

# 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

## Stewardship

Stewardship is so much more than giving money to do the work of God. Stewardship is the act of caring for something or someone unable to care for itself or him(or her)self. The Stewardship Committee is looking for new helpers for the Committee. At present the Committee consists of two people. It is time for new blood on the Committee. Please see David Arrington if you are willing to help



## Holy Trinity Flower Fund

For many years Holy Trinity has had a flower fund, that members have contributed to. It has been our tradition to have flowers on the altar each Sunday, to share their beauty and the spirit of renewal in each of our lives.

During Covid we did not place flowers on the altar each week. Last September we began offering a monthly list where individuals could contribute money to purchase altar flowers on a given Sunday, and commemorate special events, happenings in their lives or give the flowers as a memorial or in honor of a person. We have all enjoyed this sharing of the flowers when a person signs up. If on a given Sunday, no one has signed up to donate flowers then there are no flowers on the altar.

At the most recent Church Council meeting it was voted to have flowers every week on the altar. We will keep the sign-up form in the narthex so congregation members can continue to donate and memorialize the gift of flowers. If no person has indicated a desire to sign up for the flowers on a given Sunday, then the flowers will be purchased for the altar using money from the Flower Fund. Individuals who wish to place their own fresh cut flowers on the altar can do so, but we ask that you inform Mark, so that we don't order flowers that Sunday.



## Pastor Luther's Article: April 14, 2024

One of the shifts that we make during Eastertide is that our readings during this season increasingly focus on John's gospel, the Johannine epistles and the Book of Acts. These texts have been chosen by the lectionary editorial committee because they give eloquent testimony to the Resurrection of Christ as a historical and theological reality and show how the early church emerged from its Jewish roots in the first few centuries of the Common Era.

As powerful as these readings are in their witness to Christ, there is a danger lurking here too: for these texts often use language that seems to depict "the Jews" as the enemies of this new religious movement. John's gospel, in particular, is replete with such references. This last Sunday for example, in our reading from John 20, we heard that the disciples had locked themselves behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews." Likewise, in John's account of the Passion, which we heard on Good Friday, similar language was used to describe the "the Jews" as primarily responsible for Christ's crucifixion.

And John's gospel is not the only text which presents this interpretative issue. This coming Sunday, for example, our reading from Acts includes a sermon by Peter to "the Israelites" in which he accuses them of, among other things, "having killed the Author of life."

In all these contexts, it is critical to remember **that Jesus, the disciples, and the vast majority of Jesus' earliest followers were all Jews.** These texts were primarily written by Jewish Christian authors in a time and place when they were creating a new group identity, over against their fellow Jews who chose to adhere to traditional forms of Judaism. As is often the case when a religious group fractures, there was often animosity between the two groups that led to sometimes harsh name-calling. Within that historical context, it is understandable why the authors of John and Acts chose the language they did.

Unfortunately, however, throughout the centuries this language has fueled a long history of vicious anti-Semitism by subsequent generations of Gentile Christians that continues to this day. And sadly, Martin Luther, late in his life, made some particularly heinous contributions to this hateful legacy.

Such anti-Semitic hate has no place in our church. Let us once and for all put to rest the lie that "the Jews" killed Jesus. This is a pernicious myth perpetrated by the church over the centuries to make itself—to make ourselves—feel better about the Crucifixion by pinning the blame on somebody else. In truth, we all killed Jesus. Rome killed Jesus by ordering his execution. The mob killed Jesus by picking Barabbas over the Son of God. Peter killed Jesus by denying him three times. The other disciples killed Jesus by abandoning him at his time of greatest need. The religious authorities killed Jesus by turning him over to Rome in the first place. Judas killed Jesus



by betraying him. And we continue to kill Jesus every time we turn to violence, or power, or other false idols, rather than loving God with all our heart, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

So, please, when you hear these readings during Eastertide, understand their historical context, and let us not distort the words we sometimes find there in service to misdirected scapegoating and anti-Semitic hate.

## Purses and Packs

Last fall HTELC met to discuss upcoming goals for our church family. One of those goals was to increase our outreach and involvement with the community. The Social Ministry Team has decided to collect 20 purses and 20 small packs/bags which will then be outfitted with personal items. These bags will then be brought to Operation Blessing to be distributed to clients. In addition to the purses and packs, the SM team will also be requesting donations for these bags. We ask that these items be full sized. With the assistance of OB, we are requesting the following items: socks, body wash, toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, combs and cleansing wipes. The "tree" is in the Narthex with tags hanging from its branches. Each tag has a list of items. Please try to keep the value of each tag at \$10.00. And, while everyone is doing their spring cleaning/purging, please feel free to donate any purses, packs or sacks that you are no longer using. I've been told that many women have multiples of these items, stashed in their closets. They will be put to good use! Bins will be placed near the tree to collect your donations. We will be assembling the bags after services on Sunday, May 19. Contact Jessica Feeley for questions.



## An update regarding our complimentary Daily Prayer Booklets.

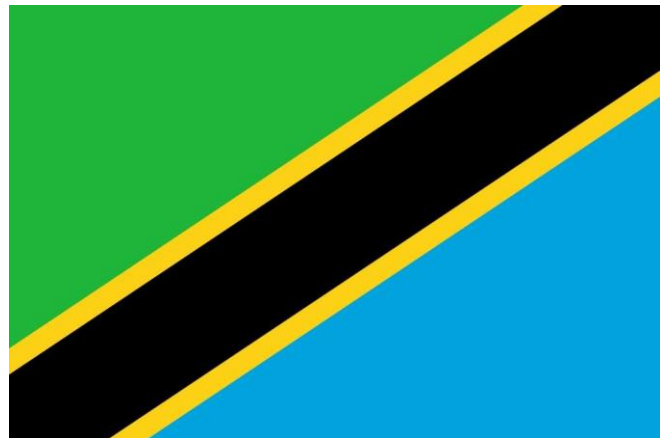
Due to increased demand, Holy Trinity has doubled our subscription for "Christ in Our Home", the large print daily prayer booklets typically found in the Gathering Area. This will begin for the next quarter of booklets (July, August, & September), of which we expect them to arrive in May. Our order for "Portals of Prayer", the small print prayer booklets, will remain at 30 copies. We are very happy that people are continuing to use these booklets, and our apologies to those who were unable to receive a booklet this time around.

## Pastor Luther's Article: April 21, 2024

On Tuesday of this week, a small group gathered at church at the invitation of our President, Erlinde Beliveau, to discuss the history, status and future of our partnership with the good people of the Isimani Lutheran congregation in Central Tanzania. Present at the meeting (in addition to Erlinde and myself) were several veterans of this ministry, including Margareta Claesson, Judy Evans, Russ Hilliard, Dot Kasik, Ed Mallon and Jo Whiting.

The meeting was a real education for me. For those of you who also may be new to this ministry, I learned that the partnership began almost thirty years ago when a new UNH professor, Joe Lugalla, arrived at Holy Trinity and asked if we'd be interested in a relationship with his father's Lutheran church in Isimani, Tanzania. Our then-Pastor, Linn Opderbecke, took Joe's request to the Church Council, which enthusiastically embraced the idea. Pastor Opderbecke then travelled with Joe to Isimani to meet the congregation and, a year later, a dozen Holy Trinity members followed on the first congregational trip in 2006. And so, a relationship was born.

Importantly, even though our connection with the people of Isimani initially came through Joe Lugalla's introduction and very personal history, the ministry is part of a broader network of relationships between individual churches within the St. Paul Synod of the ELCA and churches within the Lutheran Diocese of Iringa. An umbrella organization, Bega Kwa Bega (which means "Shoulder to Shoulder"), manages this network of relationships and provides guidance and support to congregations like ours.



Since that first congregational visit in 2006, there have been many subsequent trips of Holy Trinity members to Isimani. Just as importantly, there has been an ongoing relationship of prayer and a broad range of projects between the sister congregations. Holy Trinity has, for example, provided scholarship monies for secondary school and college education for Isimani youth, our members have taught courses at the nearby Iringa Lutheran University, we've supported the local library and sewing school in the community, and we've helped purchase food, livestock and other essentials. Everyone at our Tuesday meeting also testified that we at Holy Trinity have likewise benefitted enormously from our relationship with these Tanzanian brothers and sisters in Christ.

Because of COVID and Holy Trinity's own transition in pastors, our relationship with Isimani has been somewhat dormant these past few years (although, to be sure, several of our members have quietly continued to work in support of the ministry in both big and small ways). Sadly, this past year Joe Lugalla also died, and the long-time pastor of Isimani (Livingston Msungu) left to pursue further theological education. We just learned this week that the congregation has called a new pastor, the Rev. Samson Laiser, whom we have yet to meet.

In the wake of these developments, the purpose of our Tuesday meeting was to see how we as a congregation might go about re-starting this ministry now that the pandemic has lifted and both Isimani and Holy Trinity have new pastors in place. We agreed that an initial first step is to convene an adult forum at which veterans of this relationship could share their personal experiences and discuss both the history of the ministry and its future possibilities. We may also be able to enjoy a short “zoom visit” with some of our Isimani friends and their new pastor. We have scheduled this adult forum for **Sunday, June 16th, right after church**. It will be a wonderful opportunity to learn more about this incredible partnership and together discern its future. Please mark the date on your calendars!

## Property Team

I have been reluctant to put away the snow shovels, salt buckets, and snowblower. Call me superstitious, but I did not want to be blamed for the last season snowstorm. Who knows? My thinking about it may have been enough to cause the last storm. We seemed to have been spared any significant storm issues this time. With an abundance of caution, I think I will hold off on storing winter things until the planned workday on April 21! I'm thinking, "My God is an awesome God ... ," and surely would not send us snow after that date. Then again, as they say south of the Rio Grande, Texas, and points north, "Quien sabe?"

Regarding April 21, I am coordinating with Scott Carson to come up with a list of achievable tasks suitable for work inside and outside. As Scott mentioned in his recent item in the Sunday bulletin, we would like to get several outside tasks done, so let us all anticipate a nice warm, dry spring day. If that does not come to pass, we will direct our attention inward ... inside, that is.



The Thursday Group has been trying to schedule an outdoor task to install some rain gutters near the main entry. We have rescheduled the work a couple of times so far, and weather continues to be a challenge. The good news is we have not had any recent basement water issues as we try to get this work done. It all seems to come down to how hard it rains and for how long ... more of that "Awesome God" thing!

We have received three contractor quotes for the work to clean and paint our steeple, clean and stain the exterior wood around the sanctuary and main entry, and to pressure wash the vinyl siding around the entire building. I have reviewed the quotes and recommended one of them to council for their consideration and approval. The cost is well within the funds approved at the last congregational meeting. This work could start as early as June and will take about five days to complete. To avoid any cost increases for crane rental for the steeple work, we will need to do our best to give the contractor access to our facility for about five continuous days. If we cause a delay, the added cost could fall on us. I anticipate that they will be flexible and work with us on

the scheduled start date which will likely be controlled by the crane availability. I am excited about this work. I love the steeple, but it has gotten shabby and needs a good cleaning and paint job!

Some of you have mentioned the missing lighting on one side and at the top of the stained-glass window. These lights are installed to make our beautiful window visible to passers-by at night. When the sanctuary is in use at night, the normal room lighting makes the window visible outside. The lights installed around the inside of the window make it visible outside when the normal room lighting is not in use. After some trial and error over the years, we were able to find a LED fixture with strong enough lighting to penetrate our stained-glass window, and we installed one on each side of the window. One of these fixtures has failed and we are seeking a replacement. Unfortunately, the bulb in the incandescent fixture at the top of the window has burned out and we have not replaced it because of a safety concern with doing this work from an extension ladder. I believe the best course of action is to wait for the new replacement LED fixture and then, at a future date, replace and relocate the incandescent fixture at the top of the window so all of the window lights can be safely replaced when they fail. Of course, we could bring in a lift to safely change the incandescent bulb, but I do not think this can be justified. In the event we encounter a need for a lift for other more urgent work in the sanctuary, we can consider working on the incandescent at that time. In effect, this is an abandon-in-place option, i.e., just leave it there with a failed bulb until we are in position to remove it.

David Mercer, Property Team Leader (pro-tempore)

### **President's Article**

The last few weeks have been full and good. We had our Council retreat on April 19-20 at Camp Calumet. By the end of the day on Saturday, we developed a set of goals to span the next 3-9 months. Three days later we had our monthly Council meeting. We have been working on updating both our Constitution and our Bylaws. We will have our Constitution updated so that it is consistent with the 2022 ELCA Constitutional guidelines and plan to vote on this at the Mid-year meeting on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Bylaws will be completed for our January meeting.

Although it may seem a bit early, we have scheduled an Adult Forum on May 5<sup>th</sup> to share some of the work we have been doing, with the congregation. Our May is full and May 26<sup>th</sup> is Pastor Luther's last day with us before he begins serving at Emmanuel Church. Topics we would like to discuss are: sharing the updated Constitution, reviewing our finances thus far this year, and some changes we would like to make regarding several line items from our balance sheet or in/out funds that are no longer being used and would like to redesignate. Another item to share are some of our goals we developed. My hope is that you will be able to attend; if this is not possible, Mark is working on streaming this live for you to join in, if possible. We value your feedback.

With God's gracious presence at our side, may we all continue to find ways to express our faith in words and actions this Eastertide.

## Pastor Luther's Article: April 28, 2024

This Sunday we will be celebrating Earth Day. Not only will our Creation Care Task Force be sponsoring an adult forum on the topic of Creation Care after the service, but our liturgy itself this week reflects a focus on a theology of environmental stewardship.

I invite you to listen for and appreciate all of these connections in our worship this week. For example:

- We open our service with a Confession of Sin highlighting our recklessness in caring for God's good creation, yet even so we find hope in God's promise to forgive us and inspire us to do better.
- We harken back to the Garden of Eden in our Gathering Hymn, Morning Has Broken, and then in lieu of a Kyrie, we sing a Song of Praise in celebration of Earth and All Stars.
- Our gospel text from John, in which Jesus identifies as the "true vine," invites us into an organic and intimate connection with God, each other, and with Creation.
- Our Hymn of the Day, All Creatures Worship God Most High, written by Francis of Assisi, reinforces the message by developing these creation themes further, as does our Sending Hymn, Joyful, Joyful.
- Finally, our Eucharistic Prayer, drawn from the Lutheran liturgical resource, All Creation Sings!, places our sharing of the bread and wine within a broader understanding of God's care for, and desire to restore, the entire created order.



May we all be inspired by our worship to be God's agents of renewal, hope, and re-creation!

## Prayer Concerns

**Health Issues:** Franklyn Vosburg, Jerry Schock, Alice Peterson, Don Gindlesperger, Dave Smith, Hazel Larson, Leo Larson, Rani Marcus, Shirley Jackson, Larry Sanders, Julie Moore, Bob Hollister, Ronnie Brigham, Judy Evans. **Homebound:** Carol Saufley, Barbara Werdelin, Dave & Joyce Rivoire, Anita Lindstrom, Judy Hollister, Jean Klein, June Slipp. **Military:** Jake Brouker, US Navy (Pam Brouker's relative).

**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:** David Roth (Bonnie Sanders' brother), Richard Murray (Jessica Feeley's Brother-in-law), Cinda DeWerff & Dane Wilcox (Rich Wilcox's sister & brother), Dan & Paula LeRoux (Pamela Brouker's friends).

## Calendar at-a-glance

- Sun. May 5, 10:30 AM:** Congregational Updates - Adult Forum  
**Sun. May 19, 9:30 AM:** Pentecost Worship – Confirmation Celebration  
**Sun. May 19, 10:30 AM:** Purses and Packs – Congregational Activity  
**Sun. June 16, 10:30 AM:** Tanzania Adult Forum  
**Sun. June 23, 10:30 AM:** Semi-Annual Meeting & Church Picnic

**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.

## Monthly Attendance & Offering

<b>Easter Sunday, Mar. 31:</b>	173( <i>In-Person</i> ) + 31 ( <i>Online</i> ) = 204	<b>Offering:</b>	\$3,586.35
<b>Sunday, April 7:</b>	83 ( <i>In-Person</i> ) + 22 ( <i>Online</i> ) = 105	<b>Offering:</b>	\$6,873.00
<b>Sunday, April 14:</b>	89 ( <i>In-Person</i> ) + 32 ( <i>Online</i> ) = 121	<b>Offering:</b>	\$5,310.95
<b>Sunday, April 21:</b>	87 ( <i>In-Person</i> ) + 25 ( <i>Online</i> ) = 112	<b>Offering:</b>	\$4,225.95