creation - \$5 (youth)

The Real Story of the Flood - \$5 (youth)

Available copies in the church office.

Serving in December

Elders

Saturday – Randy Kochis, Jeff McMullen

Sunday – Eric Harcharik, Mark Lowe

Ushers

John Burt, Rob Downey, Dan Reynolds

Greeters

Mark & Deb Kovach

Altar Guild

Saturday – Greg & Barb Lentman

Sunday – Dan & Diana Reynolds

Hope for Hurting Singles

We have a published author at Holy Trinity. Mr. Jack Zavada has recently come out with a new book titled, "Hope for Hurting Singles." We have several copies in the church office for sale \$15.99. Stop in and check it out.

HOLY TRINITY HEALTH MINISTRIES

Jacqueline Girard, RN, MSN, PN

Dear Friends in Christ,

This Christmas season, my best medical advice is to relax and enjoy the ride. Let me share with you one of my favorite Christmas memories. Growing up in Minneapolis, our church (St. John's Lutheran Church) would have a mandatory performance by the Sunday school classes of the Christmas story. Yes, we dressed as Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men, animals, and a baby doll for Baby Jesus, and memorized our parts from the King James Bible. At eight years old, my part is still my favorite (me and Linus from Charlie Brown). Read it out loud with me:

Luke 2:8-14, "8And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. 12And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (KJV)

Our blood pressure clinics for December will be the 17th and 31st. I always look forward to seeing you.

Christmas blessings to you all,
Jackie

Holy Trinity Website

Please visit our church website for current information including the Ambassador and Preschool Newsletter. Listen to sermons

On-line. Click the "Hear the Word" tab

www.holytrinitystreator.org

Preschool

For school closings due to bad weather please listen to WSPL - 1250AM. We will add our name to the list if we are going to close. We will also post information on our Facebook page.

The theme for the month of December will be how children around the world celebrate the birth of Jesus. Please check out the large board in the hallway to see what we will make.

December Bible stories are "The Birth of John", "The First Christmas".

Bible memory verse - December - "A Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11.

Christmas parties will be held on December 14th for the T/Th class and December 15th for everyone else. Parties will be held during regular class times.

Christmas programs will be held on December 18th and December 19th for all classes. The programs will be at 9:00am in the Fellowship Hall. You may pick your child up in their classroom after the program. Please remember that all children will perform both days. Please drop your child off in their classroom at 8:45.

Dates to Remember

Christmas break begins after the Program on the 19th

Jan. 3 - School Resumes for MWF & 5 day
Jan. 4 - School Resumes for T/Th

The Flower, Candle and Radio sign-up sheet for 2018 is on the bulletin board outside church office.