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They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. (Isaiah 2.4b)

Advent is a season dedicated to watching for the coming of God into our world and into our lives.

God comes to us again and again with gifts of peace and joy. God comes to us in surprising ways to remind us of the power of gratitude and generosity.

As tension and violence increase between nations and even within our own nation, the words of the prophet Isaiah remind us that this is not how God wants things to be. God's desire is for all of us to enjoy peace and prosperity.

The world proclaims scarcity. There aren't enough good things to go around; we can't all be prosperous. We can only be prosperous if we take what we want from those weaker than us.

God invites us to find a better use for the energy and resources we dedicate to violence, fear, and hatred. To use them to create a world of abundance.

The world proclaims fearfulness, dividing us into camps that are at odds with one another.

God encourages us to seek common ground with people we assume to be opponents and enemies.

Advent is an opportunity to strengthen our relationships of love and trust. To give extra attention to the poorest and most vulnerable of our neighbors. To be nourished by prayer and the reading of scripture.

Advent is an invitation to open ourselves to new possibilities. To learn new ways of doing things. To re-orient ourselves to God's way of seeing people and situations.

Four short weeks from now, we will celebrate the coming of God in the surprising form of a helpless baby. With God's help, we can be ready to welcome the child with open hands, open hearts, and open minds.

Your brother in Christ,
- Pr. Paul

Advent Devotionals (Still Available)

This year's series, Humble and Holy:
Devotions for Advent and Christmas 2025
-2026, continues a centuries-old Christian tradition of setting aside time to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth and to anticipate his return. With devotions from the first Sunday of Advent (11/30/25) to Epiphany (1/6/26), this devotional will help you pause, reflect, and pray through this season of blessed waiting. Perfect for family, group, and individual use by all ages.



Notes from the Organ Bench

Happy Thanksgiving, and merry Christmas! Now that we've moved to having a single service each week, Ross and I both get to contribute to the music, and it's been a lot of fun. Advent has my favorite music of the year (Lent is a close second), and I'm so excited to share it with you all.

For the Christmas Eve service at the downtown location, we will have 15 minutes of special music before the service begins at 5pm, so make sure you're there early!

- Brenden Hall Organist and Director of Music

Trinity Lutheran Church

Paul Gibson, Pastor
Lynne Tallon, Deacon
Brenden Hall & Ross Kimura
Organists and
Directors of Music
Leah Heinicke, Office Admin
Angie Pryor, Parish Secretary
Azur H.Abdić, Facility Admin
Gretchen Frederick, Events Planner

Council Members

Gary Bartelt Kathy Bartelt Terri Craig Trudy Daniels Alan Due Pastor Paul Gibson Joe Haynsworth Betty Herzhauser Tom Herzhauser Roma Heystek Helen Mowrer Karen Potts Violet Prepost Angie Pryor Pat Shipley Lynne Tallon

Our Advent season kicks off this year on November 30th. In addition to our regular Sunday morning worship service, we will also hold our special Advent by Candlelight celebration in the CommUNITY room at 3pm. Our choir has been looking forward to this event, which is a cherished tradition at our Meadowlawn campus. The service combines an inspirational message with beautiful music, fine foods, and fellowship, bringing us all together for a special time of worship and reflection. It is a symbol of the light Christ brought into the world, a light that continues to shine through each of us. This service not only serves as a time to prepare our hearts and kicks off the Advent and Christmas season, it also offers the opportunity to experience the joy, peace, and unity that comes from gathering together to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

While we are transitioning, we are so very blessed to have the combined talent of both campus choirs performing together. Special thanks to Brenden Hall who continues to bless our merged congregation with his many talents.

- Ross Kímura

Organist and Director of Music

The Angels' Song in Three Words

On the very first Christmas Eve, frightened shepherds were suddenly surrounded by light and music. A choir of angels filled the night sky, singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14, KJV).



Nineteenth-century pastor Charles Kingsley reflected on how those three simple words — glory, peace, and good will — still capture the meaning of Jesus' birth and the hope it brings.

Glory. God's glory isn't shown in dazzling displays of power but in humility and mercy. The baby in the manger revealed God's greatness by stooping low, forgiving, and showing love.

Peace. True peace is more than the absence of conflict. It comes when we follow God's example of selflessness, giving up pride and selfish ambition to live in harmony with one another.

Good will. God's good will toward us is a gift that transforms our lives. Through Jesus, God invites us out of selfishness and sin into a life marked by love, kindness, and community.

The angels' song wasn't meant only for shepherds long ago. It still sings to us today, calling each of us to live in glory, peace, and good will.

Gen Z Is Spiritually Hungry. Let's Get Ready to Feed Them.

Pew Research Center began tracking America's religious landscape in 2007. Since then, they've reported Christianity's steady decline.

In 2024, pollster George Barna told the Christian Post that the Western church had "reached a time of Christian invisibility." Things have looked bleak for Christianity's influence for decades. Yet there are rumblings of revival among Gen Z, those born from about 1997 to 2010. That's the generation Jonathan Haidt writes about in his book, "The Anxious Generation," as he reflects on the mental health effects of a digital childhood. Amid the challenges, that generation seems to be turning to

In another book, "The Anxious Generation Goes to Church: What the Research Says About What Younger Generations Need (and Want) from Your Church," Thom S. Rainer, CEO of Church Answers, argues that the church has a phenomenal opportunity to reach a generation with the gospel. The church has the social and spiritual remedies to the challenges Gen Z is facing.

Power of Technology

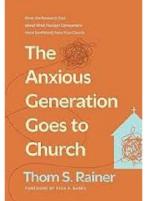
Much of Rainer's analysis relies on findings published by Jim Davis and Michael Graham, Ryan Burge, Jean Twenge, and Jonathan Haidt.

For example, Rainer shows that generations are shaped by many factors: cultural events, economic influences, and technological advances. Echoing Twenge, he argues, "Of those factors, technology has emerged as the primary driver of generational differences."

As the first generation to grow up with no memory of life before high-speed internet, smartphones, or social media, Gen Z has been profoundly marked by recent technological innovations. People often don't fully understand the effects of new technologies until years later. As philosopher Antón Barba-Kay notes, "We have never been prone to notice how deeply we are shaped by and identified with our tools." This may be most evident with Gen Z.

"In simple terms, the younger you are, the greater the likelihood you will have anxiety," Rainer states. The pervasive toxicity of the internet, smartphones, social media, and political polarization is taking a toll. Young people sleep less, scroll more, and feel lonelier than ever before.

The anxious generation needs what the church has to offer—hope, embodied connection, and stability in a tumultuous time. Thankfully, it also appears to be what they want. It's in discussing the church's opportunity with Gen Z that Rainer explores new ground.



Moment of Opportunity

This is no time for the church to retreat. Gen Z is increasingly open to spiritual things—but they don't always go to churches for their spiritual needs. In the past, churches have relied on the physical presence of the building to draw people. Even those who didn't attend regularly often had a cultural awareness of what goes on in churches. That no longer seems to be the case.

We can't wait for young people to come to us; we must go out to them. There's no one-size-fits-all method to accomplish this outreach. Churches will need to develop

creative ways to engage this spiritually hungry generation. Yet the most fruitful path forward is likely through making personal connections.

Though Gen Z is online more than previous generations, over half of them still believe in-person relationships are more important than digital relationships. Moreover, surveys show over and over that the unchurched (particularly Gen Z) are open to friendships at church but feel intimidated to go by themselves. Rainer reports that "82 percent of the unchurched were at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited."

Growth Will Be Messy

Churches that actively seek to reach Gen Z will probably see results, whether or not their strategy and location are ideal. There's an incredible openness to the gospel. Churches must be prepared for this rapid growth through the conversion of first-generation believers in a post- Christian culture. It may get messy, much like the Jesus People movement in the 1960s and '70s. Opportunities for discipleship abound. We need to allow room for mistakes. In our culture, we've got sci-fi level ethical dilemmas and the barrage of mental health challenges that technology encourages. As Rainer notes, "Church is already messy. If we do what God is calling us to do, it will get even messier." Thankfully, God's Word can help us navigate the challenges.

According to the news, the culture is in free fall. But the gospel is on the move, especially among Gen Z. The church needs to embrace the anxious generation's spiritual interest, anticipate the mess, and do the work to make disciples. "The Anxious Generation Goes to Church" accessibly presents a mountain of research to remind Christians that cultural conditions never alter the church's mission, though the methods to accomplish it may change.

Council Corner

Council Highlights

The council for our newly merged congregation has not yet met.

Their first meeting will be held on November 30th after our worship service at the Meadowlawn campus.

Let the Sun Shine In!

Let the sun shine in! A bright and warm dining room greeted guests to the First Friday Dinner and Song Fest on November 7 in the Trinity CommUNITY Room on the Meadowlawn campus.

The sun theme radiated across the tables glittering with gold chargers, mini-light centerpieces, and sunshine plates.

Dinner began with a light salad and the opening riff of a suninspired night of song by Pastor Paul and Ross Kimura. As diners cut into their stuffed chicken dinners, the music began to warm up with standards by George Gershwin and Cole Porter. By the time the dessert plates had cleared, everyone sang along with a grand finale of "Aquarius (Let the Sun Shine In)" from the musical "Hair".

The evening was much more than a fundraiser to support the solar power installation on the campus. Our monthly meals bring members together to share stories and build relationships. We are blessed to have gifted musicians willing to share their talents with us. We are beneficiaries of generosity to advance the plan to install and operate our solar energy program to look to the future of this congregation. Let the sun shine in, indeed. Not only does the sun shine upon us, the light of love radiates from this place.

- Betty Herzhauser

Solar Project Progress

In 2016, Ernie & Jill Groetz first proposed the idea of our going Solar at the Meadowlawn campus. It's been a long time in coming, but we're getting it done!

Task	Start Date	End Date	Status
Council Go-Ahead	03/11/25	03/11/25	\checkmark
Congregation Approval	03/30/25	03/30/25	√
Loan Application	05/19/25	06/10/25	×
Repair/Prep Roof	10/22/25	10/27/25	√
Install Panels	11/24/25	12/03/25	50%
Switch Over	12/24/25		
Apply/Rec'v Rebates	SwitchOver +1		

Solar Project Funding

Total costs for the roof repair and installation of our solar panels is \$223,570.

To-date, we have raised \$148,033.

Funds Needed/Raised (in \$1000s)																	
								1				1			2		
			0					0				5			0		
								0				0			0		

Candles That Tell a Story



Lighting its candles each Sunday is a treasured tradition during the four weeks of Advent.

Depending on denomination, churches use different color combinations for the candles. Some place four blue candles around the

wreath with a white one in the center, while others use all white. Many light purple candles on the first two Sundays, pink on the third, purple again on the fourth, and then a large white candle on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Each part of the wreath carries symbolic meaning:

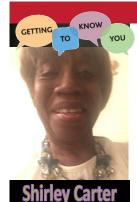
- The wreath: Its circular shape represents the everlasting love of God, having no beginning or end.
 The green symbolizes eternal life.
- The four candles: Mark the four weeks of Advent. One tradition says that each candle also represents 1,000 years, totaling 4,000 years from Adam and Eve to Christ's birth.
- Purple candles: in ancient times, purple was expensive and was considered the color of royalty and kings. On Christmas, Christ is proclaimed King of Kings. Purple also symbolizes humility and penitence. The first purple

candle represents Hope; the second, Peace; and the final purple candle, Love.

- Blue candles: Blue is another color often used as a symbol of royalty. Some churches use blue candles to symbolize the night sky and the anticipation of the announcement of Christ's birth. Blue also symbolizes the beginning of a new creation as in the waters of Genesis 1.
- The pink candle: Lit on the third Sunday, it represents Joy and marks the halfway point of Advent.
- The white candle: The large white candle in the center is the Christ candle. Its light symbolizes Christ the Savior — "the light of the world."

The beauty and brightness from the glow of all five candles is a reminder that Christ's life was the light for all earth's people — "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5, NRSV).

The Advent wreath is more than just greenery and candles—it's a symbol of watchfulness and growing joy as Christmas draws near.



"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Psalm 23:6 KJV

Very little did I know the word "mercy" would have a profound role in my life. I was born one year before World War II began, in what was named at that time Mercy Hospital in St. Petersburg, Florida.

My professional training in the medical field began at Mercy Hospital, the same place of my

birth. I received specialized training to become a Registered X-Ray Technologist at Mound Park Hospital and St. Anthony Hospital. At St. Anthony's, wonderful and supportive Franciscan nuns tutored me for the required American Registry Examination in Radiology Technology, which I passed, thanks to my hard work and support from the Sisters.

My beloved daughter, Sabrina, was also born in Mercy Hospital!

Several years later my family and I relocated to Brooklyn, New York where I would live and work for over 40 years. I was always thankful to work in a profession that promotes excellent healthcare and service to others when they needed help the most. This was one of the most fulfilling and impactful experiences in my life.

For many years I was not affiliated with a specific church in Brooklyn. But one day, my husband, Merle Carter, and I visited St. Paul's Lutheran Church near our house. It felt like home for us and a place that we could continue to grow spiritually and serve our community. I got involved in several ministries, ultimately becoming the Social Ministry, chairperson and a member of the Pastor's Call Committee. One of my greatest pleasures was working with my husband and other members of St. Paul's in maintaining the church's beautiful floral gardens.

I returned to St. Petersburg several years ago and joined Trinity Lutheran Church shortly upon my return. I had the pleasure of serving in several ministries. Now it is my pleasure to be a part of this wonderful congregation and serve our community. I'm sincerely grateful for the mercy and hospitality you have extended to me.

Written by Mrs. Shirley Ann Carter November 18, 2025

Reconsider the Rush

The Christmas rush leads to stress for many people. But author Burton Hills viewed the madness from another perspective:

"Eventually, the hour comes when the rushing ends and the race against the calendar mercifully comes to a close. It is only now, perhaps, that we truly recognize the spirit of Christmas. It is not a matter of days or weeks, but of centuries — [more than] twenty of them now since that holy night in Bethlehem. Regarded in this manner, the pre-Christmas rush may do us greater service than we realize. With all its temporal confusion, it may just help us to see that by contrast, Christmas itself is eternal."







Life is SHORT.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO LAUGH,

TO CARE, TO SPARKLE & SHINE

MOSTLY LOVE!





Who told Mary that her child would be called "the Son of the Most High"?

- A. Zechariah
- B. Gabriel
- C. Simeon
- D. Joseph

Answer: B (See Luke 1:26–32.)

Christian Symbol:



POINSETTIA — This shrub, native to Mexico, is at the heart of legend about a poor girl who wanted to bring Baby Jesus a gift one Christmas Eve. As she walked

to church, she gathered a bouquet of weeds — which Jesus miraculously transformed into lovely red flowers. Thus the poinsettia (named for Joel Poinsett, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico who first brought the plant to America) is known in Mexico as la flor de la Nochebuena (flower of the Holy Night). The poinsettia is also an ideal Christmas symbol because its leaves turn red when deprived of sunlight and its flowers (the red inner buds) bloom in December.

Notes from The Events Desk

Mark your calendars for Saturday,
December 6, for Meadowlawn
Association's first "Christmas
Market." The market will be held
from 9am-1pm at Meadowlawn
Park. Trinity is sponsoring a booth.
We will hold a drawing for two
children's bicycles, thanks to a generous

donation by Ted Hunt. Violet has also been keeping her little fingers crocheting all types of items to have for sale at our booth. Since this is our first year, we're not sure what to expect. But we are anxious for people in the community to get to know Trinity and this seems a perfectly merry way for that to happen! If all goes well, we will probably expand our booth and offerings next year. Come visit our booth and show your support!

Wednesday, December 17, at 6:00pm, Trinity will be hosting the AIDS Partnership Dinner at the downtown campus (in the fellowship hall). We've been hosting this dinner for many years now and the participants really seem to love the food and fellowship. If you are interested in participating in any way, please see me. Thanks!

The worship schedule for December and, particularly the Christmas Eve services, is available on the wall by the bulletin board at the downtown campus and posted on the doors at the Meadowlawn campus. After the 5:00pm service at the downtown campus, there will be a reception of light refreshments in the fellowship hall. (see also p.7)

It has been quite a year for Trinity and trying to process all the changes and emotions that we've had to face...well, it's been a lot for all of us. But let us be assured, amidst all the stress and struggles, there will be a Christmas this year. Not a Christmas of that's-how-we've-always-done-it, or trampled feelings, or stepped-on toes, of unkind words;, but a Christmas where a gracious, courageous young man, and a strong, faithful young woman, created with God a new family. A young family whose baby boy is still rocking the world two thousand years later. Maybe if we can be gracious to one another, courageous in the face of change, strong enough to accept hard decisions, and faithful in God's journey for us, maybe we can rock the world on His behalf...even for just a little while. Peace.

- Gretchen Frederick Events Coordinator

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Church Membership Records & Directory

Now that we are ONE congregation, we need to update our membership records to ensure everyone's information is up-to-date!

Angie has printed the member records from Servant Keeper which we will use as our source documents for entry into Shepherd's Staff. After all available data has been entered into Shepherd's Staff, we will print out new data sheets for all members and get them out to everyone for review. We would like to get all copies back showing either (a) corrections to be made or (b) confirmation that everything is correct.

Once the data sheets are returned to us we will make any necessary corrections to your record in Shepherd's Staff. We will also enter the appropriate information into our online church directory, Universal Church Directory.

The church directory also features a photo... so if you have one that you want us to use, you can return it with the form or email it to us! Anyone who is **added** to the church directory will receive an email with a "Unique Identifier" which will enable you to access the directory — either on your computer (https://directory.ucdir.com/) or on your smartphone (download from apple's app store or from google play).



December

Service		Lectors	Communion Assistants	Altar Flower Sponsors		
12/07	10:30 (D)	Marty Snapp	Lynne Tallon, Barb Macomb	Carla Sajda—IMO John Sajda		
12/14	10:30 (D)	Terri Craig	Margarita Rodriguez	To the glory of God from the people of Hope		
12/21	21 10:30 (M) Lou Carter		Betty Herzhauser	(open for sponsorship)		
12/24	5pm (D)	Phil Rearick	Paul Frakes, Ruth Kinsey	Various—Poinsettias		
7pm (M)		Terri Craig	Betty Herzhauser	Various—Poinsettias		
12/28	2/28 10:30 (M) Gary Bartelt Linda Ga		Linda Gascon	(open for sponsorship)		

(M)=Meadowlawn. Services are held at 1801 62nd Ave N; (D)=Downtown. Services are held at 401 5th St N.

Birthdays

12/01 Vickie Skidmore12/02 Willie Rodriguez

12/03 Faith Dunne

12/03 Martha Head12/03 Janis Hyneman

12/06 Frank Denniston

12/09 Lauren Anderson

12/09 Lauren Anderson
12/11 Donna Ehrlich

12/12 Janet Crim

12/12 Ron Oughton

12/14 Leif Gusdal

12/14 Gerry Munger

12/16 Paul Erickson

12/16 Jim Tallon

12/21 Lorna Holder

12/23 Joe Cataneo

12/24 Gretchen Frederick

12/29 Janetta Heinicke

12/30 Karen Toth

12/31 Kevin Boyd

12/31 Jennifer Durilla

12/31 Daxon Klema

<u>Anniversaries</u>

12/05 Elizabeth & Robert Hamilton

12/09 Lynne & Jim Tallon

12/21 Patricia & Ejon Chione

12/24 Jackie & Leif Gusdal

12/28 Kristina & Andrew Swindasz

12/31 Cindy & Chris Carter

Other Observances

12/07 2nd Sunday of Advent

12/14 3rd Sunday of Advent

12/21 First Day of Winter

12/21 4th Sunday of Advent

12/24 Christmas Eve

12/25 Christmas Day

12/31 New Year's Eve

Scientists recently combined the DNA of a cheetah with the DNA of a crab.

Things went sideways real fast.

Serving in 2026

If you would like to be in the rotation to serve during our worship services in 2026, now is the time to let us know!

We will be generating the 2026 roster for Ushers, Lectors, and Communion Assistants. There will be sign up sheets on the bulletin boards at both campuses.







Christmas Prayer: The True Gift

Dear Lord,

You have brought us to
Christmastime once more.
Help us not to get lost in the glitter and the glow, but to see the true glory of the birth of Your only begotten Son. Keep our hearts from clinging too tightly to parties, presents and decorations, and turn our eyes instead to Christ — who bears Your very image and brings us Your message of love and hope.

In the glorious name of Christ, we pray. Amen.



Order Christmas poinsettias by making gifts to the congregation in honor of or in memory of a loved one. The poinsettias are **\$8.00 each** and will be displayed on Christmas Eve, Dec 24th.

Let us know how many you want to sponsor! You may take your poinsettias home after the

service on December 24th (or any time between then and Jan 4th), or you can designate them for adoption.

All remaining poinsettias will be removed from the sanctuary after the service on Jan 4th (Second Sunday of Christmas).





Church Events Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
+30	Dec 1	2	3	4	5	6
9:50am Choir Wa	Bulletin Items Due		• 11:30am Hot Lunc	6pm Grace Family	• 9:30am TLC Pant	Parking Lot Reserv
10:30am Service	10am Bert's Breal		6pm Bible Study	6:30pm Vocal Ch	9:30am Food Pan	9am Christmas I
12:30pm Church (3pm ADVENT BY	3:30pm Preschoo				6pm First Friday I	 9am Thrift Store
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
arking Lot Reserv	Bulletin Items Due		• 11:30am Hot Lunc	 6pm Grace Family 	• 9:30am TLC Pant	9am Thrift Store
9:50am Choir Wa 10:30am Worship 11:30am Fellowsh		• 12:30pm Women's	 6pm Bible Study 	6:30pm Vocal Ch	9:30am Food Pan	10am Congregati
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
9:50am Choir Wa	Bulletin Items Due		9am Quilting	3:45pm French Aı	• 9:30am TLC Pant	Newsletter deadlir
10:30am Worship			• 11:30am Hot Lunc	6pm Grace Family	9:30am Food Pan	9am Thrift Store
11:30am Fellowsh 12:15pm Band of /			6pm AIDS Partne	6:30pm Vocal Ch	3:30pm Preschoc 6pm Film & Faith	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
9:50am Choir Wa	Bulletin Items Due		Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	• 9:30am TLC Pant	9am Thrift Store
10:30am Service		7pm Meadowlawr	• 11:30am Hot Lunc	 6pm Grace Family 	9:30am Dolores F	
11:30am Fellowsh 1:30pm Fleet Res			 5pm Christmas E 7pm Christmas E 			
28	29	30	31	Jan 1	2	3
9:50am Choir Wa	Bulletin Items Due		New Year's Eve	New Year's Day	9:30am TLC Pant	9am Thrift Store
10:30am Service			• 11:30am Hot Lunc	6pm Grace Family	9:30am Food Pan	
11:30am Fellowsh					6pm First Friday I	

Color Codes for events:

Y

Downtown Campus



Meadowlawn Campus



Other (online, etc.)

Downtown Calendar: https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=dHJpbml0eXN0cGV0ZUBnbWFpbC5jb20 Meadowlawn Calendar: https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=aG9wZXN0cGV0ZUBnbWFpbC5jb20