

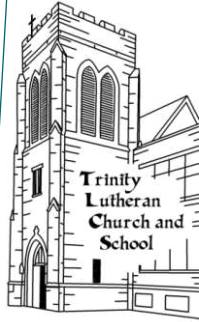
Trinity Lutheran Church & School
300 Broad Street
Menasha, WI 54952

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD



January 2024 Newsletter





Trinity Lutheran Church and School
300 Broad Street
Menasha, WI 54952

Church Phone: (920) 722-2662 School Phone: (920) 725-1715
Church Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm
Website: www.trinitymenasha.com

Worship Services:
Saturday – 5:00 pm; Sunday – 9:00 am; Wednesday – 6:30 pm
Education Hour: Sunday - 10:30 am

Services will continue to be available for streaming on Trinity’s Facebook page, and for later viewing on YouTube. Check the church website for more details.

IMPORTANT DATES IN JANUARY

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

- January 1: New Years Day – Church and School Offices Closed
- January 2: School Office Closed/Church Office Open 7-11 AM
6:30 PM Congregational Voters Meeting
6:30 PM Board Meetings
- January 3: School Office Closed/Church Office Open 7-11 AM
- January 4: School Resumes, Church & School Offices Open
3:45 PM Basketball Practice
- January 6: The Epiphany of Our Lord
- January 9: 4:30 PM Basketball vs Trinity Oshkosh @ Home
6:30 PM Board of Directors Meeting
- January 10: 9:00 AM Chapel
6:30 PM 4th-8th Grade Epiphany Service
- January 11: 4:30 PM Basketball vs Celebration @ Home
- January 13: 9:30 AM Food Pantry
5 PM Service – Soup & Bread Sale begins & runs through February 4
- January 16: 3:45 PM Basketball Practice
6:30 PM Ladies Aid Meeting
- January 17: 9:00 AM Chapel
- January 18: 4:30 PM Basketball vs Valley Home School @ Home
- January 21: **START OF LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK**
9:00 AM School Children Sing
- January 23: 4:30 PM Basketball vs Trinity Oshkosh @ Oshkosh
- January 24: 9:00 AM Chapel
- January 25: Kid Heart Challenge
3:45 PM Basketball Practice
- January 26: NO SCHOOL – TEACHER IN-SERVICE
- January 27: 9:30 AM Food Pantry
- January 30: 3:45 PM Basketball Practice



Our Mission Statement:

Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Menasha, is a fellowship of Lutheran Christians being empowered by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and His Sacraments to encourage, refresh, and strengthen both adults and children in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, while sharing His love with those who do not yet know their Lord and Savior.



Senior Pastor:
✙ Rev. Steven S. Billings

Assoc. Pastor/Principal:
✙ Rev. Keith E. GeRue

Director of Music:
Mrs. Connie Henkel

Organist:
Mrs. Nancy Lephart

January 2024

January 2, 6:30 PM Congregation Voters Meeting
Voting will be to elect board members for 2024



Trinity Lutheran Church & School


Church Phone: (920) 722-2662

School Phone: (920) 725-1715

Church Office Hours:

Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Email: ChurchAdmin@trinitymenasha.com

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
	1 CHURCH & SCHOOL OFFICES ARE CLOSED	2 Church Office Open 7-11 am 6:30AM Ladies Bible Study 6:30 PM Voters Meeting 6:30 PM Board Mtgs	3 Church Office Open 7-11 am 5:00 PM Catechism NO 6:30PM SERVICE	4 School Resumes 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM Choir Practice	5	6 5:00 PM Worship	
7 9:00 AM Worship 10:30 AM Ed Hour	8 Rev Billings' Sabbath 9:00 AM Sewing 6 :00 PM Home Prayer Time 6:30 PM Women's Bible Study	9 6:30AM Ladies Bible Study 4:30 PM Basketball vs Trinity Oshkosh @ Home 6:30 PM Bd of Dir Mtg	10 9:00 AM Chapel 5:00 PM Catechism 6:30PM 4th – 8th Grade Epiphany Service	11 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study 4:30 PM Basketball vs Celebration @ Home 6:30 PM Choir Practice	12	13 9:30 AM Food Pantry Soup & Bread Sale before and after services. 5:00 PM Worship	
14 9:00 AM Worship 10:30 AM Ed Hour Soup & Bread Sale before and after services.	15 Rev Billings' Sabbath 9:00 AM Sewing 6 :00 PM Home Prayer Time 6:30 PM Women's Bible Study	16 6:30AM Ladies Bible Study 3:45 PM Basketball Practice	17 9:00 AM Chapel 5:00 PM Catechism NO 6:30PM SERVICE	18 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study 4:30 PM Basketball vs Valley Home School @ Home 6:30 PM Choir Practice	19	20 Soup & Bread Sale before and after services. 5:00 PM Worship	
21 9:00 AM Worship 10:30 AM Ed Hour Soup & Bread Sale before and after services.	22 Rev Billings' Sabbath 9:00 AM Sewing 6 :00 PM Home Prayer Time 6:30 PM Women's Bible Study	23 6:30AM Ladies Bible Study 4:30 PM Basketball @ Trinity Oshkosh 6:30 PM Ladies Aid	24 9:00 AM Chapel 5:00 PM Catechism NO 6:30PM SERVICE	25 6:00 AM Men's Bible Study Kid Heart Challenge 3:45 PM Basketball Practice 6:30 PM Choir Practice	26 NO SCHOOL-TEACHER IN-SERVICE	27 9:30 AM Food Pantry Soup & Bread Sale before and after services. 5:00 PM Worship	
28 9:00 AM Worship Soup & Bread Sale before & after services. 10:30 AM Ed Hour 10:30 AM Children Sing @ Peace Lutheran-Neenah	29 Rev Billings' Sabbath 9:00 AM Sewing 6 :00 PM Home Prayer Time 6:30 PM Women's Bible	30 6:30AM Ladies Bible Study 3:45 PM Basketball Practice	31 5:00 PM Catechism NO 6:30PM SERVICE	Soup & Bread Sale • Jan. 13 – Feb 4 Before & after church services Contact Elaine if you have Questions at (920) 470-9090.			

Anniversary Blessings
January 2024



01/01 Nicolette & Tyler Lentz
 01/05 Chris & Cindy Williams
 01/08 Diane & Robert Lukasavage
 01/11 David & Mae Joerndt
 01/12 Brandon & Angela Hurst
 01/20 Carrie & Tom Haanen

January 2024
Birthday Blessings!

01/02 Duane Baehman
 01/02 Brandon Looker
 01/02 Matthew Looker
 01/03 Nick Kroes
 01/03 Georgina Peotter
 01/03 Myles Voigt
 01/06 Joseph Groshek
 01/09 Blaine Henkel
 01/10 Austin Seals Jr
 01/12 Finley Brown
 01/12 Charlotte Elliott
 01/12 Roger Voigt
 01/13 Bart Nielsen
 01/14 Harper Labby
 01/14 Daniel Schmidt
 01/14 Joyce Tschirgi

01/14 Tony Van Ark
 01/14 James Wolter
 01/15 Riley Brown
 01/15 Heather Fink
 01/17 Alexandra Reuning
 01/18 Kaylin Kohler
 01/19 Julie Vanden Wyngaard
 01/21 Randolph Gehrt
 01/22 Claire Gast
 01/22 Jolene Waldburger
 01/23 Alec Bricco
 01/23 Jordyn Mies
 01/23 Matthew Zachek
 01/24 Michael Moderson
 01/25 Emmalyn Lessmiller
 01/25 Aliyah Weyenberg



01/26 Ashlee Kamprath
 01/26 Chester Konwinski
 01/27 Cari Boss
 01/27 Cody Daniels
 01/28 Madelyn Graper
 01/29 Jean Ross
 01/30 Ethan Nielsen
 01/30 Sharon Raleigh



✝ *Trinity Membership Update* ✝

New Members/Transfers In: DuWayne & Bonnie Griepentrog

Released/Transfers Out:

Baptisms:

Weddings:

Members Who Have Passed: LeRoy Bartel

²⁵For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. ²⁶And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God. Job 19:25-26

Serving Our Lord with Gladness – January 2024

Senior Pastor: Rev. Steven S. Billings
Associate Pastor/Principal: Rev. Keith E. GeRue

Worship Date/Time	Acolyte	Elder on Duty	Communion Assistant	Usher Captain	Greeter	Altar Guild
Jan 6: 5:00 PM Jan 7: 9:00 AM	Richie Sprouse Mirella Taschner	<i>To Be Announced</i> <i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>To Be Announced</i> <i>To Be Announced</i>	Jerry Maynard Steve Sexmith	Barbara Kester Jane Nielsen	Jean Zeinert <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Jan 13: 5:00 PM Jan 14: 9:00 AM	Maya Torres Sydney Gast	<i>To Be Announced</i> <i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>To Be Announced</i> <i>To Be Announced</i>	Lee Colby Dave Collingwood	Dan & Peggy Dahms Rosemary Collingwood	Jean Zeinert <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Jan 20: 5:00 PM Jan 21: 9:00 AM	Axle Hurst Robbie Kohler	<i>To Be Announced</i> <i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>To Be Announced</i> <i>To Be Announced</i>	Roger Voigt Jim Wittmann	JoAnn Schultz Connie Henkel	Jean Zeinert <i>Volunteer Needed</i>
Jan 27: 5:00 PM Jan 28: 9:00 AM	Payton Lenth Simon Kroes	<i>To Be Announced</i> <i>To Be Announced</i>	<i>To Be Announced</i> <i>To Be Announced</i>	Tom Harrmann Lee Weinig	Betty Allen <i>Volunteer Needed</i>	Jean Zeinert <i>Volunteer Needed</i>

January 2024 Altar Guild Volunteers Needed:

Setting the Lord's Table is truly an honor and blessing. Please contact Mary Conradt (920) 882-8676 or Jean Zeinert at (920) 722-2662 and let us know if you can help.

Sunday, January 7 9:00 AM Clean Up/Deliver Flowers
Wednesday, January 10 6:30 pm 4th-8th Epiphany Service

Sunday, January 14 9:00 AM Clean Up/Deliver Flowers
NO WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Sunday, January 21 9:00 AM Clean Up/Deliver Flowers
NO WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Sunday, January 28 9:00 AM Clean Up/Deliver Flowers
NO WEDNESDAY SERVICE



SCRIP ON-LINE — “RAISE RIGHT”

You are now able to buy SCRIP on-line, in addition to our current SCRIP program.

The companies reimburse Trinity a percentage rate that gets applied to your tuition, or the tuition of someone you wish to help.

Gift card fundraising, also known as scrip fundraising, has been the #1 fundraiser for nonprofit organizations across the U.S. for more than 25 years.

Why? Because it's easy and more convenient than selling goods or recruiting volunteers. Earn simply by buying gift cards to use for everyday purchases, instead of cash or credit cards. The rebates received from SCRIP are used as you direct.

There are many brands, stores, and locations all over the US you can purchase SCRIP for, so if you are traveling, this is a great way to budget your trip expenses or make purchases out of state. There are gas stations, restaurants, hotels, retail stores and more.

Purchasing SCRIP online is fast, easy, and convenient. You can reload your SCRIP card while standing in line at the checkout! To get started, go to the following website: shopwithscrip.com and follow the directions.

Trinity Code: 8A38L86A1766



RaiseRight™

January 2024 Stewardship Talk: What's in the "Box"?

Your Board of Stewardship is very thankful for all that have renewed their commitment to the Lord of their Time, Talents, and Treasure for the coming two years. May God richly bless your intentions to give!

We are thankful for those who have decided to give their offerings electronically, or by other means. You can always check with the church office for more information on these options. But, for the many who use our offering envelopes to give your tithes and offerings, we know you appreciate the variety of envelopes that this box contains – from the weekly PINK(!) ones, to the envelopes for the church seasons: Advent, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Ascension, to the special envelopes for Thanksgiving and New Years Eve.

In addition, this box contains an Initial Offering envelope, designed to be used at the start of the year (think First Fruits giving!!), as well as a Day School offering envelope, perfect for National Lutheran Schools Week, the end of January. Finally, your envelope box contains a total of six envelopes each for Communion and our Building Fund, one every other month. As you have occasion to praise and thank our loving God, every one of these unique envelopes allows you the opportunity to do so in a tangible way. Please pickup your envelope box from church if you have not already done so.

As with everything else these days, the cost of these boxes of envelopes has increased. If you feel moved to provide a thank offering to help defer this expense, so that your fellow members may continue to experience the joy of giving, simply label your gift "offering envelopes".

As we look forward to the coming year, let us intentionally look for opportunities to offer up our **Time**, **Talents**, and **Treasure** (via these various envelopes) to our Heavenly Provider of all.

May our Lord Bless your day!



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH - FINANCIAL REPORT NOV 2023

	<u>BEGINNING BALANCE</u>	<u>DEPOSITS/INCOME</u>	<u>WITHDRAWALS/EXPENSES</u>	<u>ENDING BALANCE</u>	<u>Acct #</u>	<u>Delta</u>	<u>Mthly/Qtly</u>	<u>updated date</u>
Nicolet General Fund	\$12,122.83	\$77,790.30	(\$72,865.19)	\$17,047.94	6843	\$4,925.11	M	11/30/2023
Nicolet Restricted Funds*	\$95,096.21	\$4,276.12	(\$32,135.00)	\$67,237.33	8048	(\$27,858.88)	Q	11/30/2023
LCMS Endowment Fund**	\$118,135.78			\$118,135.78	7006	\$0.00	Q	9/30/2023
LCEF Steward Fund	\$880.06			\$880.06	2525	\$0.00	M	7/31/2023
Nicolet Money Market	\$25.96		(\$10.00)	\$15.96	2026	(\$10.00)	M	11/30/2023
Schwab Wealth***	\$38,414.99	\$2,826.13	(\$20.93)	\$41,220.19	4018	\$2,805.20	Q	11/30/2023
Nicolet Memorial Fund	\$7,771.28			\$7,771.28	8056	\$0.00	Q	11/30/2023
Nicolet Office Acct	\$3,435.38	\$1.48		\$3,436.86	6851	\$1.48	M	11/30/2023
Nicolet Think Tank	\$3,191.70			\$3,191.70	8099	\$0.00	Q	11/30/2023
Nicolet Scrip	\$18,822.32	\$24,523.04	(\$26,001.47)	\$17,343.89	6800	(\$1,478.43)	M	11/30/2023
TOTAL	\$297,896.51	\$109,417.07	(\$131,032.59)	\$276,280.99		-\$21,615.52		
LCEF Mortgage (BOTR)	\$882,958.24	NOT UPDATED	(3,827.08)	\$879,131.16	0440			10/3/2023

JANUARY LADIES AID/LWML

The ladies of Trinity Ladies Aid/LWML want to express a heartfelt 'thank you' to all who participated in our Christmas Cookie and Candy Sale. If you donated items, they were so appreciated and gave our customers a wonderful variety to choose from. If you helped us at the sale, you were a Godsend with all the ailments we experienced the last several weeks. If you were a customer, we pray you enjoyed what you purchased.

Our proceeds will be used towards mission projects and Trinity Church and School projects. Disbursing our funds will be the focus of our next meeting on Tuesday, January 16th at 6:30 p.m. in the small fellowship hall; ladies of Trinity, please come and be a part of this outreach of love and caring at home and throughout the world. If you have questions, please call Dottie Kraus at (920) 991-2705; or email rkraus001@gmail.com.



**Friends of the Pipe Organ &
Grand Piano**



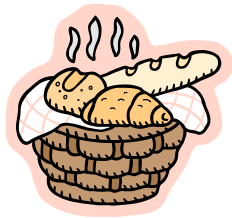
Soup & Bread Sale

JANUARY 13th

THRU

FEBRUARY 4TH

Before & After Services



A variety of Soups and Breads
will be available.

New this year -Sauerkraut by order

A ready-made meal to warm the day.

**Bring in your favorite soup or bread/quick
bread to support the maintenance of our
Organ & Grand Piano. Jars & instructions
will be available in the Narthex in January.**

Contact Elaine with any questions 920-470-9090

(If you have a favorite you'd like us to make - let us know)

From Your Parish Nurse...



Anger is Not Good for Your Health.

“Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming...” - Proverbs 27:4

Everyone feels angry every now and then, and such feelings are unavoidable, especially if the anger is due to a specific event. Anger can even be a healthy and appropriate response when it is experienced at a modest level and for a modest duration. For some people, anger and hostility are long-term habits or personality traits. If you feel anger too long, too intensely, and too often, it is not good for your health.



Provided by:

Mary Howden, RN
Parish Nurse

Anger Triggers Natural Responses in Your Body:

- Your heart races and blood pressure rises.
- Your muscles tense and your arteries dilate to carry more blood—hence the red face.
- Your body is putting itself in the “flight or flight” mode and certain “stress” chemicals are being released into your body (epinephrine and norepinephrine).

Stress chemicals can also increase the tendency of your blood to clot, cause direct damage to your heart, and disrupt your heart's rhythm. “Holding it in” and “fuming” silently is no better. Suppressed anger can lead to high blood pressure and depression. The healthiest way to express your anger is to be assertive without being aggressive. State your position clearly, calmly and respectfully without being demanding or hurtful to others.

Healthy Ways to Manage Anger:

Think before you respond. Listen carefully. Try to understand the other person's point of view. Don't assume other people are out to get you. *“A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.” - Proverbs 19:11*

Find your triggers. Keep a record of things that trigger your anger and try to avoid them. *“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.” - Proverbs 22:24-25*

Look for humor in the situation. Humor puts a distance between you and the stressor.

Exercise. Regular exercise can help reduce frustrations.

Talk yourself down. Express yourself assertively but calmly. Slowly repeat to yourself such words as “relax”. *“Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret-it leads only to evil.” - Psalm 37:8*

Take time out. The old “count to ten” is still a good method. Walk away from your anger triggers. *“In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.” - Psalm 4:4*

Pray. The Lord is our strength and our ever present help. He promises... *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I don't give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” - John 14:27.*



Catechetical Comments

A Series

THE APOSTLES' CREED

This month we continue our look at The Apostles' Creed and consider the following question: *Who is God?*

93. *Who is God?*

In His Word God has told us that He is

L. gracious (showing undeserved kindness, forgiving)

The *Small Catechism* further answers the question *Who Is God?* by saying:

In His Word God has told us that He is

L. gracious (showing undeserved kindness, forgiving)

It then offers the following Scripture passage in support of this answer:

Ex. 34:6-7 – The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

This passage tells us that God is utterly different from us. We could turn this around to express the things we are not. We are not often slow to anger; our love is not always steadfast, but wavering; we are not often faithful, our allegiances shift from one thing to another, from one person to another. God is none of this. He is *always* gracious, *always* slow to anger, *always* faithful. God is not like us, and this is a very good thing.

Another interesting thing about this passage is that it clearly defines why we need God to be gracious.

We often use the words “iniquity,”

“transgression,” and “sin” interchangeably, as though they were merely synonyms. They aren't, as the original Hebrew, and its Greek translation in the Septuagint, makes clear to us, stacking them in order of the strength or intensity of the rebellion involved, for sin is nearly always an expression of rebellion, in one way or another.

The first English word – **iniquity** – in Hebrew is *avówn*, meaning “perversity.” The Greek translation uses *anómia*, which means “lawlessness.” The idea here is “to be without law” or to be opposed to any sense of law, especially God's law.

This is different than the next word – **transgression** – which in Hebrew is *peshá'*. The Greek equivalent is *adikía*, which, in English, is “unrighteousness.” This isn't rebellion against the very notion of law, but more of a disregard for the law. I might agree that speed limits are a good thing in general, but I, in my sinfulness, just might consider that a particular speed limit doesn't apply to me at a given time.

The last word – **sin** – in Hebrew is *hattá'a*, which is simply translated as “sin.” The Greek helps us a bit here by narrowing that term to *hamartía*, which means “guilt.” Even if our sin is not a deliberate act of rebellion, such as when we sin unknowingly or without intention or forethought, we are still guilty of violating the law of God.

All of our sin, from the most vile to the least infraction, is deserving of God's wrath, punishment, and, ultimately, damnation. Thank God, that because of Christ, He is most definitely gracious and merciful toward us sinners. †

Humbly in His service,
Rev. Steven S. Billings
Senior Pastor

From the School

“Happy New Year?”

Luke 2:21

Happy New Year! Maybe. Maybe it will be happy for you. But maybe not. We hope it will be. We wish it. That the war in Ukraine will end. That our nation’s politics will get out of the pig sty and maybe even get something accomplished. That hostile dictators will become a little less hostile. That hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, pandemics, and things like mass shootings and terrorism might take the year off. That would be nice. Though it’s unlikely. What’s *more* likely is that there will be more of the same. A new calendar year really changes very little.

So maybe instead of hoping for change - which may or may not come in the new year now before us . . . maybe instead we put our hope in the God who doesn’t change. Our God *who is the same yesterday, today, and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). And when things happen in the world and in our lives that cause us sadness or frustrate us, that induce fear or make us wonder if anyone is sane anymore . . . rather than drive us to despair, those things drive us to the one we can count on. The one who is good, works good, and can bring good out of evil. The one who makes promises and keeps them. The one who will one day make not just a year but all things new. That the worse or the harder things get in the world or in your life, the more we live by faith. Not in what we can do, but in what our Lord can do. And will do.

Which is not an excuse to do nothing! As in: My New Year’s resolution this year is to do nothing because I’m going to let God handle it all! No . . . God uses people like you and me to work good in this world. So, what you do is important. How your work provides for the needs of others. How you care for and provide for your family. How your generosity and friendship help others out. God wants you not only to not sin, but to do good works, God works, those works through which God works good.

But as you’ve often heard me say, there are two ditches we don’t want to fall into here. To do nothing and think God is going to do everything for you is the one ditch, but the other ditch is equally bad - and that is to think it’s all up to me. If this is really going to be a Happy New Year for me then it will be because I did all the right things and did them well enough. I kept my resolutions, was a better person, a better parent, I worked harder, I changed, I improved. I did all those things I was supposed to do . . . mostly . . . or more often than not . . . or more than I used to, at least . . .

All of which isn’t bad! It’s good to work on yourself and improve. But you’re not worth more if you succeed and worth less if you don’t. You’re not loved by God more if you improve and less if you don’t. **You are a baptized child of God.** Which means when your heavenly Father looks at you, He doesn’t see a disappointment, someone who has fallen short - again! - or someone He’s only going to give one more chance to. Baptized into Christ, having put on Christ means that when your heavenly Father looks at you, He sees Christ, He sees His Son, whom He dearly loves. He sees good. He sees new. Now, that’s definitely not what we see! But that’s why we say in the Creed that *we believe in a holy* Christian Church, a communion of saints, and the forgiveness of sins. So, what makes you new is not a New Year or a new effort on your part, but the one who makes all things new by His death and resurrection. You are new because Jesus has made you new.

This is why I said at the beginning that all the things that happen in our world - the hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, pandemics, mass shootings, terrorism, all the things that cause us sadness and frustrate us - instead of driving us to despair, should drive us to Jesus. Because all those things are the wordless preaching of the Law. All those things preach to us that the world is broken, that we are broken, that we’ve fallen, and we can’t get up! We need help. We need a Savior.

We always need Jesus. So just as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and all Old Testament believers lived by faith in God's promise to send a Savior, so we New Testament believers live by faith in the Savior God did send, His Son. Promise fulfilled. His Son who was born for you, then circumcised on the eighth day for you, lived for you, was baptized for you, died for you, rose for you, and ascended for you. Who did *everything* for you, that you might be new. Forgiven. A child of God. Dearly loved. With hope, and a future, and confidence. No matter what year it is, or what time in the year it is. Jesus is the same - the same Savior for you - yesterday, today, and forever.

So now baptism points our faith to Jesus and all that He has done for us. To remember and rely on not what you have done or do, but to remember and rely on Jesus and all that He has done *for you*. That He has made you new. And given you not merely a New Year, but a new - and eternal - life.

So, whatever this New Year of 2024 holds for you, for us, and for the world, nothing can change that. Which, it seems to me, is a pretty good way to start a New Year. Remember who you are and what you have. That you are a child of God, and have his love, forgiveness, and life. And this too: His Name. He put His Name on you. Because you are precious to Him. So, God has given His Name to you. He put it on you in your baptism, and we hear it at the end of the Divine Service every week. God commanded Aaron to put His Name on His people, to bless them with His Name. And you have been so blessed. Don't underestimate that, what a precious gift that is. Remember that you are baptized. Remember that you bear God's Name you are His. So that whether or not you have a *Happy* New Year, you will have a blessed one. Amen.

In Jesus, Pastor GeRue

What's happening around The School.

- ***January 4 School Resumes***
- ***January 4 Basketball Practice***
- ***January 9 Basketball Oshkosh @ Home***
- ***January 10 School Chapel***
- ***January 11 Basketball Celebration @ Home***
- ***January 16 Basketball Practice***
- ***January 17 School Chapel***
- ***January 18 Basketball Valley Home School @ Home***
- ***January 21 School Students sings at 9 am service at Trinity***
- ***Lutheran Schools Week January 21 – 28 Watch for more details to come.***
- ***January 23 Basketball @ Trinity Oshkosh***
- ***January 24 School Chapel***
- ***January 25 Basketball Practice***
- ***January 25 Heart Challenge***
- ***January 26 NO SCHOOL Teacher Inservice***
- ***January 28 School Students sings at 9 am service at Peace, Neenah***
- ***January 30 Basketball Practice***
- ***January 31 School Chapel***

**What an exciting time to be a servant in the LORD's harvest.
Thanks for being a part of the Trinity family.**





Master's Degree

In addition to my responsibilities with the Mende and Themne Bible Translation Projects, I am also working on an online Master of Arts in New Testament at the Talbot School of Theology out of Biola University. Since the school is in California, I've had classes that started anywhere from four in the afternoon to two in the morning while in Sierra Leone!

For my degree I am taking classes in theology, spiritual formation, Koine Greek, New Testament background, and exegesis. While some classes connect more directly with translation work, they are all important for life in translation, ministry, and personal faith.

I did not know what to expect for my spiritual formation classes, but I was pleasantly surprised. For a Lutheran audience, I would say it is the practical realization of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. We did learn practices that encourage us to spend time with the Word of God and prayer. But we also learned to peel back all of the layers of who we are or who we think we are – acknowledging the good, the bad, and the ugly (Law). This is important, not so we can dwell on our own greatness or weakness, but to put every part of us before God and the truth that we are created in his image, knowing that He has and continues to forgive our sins, and He has already won our salvation (Gospel). He already knows us and loves us, so if we hide our darkness, it is only detrimental to ourselves because Christ has already made us enough before the Father. Spiritual formation also focuses on sanctification, reminding us that the Holy Spirit is the one who changes our hearts (we can't do it ourselves), not like a magic spell that has instant results, but He works alongside us little by little to bring us closer to who we were created to be. Sometimes we can know our theology well but applying it to our life can be the challenge, and this is where spiritual formation steps in to bridge that gap.

The Greek, exegesis, and New Testament background classes have helped me become more aware of the different issues that go into properly understanding a Biblical text and gives me the skills to investigate them. In order to understand a sentence, you need to understand what each word can mean in different contexts, how the grammar can affect the meaning or the emphasis, how some phrases can take on meanings affected by tradition and culture of the language (such as “break the ice”), and how some aspects of a sentence, paragraph, story, letter, etc. are impacted by culture, history, tradition, geography, climate, socioeconomic environment, and politics. All of these need to be in the mind of the reader, translator, or pastor to best understand the passage's original meaning and intent.

Visit in the US

I will be in the US from mid-May to October of this year (2023). I will be visiting churches, Bible studies, LWML meetings, small groups, or any other gathering that has an opening! Email me or text me if you are interested in welcoming me to share an update with you and your group about the Bible translation work going on in Sierra Leone. I will also need a vehicle to travel many miles, so if you have an old reliable vehicle that you don't need or are planning to sell eventually, let me know! I typically am around WI, MN, IA, MO, AZ, CA, TX GA, AL, and NY, but I am happy to travel to areas nearby to these or new ones, especially if there are a number of groups to meet with or are on the way to another location (for instance I could stop in OH on my way from NY to WI). I look forward to seeing you all!

Feel free to scan this QR code and fill this form if you are interested in having me speak at your church, small group, or with you and a few friends over a cup of coffee!



<https://forms.gle/sSPhvC2ahCsW6ugk6>



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for me as I tackle all the work that goes with taking my classes, including the odd hours.
- Pray that I can balance the translation work along with taking classes.
- Pray that I can apply what I am learning to my work as well as my personal life.
- Praise God that both Mende and Themne translation teams have capable and dedicated people to keep this important work moving forward.



The Mende Translation Team

Translation progress is being made as books of the Bible are moving through various stages of the translation process according to schedule. The lead team members evaluate progress, measure achievements, and track timeliness using a chart through Paratext (Scripture Translation software). This is an important part of the process, as it ensures translation continues to meet goals in a timely manner.

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Please make your check payable to Lutheran Bible Translators. Remember to sign and date your check. Go to lbt.org or call 660- 225-0810 to use a credit card or set up monthly payments! Lutheran Bible Translators is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, and your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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