

November/December 2023

the Candle



Do you ever tell people that you're a *member* of Trinity Lutheran Church? I hope so! And, I hope you follow it up with talking about Jesus and His presence in your life, about His grace and love for you and for the person(s) you're talking to, and His presence and working at, in, and through His Church at Trinity! I also hope you follow it up with an invitation to join you for worship at Trinity, as well as study, fellowship, and growth in Christ with us!

Now, I want to go back to that word "member." What does it mean to be a member of a church? Of Trinity Lutheran Church? Let's start with what it's not. Being a church member doesn't mean just having your name written in a big red book in the church vault or in the church's membership program on a computer. And, it doesn't mean merely sending in money to the church as if it were a club and you maintain membership by paying "dues."

Unlike many other entities which have membership, "membership" in a church necessarily entails **presence at church**, first and foremost in **worship**. Whether at the time of Baptism, confirmation, or both, a member stood before God and the congregation and publicly confessed his or her trust that what is believed, preached, taught, and confessed at Trinity is faithful to Scripture and professed the intent to faithfully live out life in accordance with God's Word with this community of God's people.

Do you confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from the Scriptures, as you have learned to know it from the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true?

I do.

Do you intend to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper faithfully?

I do, by the grace of God.

Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?

I do, by the grace of God.

Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?

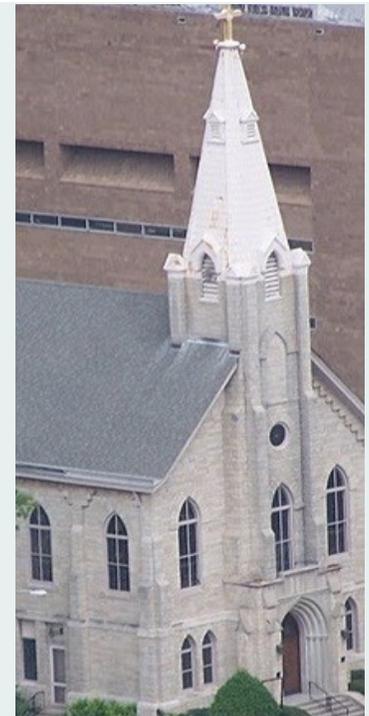
I do, by the grace of God.

-From the Rite of Confirmation, Lutheran Service Book Agenda

In God's Top Ten, number three no less, the Lord says: "**Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8).**" In Leviticus 23:3, the Lord declares, "**Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation.**" Martin Luther's explanation of the Third Commandment says: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and God's Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it." All these declare that a member's presence is required by God, at a minimum weekly, for worship.

Some professed "members" of Christ's Church treat presence, first and foremost in worship, as optional. From a standpoint of honoring God's Ten Commandments, that's strange, though. Would a church member think it's ok to be a serial murderer (5th Commandment) or serial adulterer or other sex offender (6th Commandment) or serially commit theft (7th Commandment)? Sadly, in our day and age, some actually would. But, I suspect not here because we believe God's Word to be ... God's Word! If those are not ok (and they aren't), then how can a member think it's ok to serially break the Sabbath (3rd Commandment)?

Jesus' parting commission to His disciples, and His Church through His disciples, and to His shepherds, or pastors, of His Church publicly on behalf of His Church was: "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, (by) baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and**



CHURCH EVENTS

- 11/5 Annual Voter's Meeting
- 11/8 Board of Cristian Education Meeting
- 11/11 Church Council Meeting
Elders Meeting
Men's Group Meeting
- 11/12 Children's Christmas service
organizational meeting
- 11/15 Community Connection Team Meeting
- 11/16 Young Adult Group at Board to Beers
- 11/18 Youth and Young Adults
Thanksgiving Lunch Preparation
- 11/19 Stewardship Commitment Sunday
Thanksgiving Lunch Hosted by Our
Youth and Young Adults
Naomi Circle Meeting
- 11/26 Children's Christmas Service
Practice
- 12/1 Youth Lock-in
- 12/2 Trinity Serving as Spectator Spot for
St. Jude Marathon
Decorating for Advent and
Christmas Seasons
- 12/6 Mid-Week Advent Services Begin
- 12/9 Dress Rehearsal for Children's
Christmas Program
- 12/10 Children's Christmas Program
- 12/13 Mid-Week Advent Service
- 12/17 Naomi Circle Meeting
- 12/20 Mid-Week Advent Service
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Service
- 12/25 Christmas Day Service

For up-to-date information, see the Trinity Today or the weekly e-newsletter.

(Continued from Page 1)

of the Holy Spirit, (by) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:18-20).” Disciples are made in a moment by being baptized and *are also made*, as in formed lifelong, by being taught all of Christ’s Word, the Word of God. That takes place, *first*, in the worship service!

Worship is not just something God commands. Even more, it is time He has set aside for us as a gift that we need! As Lutheran Christians, we refer to worship as the “Divine Service.” This is because worship always starts with the *Divine*, our Lord and God, coming to be “with us” (Matthew 1:23) and “serve us” (Mark 10:45) with His ongoing and limitless gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation earned for us in His perfect life, reconciling death, and life-giving resurrection for us. In John’s Gospel, the Lord Jesus says, “... **the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth (John 4:23).**” He also says that He is the true “temple” of God (John 2). Worship takes place where the Truth (and Way and Life), Jesus, is present, and His Spirit working. Jesus is truly spiritually and physically present with His people and working for us – serving us – when we are gathered around His Word and Sacraments in worship. In return we respond with our prayers, praise, and thanksgiving in worship of our Lord who is worthy of all worship. A member of the church is **present**, therefore, receiving the Lord’s gifts in His Service and responding with the worship He deserves.

Similarly, a member of the church lives the truth that there is no such thing as a Christian in isolation from the church. As a member of “Christ’s body” (1 Corinthians 10 and 11) and family of faith, he or she needs constant connection with Christ and the rest of His body, **being together, together with the Lord, and mutually growing together in Christ.** When any member of Christ’s body is missing, the body is incomplete, and the individual member separated from the body is headless and hurting him or herself.

In Acts 2 after the Day of Pentecost, it says of the believers in Christ, “**And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ... And all who believed were together and had all things in common (Acts 2:42, 44).**” Devoted themselves...! Had all things in common! This *starts* in the Divine Service which is the start and heart of our life together as members of Christ but *not its end*. Life together connected to Christ is further formed and strengthened as members of Christ are **taught His Word together and fellowship together.**

Church members are also present to **support one another and encourage one another in the faith through this life.** A member actively loves, cares for, encourages, and supports the brothers and sisters in Christ and is loved, cared for, encouraged, and supported by the brothers and sisters in Christ. The writer of Hebrews exhorts: “**Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Hebrews 10:19-26; italics mine).**”

To be a member of Christ’s Church is to also **give of oneself in support of the ministry and mission Jesus has given to His Church to make disciples.** It is to give generously of one’s time, talents, and treasures for His ongoing Word and Sacrament ministry to us - to you and the rest of your family of faith, growing children and adults as disciples throughout life. It is to give generously of one’s time, talents, and treasures for His mission through us to connect more people to Christ who don’t yet know Him, saving the lost and making more and more disciples for eternity.

Will you support the work our gracious Lord has given this congregation with your prayers and the gifts God has given you?

I will, with the help of God.

-From the Rite of Reception of Members by Transfer or Profession of Faith, Lutheran Service Book Agenda

In the Church, we sometimes use terms like “active” members or membership and “inactive” members. When you consider that a church member, a member of Christ’s body, is by nature **present**, those are dubious descriptions. The former is redundant, the latter paradoxical.

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FOCUS ON MISSIONS

Connecting2Christ Community Team

The new Trinity Connecting2Christ Community Team will meet on Wednesday, November 15. The team’s mission is that of the church as a whole: Connecting people to Christ for life. The team’s purpose is to plan and implement Community Connection Events and lead the congregation as a whole into greater service and witness in our community(ies), that we as God’s people may connect with the people of the community and that, prayerfully, many people will come to be connected to Christ for life through us. If you are interested in being a part of this team, please see or contact Pastor Croom

Missions Opportunities at Church and Local Community:

- Hispanic Missions Fund – Pastor Croom
- Homeless Food Project – Coordinators Vernetta Eddleman and Charlotte Johnson
- Water Tumbler Project – Coordinator Charlotte Johnson and Supplier Candace Henderson
- School Backpack Project – Coordinators Charlotte Johnson
- St. Jude Marathon Project – Coordinators Pastor Croom, Anna Pittman
- Christmas Angel Tree Project – Coordinator Vernetta Eddleman
- Food Pantry – Coordinator – Charlotte Johnson

(Continued from Page 2)

When Jesus was in the wilderness at the outset of His ministry, He had fasted 40 days and nights and was tempted by the devil. Satan's first recorded temptation was for the hungry Jesus to turn a stone into bread. Jesus responded by quoting Scripture from Deuteronomy 8: **"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).'"** ... To survive physically in this life, you and I need the nourishment of food and water. To survive spiritually (and physically, too), you and I and all members need *even more* to constantly consume and be nourished by the life-giving and life-sustaining Word that comes from the mouth of God!

A member of the Church obeys God, because God always knows what's best for us. A member of the Church lives by God's living Word in the constant fellowship of His gathered people receiving the bread of life when and where He distributes it in Word and Sacrament. A member of the church is one who has professed the faith of Scripture believed, confessed, taught, and preached at, in, and by the church; is faithfully present in the church receiving God's gifts in Word and Sacrament and responding with the acts of worship of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving with the rest of Christ's body in this place; is growing in faith and faithfulness throughout life with the rest of Christ's body in this place; is present and encouraging and supporting and being encouraged and supported by one another; and is present and supporting Christ's ministry to His people of making disciples by baptizing and teaching and is present and supporting Christ's mission of making more disciples by witnessing, baptizing, and teaching!

All of these are essential in connection with Christ for life, *present and eternal*. A member of the Church not only knows them but *lives* them!

A Blessed Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas Seasons to You in Christ,

Pastor Michael Croom

NEWS AND NOTES

Stewardship Commitment Sunday - Sunday, November 19, is Stewardship Commitment Sunday for Time, Talents, and Treasures for 2024. Everyone should have received an envelope with a form for each person in the family. If you need a form, please let an usher know. We have extras. We ask that you prayerfully consider how you might give of your time, talents, and treasures this year in service to our Lord and the ministry and mission He has given us as His family of faith at Trinity.

Thanksgiving Lunch Hosted by Our Youth and Young Adults - On Sunday, November 19, our Youth Group, with the help of our Young Adult Group, will be providing a Thanksgiving lunch at 11:30. In addition to a great fellowship opportunity, this is a fundraiser for our Trinity Youth Group. We hope you'll come and support them!

Youth Lock-in - On Friday, December 1, we will have a lock-in for our Middle and High School Youth. On Saturday, we will help out with our Community Connection Event of serving as Spectator Spot and Cheer Station for the St. Jude Run.

Trinity Is Serving as Spectator Spot and Cheer Station for the St. Jude Run on Saturday, December 2. We invite people to volunteer to help out with greeting people and serving hot chocolate, coffee, cookies, etc. Because of street closures, you will need to be at the church by 6:00 am. Please wear your blue Trinity t-shirts. The event ends at 11:00.

After Worship Fellowship - The Hospitality Board is asking people to sign up to bring snack-type items and drinks for our fellowship. The sign-up sheets for **November - December** is on the board in the fellowship hall.

Organist Search - If you know someone who plays the organ and would like to recommend him or her for consideration, please see or contact Doug Campbell (901-212-6028), Head of our Worship Committee.

The Board of Missions Food Items of the Month for November - To help supply our emergency food pantry for the needy, the Board of Missions is requesting donations from the congregation in November for the following items: **peanut butter, canned vegetables, tuna**. Please place them in the corner of the fellowship hall where the food pantry closet is located. If you have questions, please contact Board of Missions Director Charlotte Johnson (662-782-7251).

Connecting2Christ sunday groups We have groups for all ages! We meet in the fellowship hall, and then go to our groups following an opening devotion. Please make plans to join us to experience the Lord and connect to Christ through the hearing and study of God's Word!

Our Groups and teachers:

Pre-school - K: Nancy Anderson, *God Made the World and Me* (Note that this class is for the children and parents and/or grandparents.)

Hispanic Pre-School - K: Samuel Granado, *Caminando con Jesús*.

Primary Grades: Drs. Doug & Angela Campbell, English and Spanish group with materials covering one of the Readings for the day.

Middle & High School: Cheryl Croom & Nikki McCormack, Topical study: *It's a Big Deal*.

Adults: Pastor Croom, *According to John: The Fourth Gospel*.

text2talk - Have you ever wanted to know more about something you heard during a sermon? Have you ever wondered what one of the readings might mean for your life? Have you ever wanted to know why we do something in particular as part of the service? We want to answer your questions! So, we want you to text at church! That's right! If you have questions about the service, message, readings, hymns, etc., you can **text** your questions to (901)665-3665 at the end of the service, and Pastor Croom will take 5 to 10 minutes of our fellowship time after the service to **talk** about as many of the questions as possible. We ask that you wait until the end of the service to text your questions so as not to possibly distract other worshipers during the service.

Pew Bibles - You can still dedicate one or more of our new pew Bibles in remembrance of a loved one or in thanksgiving for someone. The cost is \$15.00 each. You may mail the completed form with your check marked "Bible dedication" or put it in the offering plate.).

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

ONLINE GIVING

Did you know that you can make your offering online? Go to the Trinity website, trinitymemphis.org, then click on Give Online. You can choose to give one time or set up a recurring offering. For one-time contribution, click Trinity Lutheran Church (default). If you already have an account, click on Log-in. If you don't have an account and would like to set up a recurring offering, click Create Account. It works with either credit and debit cards, or as a draft from your bank account. It is all very secure.

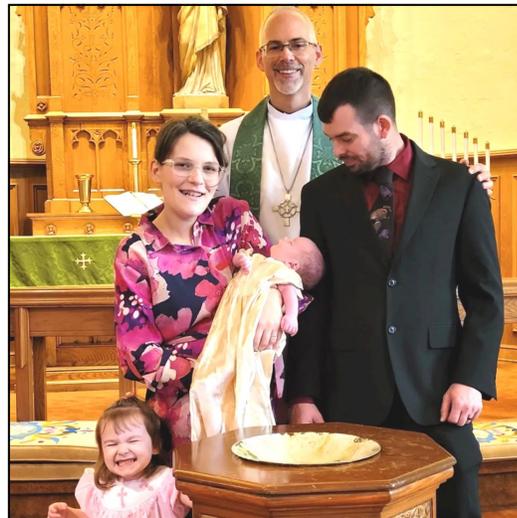
Note: If you use a credit or debit card, the company charges Trinity a processing fee that will be deducted from your offering, but there are no fees to Trinity for using a bank draft.

MEMBERS RECEIVED

By Baptism

Arvid Finley Peterson

September 10, 2023



'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matthew 25:35,40



"The Gospel does not belong in a corner, and Christ is Lord of everything"
Lutheran Study Bible, p. 1493



"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9



For not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one." 2
Thessalonians 3:2-3

MEN'S GROUP

The Men's Group will next get together in January. Date to be determined. Please contact Stacy Johnson (501-269-5324) if you have questions.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ~ James 5:16



BIRTHDAYS

November

Jordan Pulliam	11/3
Nancy Anderson	11/4
Diane Schwanke	11/6
Hannah Croom	11/8
Andreina Laconcha	11/11
Gabihil Bernez	11/17
Cicely Lynn	11/17
Alex Rincon	11/17
Carley Peterson	11/18
Lee Monger	11/24
Marsha Boles	11/27
James Hodges Jr.	11/27

December

Lois Knight	12/1
Johnnie Mowry	12/3
Aran Teran	12/7
Allesandro Teran	12/10
John Konnerth	12/11
Christopher Peterson	12/11
Lisa Dennis	12/28
Ana Williams	12/31

ANNIVERSARIES

November

Doug and Angela Campbell	11/5
Bill and Sherrie Otte	11/27

December

Dan and Angie Draper	12/31
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Happy Anniversary



For a full calendar of upcoming events, visit www.trinitymemphis.org
"Calendar of Events"

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



Christian Education - If your interest is in working with children to teach Sunday School as a substitute, helping as a teacher's aide, assisting with special projects such as VBS in the summer etc., you can contact Cheryl Croom (270-348-5505 or cherylcroom23@gmail.com).

Fellowship - The Hospitality Board is asking people to sign up to bring snack-type items and drinks for our after-worship fellowship. There is a sign-up sheet for November and December is on the board in the fellowship hall.

Church Maintenance - If you can work a drill, have plumbing experience, can install light fixtures, or another handyman-type talent, the Board of Trustees would love your help. Whether it is general maintenance around the building or a renovation project, your assistance would greatly help keep these costs manageable. You can either simply help out as needed or even join the Board. Contact Mike Grant or Paul Koehler if you'd like to serve in this capacity.

Missions - While we are all ambassadors for Trinity, there are always opportunities to help others in the community as well. If you are interested in helping plan and prepare outreach events, the Board of Missions would love to have you! Contact Charlotte Johnson if you'd like to join this endeavor. Her contact information is jnsncc@yahoo.com and (662) 782-7251.

Altar Duty - Helping with Altar Duty is a very rewarding way to serve the Lord. Some of the duties consist of keeping the candles filled with oil to "let our light shine," preparing the elements necessary for communion, and cleaning up afterwards, changing the paraments and banner in accordance with our church calendar, and making sure the pews have the correct amount of hymnals, Bibles and pencils. We rotate monthly and new volunteers are paired up with experienced people while learning. For more info or to volunteer, contact Linda Wilkins at 774-3777.

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

Trinity is enrolled in the Kroger Community Rewards program. Once you register your Kroger Plus Card online at krogercommunityrewards.com and select Trinity Lutheran Church - Memphis, TN (NPO number DG721), 4% of what you spend on groceries will be donated to trinity! See the flyer on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall for more information on how to sign up if you have not already.





An Article from The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Stewardship Ministry for November 2023

Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart!

Our Father in heaven has claimed us as His own. By the shedding of His Son's blood, by His death for our sins and His resurrection for our justification, God the Father has received us back into His family. By water combined with His Word, promise and name, the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us. We belong to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is in us, and we are in Him. And being in Him, all things are ours. In Him, we are richly and abundantly blessed.

Our true treasure and wealth is that we belong to the most holy Trinity and everything that is His belongs also to us: righteousness, peace, eternal life. Even our temporal treasures are gifts from His fatherly, divine goodness and mercy.

We receive our treasures from Him, and thus, as good stewards of His varied grace, we manage them in such a way that they may be returned to Him. We bring them to Him, hallowed through prayers of thanksgiving and God's Holy Word, as a sacrifice. Thus all our possessions, as gifts from God, are also sacrifices to Him, from which we eat to nourish our bodies and share with our family, neighbors and fellow Christians, with the poor and even our enemies, as holy things given by our holy God. His temporal gifts are blessings to and for us, and bring blessing upon us even as they are pressed into His service for His kingdom and the souls that receive them.

Thus we place all that we have into God's hands. He never fails to remember us and pours out the fullness of His promises upon us. We give thanks for all that He has done, is doing and will continue to do. We give thanks by not taking for ourselves, but giving to all even as our heavenly Father has given to us.

As we prepare for Thanksgiving celebrations, may we all give thanks continually for all that we are and all that we have because of God's providential care. And may we be all the more diligent in bringing everything that we have received from God to Him, so that He may bless it and employ it for the good of all — even for us. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.



"Believers?"

John 8:31-33, 59 - So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered Him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that You say, 'You will become free?'" ... So they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

John 8 bothers me. In verse 31, it calls Jesus' audience "the Jews who had believed Him." But less than 30 verses later, these same people are picking up stones to kill

Him. How can you believe Jesus and then turn around and try to kill Him half an hour later? It looks like there are two kinds of belief—and only one of them touches the heart. We all know people who say they are Christians—who can even recite the Creed for you if you ask them to—and yet, when it comes to their behavior, you'd never recognize them as people who belong to Jesus. They gossip; they say spiteful things about other people; they break promises; they put money and power first in their lives—they do an excellent job of blending in with the rest of the world. Are they Christians? On paper, maybe. I'm not saying that they know they are hypocrites. In fact, I'm worried because I think these people mostly don't notice the difference between what they say they believe and what they actually do. I think they really, truly think they are believers in Jesus. Somehow they manage to overlook the huge disconnect between the faith they claim and the life they live.

And of course, it worries me most of all that I might be one of them.

How can we guard against this sort of thing? How can we make absolutely sure that John 8 isn't a picture of us, at some level?

I don't think we can. But the Holy Spirit can. And that's why every day we ask the Lord to be with us—to protect us from the power of the devil and all his deceptions.

Jesus is totally familiar with this problem. After all, He faced off with the devil's temptations throughout His life. Even on the cross, He had to deal with the temptation to do a self-serving miracle—to come down off the cross—and justify it by saying, "Then they will believe in Me. I'm doing God's work!" No, the same Lord who saw through that deception and stood firm will also hold us firmly in the true faith forever. He who rose from the dead will bring us safely to Himself, not by our work, but by His.

We believe in Jesus—not by our own power or wisdom, but because God has given us such a great gift. And now we lay our hearts in Jesus' hands, saying, "Lord, keep me safe, just as You kept Your disciples. Let me be Yours forever, just as You planned." He can do it, and He will do it—because He loves us.

WE PRAY: Dear Savior, hold on to me and keep me in Your true faith. Amen.

This Daily Devotion was written by Dr. Kari Vo.

Reflection Questions:

1. Do you ever worry about this problem? Why or why not?
2. What do you do when you hear friends or neighbors complaining about the hypocritical Christians they know?
3. How do you find peace in Jesus when you are worried?

Today's Bible Readings: Jeremiah 25, 45-46 Hebrews 1