

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.htelc.com](http://www.htelc.com)

22 Fox Run Road \* Newington, NH 03801 \* 603-436-1704

[office@htelc.com](mailto:office@htelc.com)

Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## Advent Schedule of Events for 2023:

- *Adult Forum on "The Meaning of Advent"* – after worship on Sunday, November 26
- *Advent Wreath Making Workshop* - after worship on Sunday, December 3.
- *Bible Study moves to 4:30 PM, followed by a soup and supper at 5:30 PM* – beginning Wed. December 6.
- *Holden Evening Prayer* – every Wednesday during advent, at 6:30 PM, beginning Wed. December 6.
- *Indonesian Support Forum* - after worship on Sunday, December 10.
- *Confirmation Class* - after worship on Sunday, December 10.
- *New Member Class* - after worship on Sunday, December 17.
- *Service of the Word* – Sunday, December 24 at 9:30 AM.
- We will be announcing *Christmas Eve Service* times and details shortly.



## Christmas Giving

This year's holiday giving opportunity will benefit teens served by Operation Blessing. From November 26th until December 17th, we will be collecting gift cards from local stores such as Kohl's, Old Navy, Walmart or the Fox Run mall. This is not a definitive list by any means, but the store should be accessible in the local area, perhaps even on the Coast bus route. Any dollar amount is appreciated. Please drop cards in an envelope, with the dollar amount indicated, in the box in the office. Thank you for your generosity.



## Pastor Luther's Article: November 5, 2023

We celebrate All Saints' Day this Sunday. I don't know about you, but I feel a desperate need in these fragile times to be in the company of holy women and holy men. For saints, even in the midst of darkness, have a way of reminding us that God's light will not be extinguished but continues to shine in the lives of faithful folk around the world.

One of my favorite reflections on saints is from the writer Frederick Buechner (pictured below) in his book *Wishful Thinking*:

***"In his holy flirtation with the world, God occasionally drops a pocket handkerchief. These handkerchiefs are called saints.***

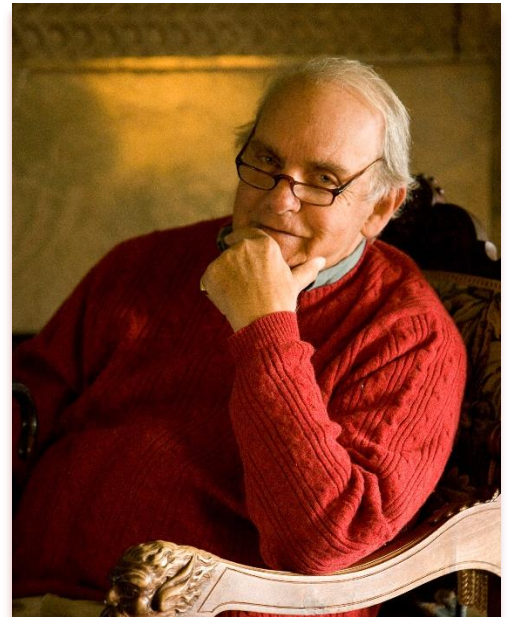
***Many people think of saints as plaster saints, men and women of such paralyzing virtue that they never thought a nasty thought or did an evil deed their whole lives long. As far as I know, real saints never even come close to characterizing themselves that way. On the contrary, no less a saint than Saint Paul wrote to Timothy, 'I am foremost among sinners' (1 Timothy 1:15).***

***In other words, the feet of saints are as much of clay as everybody else's, and their sainthood consists less of what they have done than of what God has for some reason chosen to do through them. When you consider that Saint Mary Magdalene was possessed by seven devils, that Saint Augustine prayed, 'Give me chastity and continence, but not now,' that Saint Francis started out as a high-living young dude in downtown Assisi, and that Saint Simeon Stylites spent years on top of a sixty-foot pillar, you figure that maybe there's nobody God can't use as a means of grace, including even ourselves.***

***The Holy Spirit has been called 'the Lord, the giver of life' and, drawing their power from that source, saints are essentially life-givers. To be with them is to become more alive."***

In the short time I have been at Holy Trinity, it has become abundantly clear to me that in this church I am in the midst of many, many life-giving saints. Thank you for inviting me into your beloved community. I look forward to many years ahead in our shared journey with and toward God.

Blessings, Pastor Luther



## Pastor Luther's Article: November 12, 2023

I find it hard to focus these days as we continue to watch the horror of war unfold in the Holy Land, with more and more innocents dying every day. I don't know about you, but I feel utterly helpless in all this. And, as important as prayer is, sometimes prayer in the face of such relentless violence feels empty and pointless.

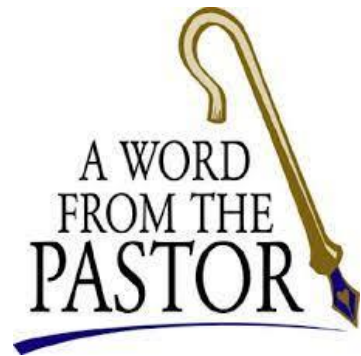
In my despair over the world this week, I was helped by some words I came across by Malcolm Guite. If you don't know of Guite's work, I commend him to you. He is an Anglican priest and one of the greatest religious poets of our time.

In a blog post from Holy Week last year that is strangely apt to the current moment, Guite reminds us of that scene in the gospels where Jesus weeps over Jerusalem. Guite writes: "It's hard to see through tears, but sometimes it's the only way to see. Tears may be the turning point, the springs of renewal, and to know you have been wept for is to know that you are loved. 'Jesus wept' is the shortest, sharpest, and most moving sentence in Scripture. We are well to remember that we have a God who weeps for us, weeps with us, understands to the depths and from the inside the *rerum lachrymae*, the tears of things."

In homage to this profound scene from Scripture, Guite has written a sonnet of his own, entitled 'Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem.' Perhaps this kind of lament is all we can do in this time of crisis; or, at least, it may be a useful place to start as we seek guidance from God as to what the nations of the world can do in the days and weeks ahead to contain this tragic conflict in the Holy Land.

Here is Guite's sonnet:

*Jesus comes near and he beholds the city  
And looks on us with tears in his eyes,  
And wells of mercy, streams of love and pity  
Flow from the fountain whence all things arise.  
He loved us into life and longs to gather  
And meet with his beloved face to face  
How often has he called, a careful mother,  
And wept for our refusals of his grace,  
Wept for a world that, weary with its weeping,  
Benumbed and stumbling, turns the other way,  
Fatigued compassion is already sleeping  
Whilst her worst nightmares stalk the light of day.  
But we might waken yet, and face those fears,  
If we could see ourselves through Jesus' tears.*



## Update on Claudine from Dot Kasik

A few years ago, about the time Covid hit us all, I got a call from the Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition (SISC), an organization that aids immigrants in the area. They asked if Holy Trinity would like to team with Portsmouth's Temple Israel to "companion" a Cameroonian woman named Claudine who'd just been released from Strafford County Jail. Her "crime" was that she missed a legal meeting because she didn't understand what or when it was, completely understandable when you learn that she was still in the process of learning English, which would be her fourth language. Holy Trinity and Temple Israel both agreed, and soon Pastor Tim, Ellen (the Temple rep) and I began to meet and plan.

Claudine was living in a home in Dover with a single mom and her teenage daughter. Ellen and I began regular visits. We learned that in her home country she'd been a paralegal, but that skill didn't transfer to the American legal community. Needing work quickly, she'd taken a week-long introduction to being a nurses' aid as soon as she arrived in the States.

"Team Claudine" formed with a dozen Holy Trinity folks who called, texted, and visited to get to know her and discover how we could help. She found herself a job as a nurses' assistant at a Dover nursing home. Without a car, she walked to and from her job, and when Team Claudine discovered it was a 5-mile walk each way and that her shift ended after midnight, we quickly organized a team of drivers. In addition, both HT and the Temple donated funds to help with her groceries.



Claudine's home in Dover was only a block away from one of the Catholic churches. She attended regularly, but as the only Black person, she felt too shy to approach the altar for communion or even to talk to the priest. We started taking her our Covid communion kits and sharing them together. We went for long walks with long talks. She sewed for some of us who brought her fabric. We learned about the elderly mother she'd been forced to leave in Cameroon along with a daughter and some grandkids. A second daughter was attending school in France.

None of us knew what had happened in Cameroon that made her need to escape. We weren't allowed to ask, and Claudine's asylum attorney had made it very clear that she wasn't to talk about it outside of a courtroom setting.

A lot has happened between those Dover days and now, including two different jobs and two separate living arrangements, all in Dover, and then an additional move to the Dartmouth area as a traveling nurses' aid. She was unsure where she belonged and where to find work. So when a Cameroonian woman she knew from home who lives in Las Vegas invited her to share her apartment, promising her she could easily get a nursing position in the city, she took the next plane out.

That was almost two years ago. Loving the job and finally earning enough to live on, she now has her own apartment. Last spring she was able to fly her daughter from France to join her for a visit. The best news of all is that she finally has a date scheduled for her asylum hearing. These successes have given Claudine the faith to take the next step. Last spring she enrolled at Las Vegas College in their LPN program. It's hard: fulltime nursing student and still parttime nurses' aid. But she knows it's the right path.

We communicate back and forth routinely, and in her last message she wrote, "Please please please ask the good people at Holy Trinity to pray for me." I said yes, of course I will.

### **Dover Friendly Kitchen**

Dover Friendly Kitchen will be on Tuesday, November 28 at 3:45 PM. at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Dover. Volunteers are welcome to help support this important ministry. Additionally, please drop off cookies with the Church Office by noon on the same day. Please speak to Bonnie Sanders for more info.



### **Nursery Items Needed**

Recently, our Nursery was cleaned out and our team noticed we are in need of a few items. The Nursery is searching for a used playpen and a used play kitchen. Please contact the Church Office if you have one (or both) of these items that you're willing to donate.



## Property Team

My first written communication to the congregation regarding my desire to give up my position as Property Team leader was in my contribution for the Property Team for the annual meeting in 2021. Much has happened in the nearly three years since that time. Yes, you read that correctly ... nearly three years!

The number of volunteers addressing property matters in and around the building has continued to be small by past standards. Although, ongoing appeals for more volunteers to commit to regular or ad hoc membership for the team have been mostly ineffective, the more obvious work such as grounds maintenance and work to keep selected spaces neat and tidy has continued to be accomplished with our tiny team of volunteers. But, any time I look through the detailed listing of tasks needing to be done on a regular basis, it is obvious that property management at Holy Trinity has declined significantly over the years and much of that decline has happened on my watch. It is well past time for a change and fresh approaches.



It is clear to me that what worked well in the past, no longer works for us. Times have changed. People have changed. When I first got involved with the Property Team circa 2002, we regularly had a dozen or more folks working on various property team tasks on a given Thursday morning. We could take on about any task that was needed and for which we had the skills to pull it off. How that has changed! A few months ago Scott Carson suggested periodic work days after Sunday services as a means of addressing some of the lingering property needs and to provide an additional social interaction for the congregation. More recently Bobbie Febbo suggested the same thing. I thought it was a great idea, and Scott agreed to organize the first one which was done this past Sunday, November 12. And what a success it was! Much was accomplished inside and outside the building, and a fine lunch was enjoyed by the volunteers. I did not count heads, but I would say there were 20-25 folks, maybe more. Many thanks to Scott and Leslie for putting it all together. This certainly proves that we have volunteers who are willing to work on property matters after church services. Maybe it is time to retire the Thursday Morning concept and move on to what seems to work better. That is something for my replacement to address. As I said before, the time for that change is well past due.

*Dave Mercer, Property Team Leader (pro tempore).*

## Flower Ministry

What has been missing? Well much has been missing since Covid, but the good news is these missing things no longer need to be missed. We are used to the way it is versus perhaps, the way we want it to be, not necessarily the way it used to be. Altar flowers are one way we can once again engage in the beauty of God's creation and praise Him. The flowers may also be an opportunity to honor or remember a person or event in our lives who was or is special. More information will be shared as systems for signing up for flowers are developed.



## Adult Weekend at Calumet

When last year's Women's Weekend at Calumet was cancelled, several singles and couples took advantage of the reserved weekend and had an enjoyable Adult Weekend. I've been asked by several people about the possibility of having another. Holy Trinity does not have a weekend reserved, but if there is interest it is possible to schedule a weekend this winter or spring with Calumet. If you are interested in an Adult Weekend, please contact Kurt Kasik.

## We are Looking for a Christmas Decoration Team Leader

With the Advent and Christmas seasons right around the corner, there is much to be done in planning for these seasons, including making our church space look appropriately festive with wreaths, garlands, trees, and the like. Our dear friend, Gisela Wemple, had for years been instrumental in coordinating these decorating efforts alongside the Altar Guild and Property Team; but with Gisela's passing, there is now a need to fill this coordinator role. (We are also looking for additional volunteers to fill out the team). If you think you might have the time and talent for leading this special ministry, please contact Pastor Luther.



## Church Office Closed during Thanksgiving week.

Church Office will be closed the week of Thanksgiving, from Monday November 20 until the end of the week. Mark will be in the office on Sunday, November 26.

# Prayer Concerns

**Health Issues:** Franklyn Vosburg, Jerry Schock, Pastor Linn Opderbecke, Alice Peterson, Bob Hollister, Don Gindlesperger, Richard Anderson, Dave Smith, Hazel Larson, Leo Larson, Geri Seig, Rani Marcus, Shirley Jackson. **Homebound:** Carol Saufley, Barbara Werdelin, Ron Evers, Dave & Joyce Rivoire, Anita Lindstrom, Judy Hollister, Jean Klein, Steve Bush. **Military:** Josh Bretz, Matthew Hanrahan, Brendan Podszus, Jacob Schankis, Jessica Chabot, Ian Connors.

**Partners in Ministry:** ELCA, New England Synod, Ismani Congregation in Tanzania, Imanuel Indonesian Lutheran Church, Ascentria Care Alliance, Camp Calumet, Operation Blessing, Crossroads, Dover Friendly Kitchen, Good News Garage, Seacoast Family Promise, Salvation Army, & Lutheran World Relief.

**Friends:** Kathy Wyrick (Linda Marshall's friend), Jacquelynn & Richard Murray (Jessica Feeley's sister and brother-in-law), Karin Otero (Lois Laurence's friend), Carol Dumican (friend of Bobbie Febbo), Scott Andrade (Bobbie Febbo's friend), Phil Cahners (Bobbie Febbo's son-in-law), David Roth (Bonnie Sanders' brother).

# Monthly Attendance & Offering

<b>Sunday, October 22:</b>	100 ( <i>In-Person</i> ) + 29 ( <i>Online</i> ) = 129	<b>Offering:</b>	\$4,523.30
<b>Sunday, October 29:</b>	96 ( <i>In-Person</i> ) + 17 ( <i>Online</i> ) = 113	<b>Offering:</b>	\$3,844.56
<b>Sunday, November 5:</b>	112 ( <i>In-Person</i> ) + 25 ( <i>Online</i> ) = 137	<b>Offering:</b>	\$5,979.30
<b>Sunday, November 12:</b>	97 ( <i>In-Person</i> ) + 23 ( <i>Online</i> ) = 120	<b>Offering:</b>	\$8,255.85

# Calendar at-a-glance

- November 19, 11:00 AM:** New Member Class #2
- Sun. Nov. 26, 10:30 AM:** "The Meaning of Advent" Adult Forum
- Sun. Dec. 3, 10:30 AM:** Advent Wreath Workshop
- Sun. Dec. 10, 10:30 AM:** Indonesian Support Forum; Confirmation Class
- Sun. Dec. 17, 10:30 AM:** New Member Class #3
- Sun. Dec. 24, 9:30 AM:** Service of the Word
- Sun. Dec. 24, 5:00 PM:** Christmas Eve Service – FAMILY (no communion)
- Sun. Dec. 24, 8:00 PM:** Christmas Eve Service – EUCHARIST
- Sun. Dec. 31, 9:30 AM:** A Service of Lessons and Carols

**Sunday Worship,** Sundays at 9:30 AM

**Wednesday Bible Study,** Wednesdays at 9:30 AM

**Property Team,** Thursdays at 9:00 AM until *about* noon.