

Holy Trinity Ambassador

May 2025



Mother's Day – May 11th

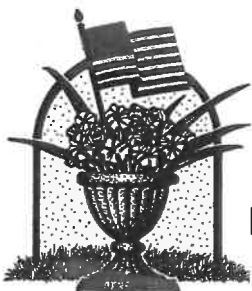
God is Pro-Life! We give thanks for those who have given birth and cared for us.

"For You formed my inward parts;
You knitted me together in my
mother's womb. I praise You, for I am
fearfully and wonderfully made."
Psalm 139:13



Holy Trinity Website

Visit our church website for
current information including the
Ambassador and Preschool newsletter.
Listen to sermons on-line.
www.holytrinitystreator.org
Click the "Hear the Word" tab.



MEMORIAL DAY

Remember
Those Who Served
Memorial Day, May 26th

Kroger Rewards Cards

Thank you to the 44 households participating in the Kroger Rewards program. Our supporters who shopped the 1st quarter have contributed to the \$85.95 donation to Holy Trinity. This simple fundraiser is done by registering and scanning your Kroger Plus Card.

Email Address

Email addresses help us to keep you informed about Holy Trinity and save postage. Please let us know your email address so we can include you.

Send information to: htlc.streator@gmail.com

We **DO NOT** share your email address!

**Invite a Friend
to Church!**
(or an enemy or even someone
you don't know)

May Ambassador - Ponderings in the Pasture - Pastor Gutz

(Excerpted from the book, *Night Driving: Notes from a Prodigal Soul*, by Chad Bird. 2017)

Numbers are seductive. They woo us by promising us a firmer grip on our lives. Thanks to numbers, we can calculate the extent of our financial security as we tally up stocks, bonds, 401ks, and loose change, so that we might fear, love, and trust in what we've tucked away for a rainy day. Thanks to numbers, we can count calorie intake, measure our steps, and step onto the scale to add up how much closer we are to—or far we are from—conforming to some image. Thanks to numbers, we can count how many worshipers are in the pews and how much money is in the offering plate, so hopefully we can stand up and pray, "Lord, I thank you that I am not like other churches...."

We're by nature counters. So long as we can add, subtract, multiply and divide something, *anything*, we have some measure of control and comparison.

We worship the God who turns his pencil over and uses the eraser. He has to work with nothing, with *ex nihilo*, with zero. So he erases us down. He puts crosses on our backs, scars on our hearts, and wounds all over our egos in order to shrink us down more and more, less and less, taking us closer and closer to the big fat zero. To nothing. Until all our numbers are gone. Until we've run out of numbers to add up and show that we may have fallen short of the glory of God, but we haven't fallen as far as *that guy*. Until we've run out of numbers to measure how much higher—or how much lower—in holiness we are than others. Until we can't find a single number to add up how good we are or how bad we are; how stupid or how smart we are; how many times we've got drunk or how many times we've stayed sober. Until all our numbers have been ground into powder at the foot of one cross, so that all we have left is zero. Until all we are is nothing.

And in that numberless state, in the holy zero, God dives in to work on us. He does what He's been doing since the dawn of time: he creates out of nothing. A world from zilch. A promised baby from the womb of a 90-year-old. A rescuer from the pits of an Egyptian dungeon. A redeemer from the deserts of Sinai. A word-made-flesh inside the womb of a virgin. Not only something from nothing, but everything from nothing. God only knows how to work with zero. But when he works, all the numbers in the world can't add up how astonishing it is.

The Boy Who Loved Numbers

This boy counted everything. Socks in his drawer, peas on his plate, cars on the highway. He loved numbers. He loved to count. One day he asked his father, "Daddy, can God count?"

"Yes, son, God can count."

"What does he count?"

"He counts the hairs on our heads."

"Every hair?" the son asked.

"Yes, every hair," the father answered.

"What else does God count?"

The father said, "When we get sad, or hurt, and we cry, God counts our tears."

"Every tear?"

"Yes, every tear," the father answered.

The son thought a minute. Then he asked, "Is there anything God doesn't count?"

"Yes, there is one thing God does not count."

The son asked, "What does he not count?"

The father took his son's hand and led him down the hall. He pointed to the family's crucifix that hung on the wall. The father said to his son, "On the day Jesus died, God stopped counting our sins. He added them all up and gave them to Jesus. He will never count them again."

"Every sin?" the son asked.

"Yes," the father answered, "every single one."

Church Council Meeting March 25, 2025

Present: J. Zavada, M. Peters, D. Gotch,
K. Downey, R. Kochis, D. Sass, B. Kerestes,
V. McCollum and Pastor Gutz

Committee Reports:

- **Treasurer Report:** Church and Preschool financials reviewed.
- **Church Properties:** Roof leak in parsonage was repaired. Waiting on estimates for chimney demo. Church fans will be installed in May. Fire Department checked emergency lights. Snow blower starter was replaced.
- **Board of Education:** Preschool enrollment is full. Students are being registered for next year. Spring Fundraiser – Bundt Cake Sale. Enrollment for '25-'26 capped at 18 students. t.
- **Elders Report:** Pastoral activities were reviewed. Assigned elders to serve for April. Continuing search for organists and CD operators. Pastor reminded everyone to make Bible reading a part of your daily routine.
- **Parish Activities: Old Business:** No cradle rolls. Served meals for Lent lunches. March 5th Sunday Fellowship refreshments served.
- **Old Business:** Update from the nominating committee for upcoming elections.
- **New Business:** Discussion about reaching community and new members.

Preschool

May's Bible Verse: Behold, I am with you always. Matthew 28:20

May Bible Stories:

- Pentecost
- John and Peter Heal
- Timothy

May 20th will be our last full day of classes.
Thank you for a great year!

May 21st will be the school class picnic
between **10:30 - 12.**

Graduation is May 22nd at 9:00am for all
students that will be going on to kindergarten.

Serving in May

Elders

Saturday – Jeff McMullen
Sunday – Mike Peters

Ushers

Rick Lesak, Steve Lightle

Altar Guild

Saturday – Nickie Clark and Tracy Stortz
Sunday – Mark & Deb Kovach

For Your Prayers

Members in Bold (requested by)

Gary Brandenburg (Matthew Brandenburg)
Abbey Brown (Marilyn Quinn)
Bob Cross
Buddy Crouch (Lauren Pastirik)
Sylvia Held
Laura Johnston (Nancy Hepner)
John Kochis
Sally Libby (Carol Sass)
Rick Mahrt (Denise Burt)
Larry Runyon
Carol Sass
Shirley Zavada (Jack Zavada)
Lutheran Heritage Foundation
Rev. Dr. Quintin Cundiff and family, Riga Latvia

If you have placed a name on the prayer list
please keep the Church Office updated on their
status.



So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

“CAtechism corner”

Hope you had a good Easter. We both did. We even managed to nab some ham scraps. Yummm. Easter was a bit later this year. It's nice that the days are getting longer and the temps warming up.



We've started to write about the Small Catechism. It really is a short book – less than 40 pages. It contains 6 of the basic teachings of Christianity – 10 commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, Office of the Keys/Confession, and Holy Communion.

A catechism is a book that is written in question/answer format. A question is asked and then answered. It is a teaching tool. There are catechisms about many different subjects. We're writing about Luther's Small Catechism. Martin Luther put it together and it's small. The title isn't very creative, but we've learned a lot from it. Especially Monroe!

Cats are by nature curious. So a catechism is right up our alley. The question that comes up over and over in the Small Catechism is, "What does this mean?" I like that. I like that we can ask questions. We are encouraged to ask questions! For a curious cat, that's awesome. Our God gave us brains and minds and He wants us to use them. Sometimes I think human beings don't want to use their brains. Why else would you invent TV? Do you remember those commercials with Morris, that fat cat? He got to be famous just for eating food! How hard is that? He couldn't act. Cat envy. I got a feeling he didn't see much of the cash, but his owners did. Money is probably the number one god for most folks. Clearly violates the first commandment, "You shall have no other gods." Cats are way more content than people are. Practice being content. Keep your eyes and ears on Jesus.

Be Kind, Sammy and Monroe

Dear friends in Christ,

My favorite holiday of the year is Easter. It is a time for us to rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ after He paid the price for our sins at the cross. The forgiveness of sins and the new life that is ours in Christ is the source of our greatest joy.

This semester, I have been teaching the class that students take to prepare and equip them for preaching. We now have a firmly-planted program that will carry on for years to come.

Sadly, I must leave the continuation of that work for others. Needs in our family have arisen that require us to go back to the United States. We are preparing to leave the foreign mission field in June.

I will not be leaving mission behind! I have been called to serve with the Office of National Mission. I am looking forward to bringing back the amount of experience and knowledge I have accumulated to the United States. It is the third-largest mission field in the world.

The Office of International Mission is helping us navigate the transition back to the US. Thank you very much to everyone who has been a part of this work over the past three years. I would encourage you to please consider continuing to support the important work of mission in Europe. The Gospel is sorely needed by many here. We need people like you who are willing to walk alongside missionaries. The joyous Easter message of Jesus will continue to go to all the earth. May our Lord graciously bless you and give you a share of the peace and joy that you have been instrumental in bringing to others throughout the world by your connection with mission.

In Christ's service,
Pastor Cundiff

