

""Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43: 18-19

"He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." **Revelation 21:5** 

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" **2 Corinthians** 5:17

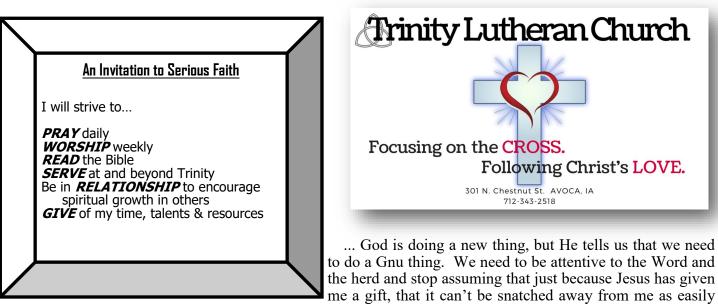
### God's Doing a Gnu Thing

On the Savana in Africa, as in many other places on the continent and around the world, symbiotic relationships mean the difference between life and death. For instance, take the Gnu and the Zebra. This is one of the most noted life-giving relationships because together each succeeds and flourishes because the are together all the time. A wandering animal can expect hardship and struggle as much as danger and even death if they become too isolated from the herd. The Gnu is large and tends to make predators think twice before attacking. Zebras have great memories and can recall safe ways to the watering hole. Gnus have a great ability to find water and food. Zebras have great vision and can see danger a long way off. Gnus have a great sense of smell and hearing to warn them of impending danger. The zebra has powerful protection ability. Gnus have a swarm mentality and act on problems and solve them as a group. All this works to protect and get them to safe grounds as they take part in The Great Migration every year.

Isaiah prophetic word from God long ago promised that God was going to do a new thing. In fact, God even spoke of it as a great migration when in 43: 5 - 6 God said, "<u>Do not be afraid, for I am with you</u>; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth" He was of course talking to those who had been taken into exile; those who had been taken from the promised land of God to a distant and foreign place. But God promised the people of that day, that He would bring them back home. Just as He promises us today that He will bring His people home forever. A great migration from where we have been taken in sin and darkness, deep darkness; being brought into the Light of Life.

Jesus promises the same in Revelation as He did in Isaiah, that we needed to look, behold to see this new thing that God was doing. His work, much like Moses, Nehemiah, and others who lead God's people through the wilderness of life was even better. It was not a temporary migration of people around in this broken world of sin and loss, but an eternal migration that begins today and carries on forever. And it all began with a new beginning – the incarnation, God in the Flesh, found in that manger, growing and living in and through all the stages and struggles of our migration, finally to a cross to suffer the death that we deserve that is not just the death of life but eternal separation from God – in short Hell. He was doing a new thing from the moment was pushed with cries and muck into this world all the way to that cross where He died alone, humiliated, and horrifically so that you and I could follow where He was going.

Just as the manger was the birthing room for the baby, the empty tomb was the birthing place of the new creation, the first fruits of what was to come for all who trust and follow Him. And our place in that comes as water is poured and the Word confessed, and the family name is given, we too have been made a new creation. But its not over yet. There is a migration ahead that has dangers and perils galore. The enemy still prowls around like predator looking for someone to devour 1 Peter reminds us. One of the greatest dangers is the assumption that I can then wander away from the herd and I will be okay. Perhaps just as dangerous as to assume I don't need to play my part in the migration protecting and warning others of danger. Making assumptions with might terrible eyesight that I am where I am to be while standing right next to death, or not hearing well the word that is proclaimed that I keeps me always aware that I need to stay alert and not take the perils of this migration too lightly.



as life can change to death. He has died, He has risen, and He will come again we declare but are we living that way. It only takes a little sloppy to get lost from the heard, and the predator will use any means, disagreements, assumptions, feelings, hurts, failings and so much more of others around us and we ourselves, to take us from the relationship God has lovingly and graciously provided for us. The truth is that we live in this symbiotic relationship with God as total receivers. But, as receivers God has made His people the Church, not in name only and without participation but together, so that we together help one another "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." **Eph 4:** 12b ff

Will we do a Gnu thing this year as God seeks to do a new thing in us. Will we read the bible, study together, lovingly challenge and call each other to faithfulness so no one get's lost or remains lost thinking they are in the herd? Will we take honest stock of our condition, our participation in the Church, and the assumptions we have made about faith? Will we open ourselves up to see that the most gracious God desires for us to receive fully what He has given and take on faith in a new, gnu way? *Do not be afraid, for I am with you, God said.* 

Blessed New Year Pastor Matt





The TLC Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22nd, 2023. The meeting will be immediately following our worship service that

morning, in the fellowship hall. Please plan on attending!

Annual reports by committee leaders to be included in the meeting packet are due to Sue in the office by January 8th, preferably by e-mail at tlcspaulsen@gmail.com. Thank You!

#### **Church Council**

**President**: Kathy Soetmelk (712) 249-9027 Property Management: Dale Krohn (402) 880-5072 Secretary: Amber Johnson (402) 681-6847 Christian Education: Beth Buboltz (402) 419-3076 Worship: Ron Winter (531) 205-5378 Finance: Mike Jorgensen (712) 250-0774 Outreach: Alan Blakestad (712) 343-2566 Stewardship: Nicole Krohn (712) 309-2318 Treasurer: Shela Jacobsen (402) 490-2423



	Total	Total Gifts
Weekend of	Attendance	Received
12/4	172	3,832.00
12/11	86	21,676.00
12/18	115	33,696.00



Donald Nelsen & Teresa Kardell– Dorothy Nelsen



The 2023 altar flower sign up sheet is up in the Narthex now. This is one way you can honor a loved one within the church. Here's how it works: Choose a date and write your "in honor of" or "in memory of" information and name next to the date you wish to provide flowers for the altar. This list is sent once a month to our local flower shop. They deliver the flowers for the altar on the weekend you have signed up for. If you'd like specific flowers/colors, you would call the flower shop to make those arrangements ahead of your sign up date. The flower shop will then bill you directly.



The 2023 Giving Envelopes are in the Narthex ready for pick up. If you don't see yours, please let the office know. Thank You!



Pastor Matt is in search of some wide mouth quart jars. If you have any that you are not using, that you'd like to donate, please consider donating here! Thank you!



Mark your calendars early! VBS will be held Monday, June 26th thru Thursday, June 29th this year! If you would be interested in leading the VBS ministry week, please let Sue in the office know.



As we begin the new year one of our main focuses will be on Stewardship as was mentioned in last month's newsletter. Again, Stewardship is not about money, but money is a part of Stewardship. Stewardship is about your life and relationship with God and how each of is stewards what we have been given in line with what our bounteous God has poured out upon us. This is not just a subject for the older members, but for children, teens, college aged, young families, middle aged – Stewardship is about you. Each month there will be a section of The Indescribable Joy of Giving study which was released this year by the NALC for congregations to study and grow in faith.

What follows is the introduction to that study. We hope that each person studying and pondering will be blessed, strengthened, and deepened in their faith and faithful service to our Lord. – Nicole Krohn – Council Stewardship, Pastor Matt.

<u>The Indescribable Joy of Giving</u> explores and celebrates the joy of giving — not only as a spiritual gift, but also as the lifeblood of the Christian way of life. I hope that you have experienced, many times over, the joy of giving. There is a certain excitement and joyful anticipation that comes when you give someone a gift, and that joy exponentially grows when the gift is generous and is a sacrifice. Why? It's simple: God gave each of us the need to give.

Giving generously is inherently Christian. It is who we are. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than receive" (Acts 20:35). And he was absolutely right. Paul said, "God loves a cheerful (joyful)giver" 2 Corinthians 9:7. However, we live in a world that has schooled us in consumerism, a world in which receiving is all that matters. Our success is often motivated by the need for more wealth, achievement and power, as opposed to finding our significance in generosity, service towards others and in our relationships.

In many respects, giving has become purely transactional: I give to get something back. But true giving is transformational. Joy-filled giving warms the heart. It is contagious, and it has the power to transform the human heart. Joy is released in us when we put God and others first in our lives. As written in *Mark 8:36*, Jesus said, *"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"* When I put God first in my life, it imposes certain limits on my behavior. And it is a universal struggle to want to rebel against those limits. We profess to believe we cannot worship God and mammon; we profess to worship someone who told us to give away, not accumulate; we profess to follow a tradition that in its infancy demanded communal sharing amongst its members; but at times, it seems as if we have bracketed off those central portions of the message.

In a world where it seems like there is never enough — enough faith, enough love, enough money, enough service — we who confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior know we already have been given enough. We have it all! In the words of Paul, "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" **1** Corinthians 4:7. We were chosen for joy, and joy comes from God.

If you haven't already experienced the indescribable joy of giving, our Living and Giving Stewardship Team of the North American Lutheran Church trusts [the following] biblical study will ignite a fire within you, transform your heart and rekindle the joy of living generously. I am grateful to the members of our Living and Giving Stewardship Team for their faithful and gracious contributions to the chapters of this book and to building a culture of generosity throughout the NALC: Rev. Dr. Amy Little, Rev. Dr. Eugene Grimm, Rev. Carl Johnson, Mike Johnson and Rev. Taylor Stempniak.

Te Deum. To God be the glory!

Rev. Dona Johnson Chair of the Living and Giving Stewardship Team

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? Mark 8:36



January 01	Barbara	Brown	January 19	Amanda	Holst
January 01	Evalyn	Irlbeck	January 19	David	Sampson
January 01	Lesley	Krummel	January 20	Callum	Maassen
January 02	Carmen	Martens	January 21	Penny	Langer
January 06	Conner	Hansen	January 22	Henry	Nelsen
January 06	David	Niemann	January 22	Jimmy	Young
January 07	Kaeden	Lane	January 23	Nicole	Krohn
January 08	Derek	Kardell	January 24	Bruce	Krummel
January 08	Vicki	Schueman	January 25	Darian	Hansen
January 10	Jim	Lechtenberger	January 25	Lauren	Кпор
'			January 25	Rita	Kohlscheen
January 10	Jessi	Wade	January 25	Mackenzie	Sampson
January 12	Erik	Jorgensen	January 25	Hayden	Woltmann
January 13	Mary	Hildebrand	January 26	Christopher	Jarrett
January 14	Roger	Кау	January 26	Kate	Jarrett
January 15	Marvin	Schuler	January 28	Autumn	Boysen
January 16	Joshua	Guyer	January 28	Lou	, Funk
January 16	Julie	Miller	January 28	Cole	Harder
January 17	Wendy	Dierking	January 28	Lori	Snyder
January 17	Alan	Sieh	January 29	Jason	Best
January 18	Gage	Clay	January 31	Leo	Bargenquas
January 18	David	Kardell	January 31	LeRoy	Hansen
January 18	Ryker	Krummel	January 31	, Madison	Long
January 19	Lauren	Guyer	January 31	Sophia	Luth
January 19	Evan	Harder	January 31	Denise	Young



Our youth met on December 11th, baked cookies and enjoyed a few hours of fellowship. Cookies plates were then gifted to our neighbors! Our next meeting date will be Sunday the 8th, in the sanctuary from 11 a.m. to Noon.







The rest of the second semester dates and events are being looked at and will be sent out soon! Parents please watch your email and save the dates! Looking forward to

more faith learning and fellowship in the new year!



## Jan./Feb. Volunteer Schedule

	Sunday, Jan. 1st, 9:30 a.m.
Communion Set Up	NA
Communion	NA
Scriptures & Prayers	NA
Acolytes	Maeleigh Rold
Support	Jim Hansen
	Sunday, Jan. 8th, 9:30 a.m.
Communion Set Up	Kristen Krohn & Stephanie Harder
Communion	Greg & Marge Petersen, Sue Paulsen
Scriptures & Prayers	Kaleah Guyer
Acolytes	Evan Harder
Support	Mike Krummel
	Sunday, Jan. 15th, 9:30 a.m.
Communion Set Up	Kristen Krohn & Stephanie Harder
Communion	Robb & Amy Jacobsen, Stephanie Harder
Scriptures & Prayers	Wendy Jorgensen
Acolytes	Madison Holst
Support	Dale Krohn
	Saturday, Jan. 22nd, 9:30 a.m.
Communion Set Up	Kristen Krohn & Stephanie Harder
Communion	Gary & Kathy Soetmelk, Ron Winter
Scriptures & Prayers	Amber Johnson
Acolytes	Katie Johnson
Support	Ron Winter
	Sunday, Jan. 29th, 9:30 a.m.
Communion Set Up	Kristen Krohn & Stephanie Harder
Communion	Dorothy Nelsen, Ronda Holst, Jeff Harder
Scriptures & Prayers	Peggy Osbahr
Acolytes	Kadence Coolidge
Support	Shela Jacobsen
	Sunday 5ab 5th 0.20 a m
Communion Sat Un	Sunday, Feb. 5th, 9:30 a.m.
Communion Set Up	Doon & Joy Krohn Noil Doulson
Communion	Dean & Joy Krohn, Neil Paulsen
Scriptures & Prayers	Arla Pickham
Acolytes	Kaden Lane
Support	Dean Krohn



Our Children's Sunday School Christmas Program was held on Sunday, December 4th. They all did a wonderful job! Thank you to all the many who helped make this a success and a special thank you to Angela Sieh and Beth Buboltz for organizing and



leading the program this year! Sunday School classes resume on Sunday,

January 8th!

### **TRINITY'S FIVE & DIME**



Welcome to "Trinity's Five & Dime". This section is dedicated to stories, experiences, and devotionals where together we can share God's spiritual candy. Glory be to God for the opportunity to share with you some thoughts, experiences, and scripture regarding our everyday lives. Praise and glory to God for his never changing word, faithful love, and countless blessings. May his life-giving word nourish us and strengthen us as we strive to fulfill the purposes, He has for us. Amen. Neil Paulsen

...As I walked out of Menards, a light snow had started to fall, and I left the parking lot and got on to 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue to make my way towards the 4-way intersection when traffic came to a standstill, and I was the 4th car from the stop sign.



Stepping Out of the Boat (Part 2

The lead car in my lane, turned left into the Sam's parking lot and it came to a complete stop as that traffic was no longer moving. The car coming out of Sam's wanted to go the same way I was going. The car to the right had no signal, so it appeared that they wanted to go straight in to Sam's. The car in the oncoming traffic wanted to turn right into Sam's, and the other two cars in front of me had no signal on, so it looked as if they wanted to go straight as I wanted to. In the lane I was in, on the other side of the intersection was a UPS truck sitting there with its flashers on. Then the first car in my lane decided to move, and they did a 3 point turn in the middle of the intersection and headed back in the opposite direction. The next car in my lane did not waste any time, and did the same maneuver, advancing me to the stop sign. One could sense the aggravation and frustration from all the shoppers who were now momentarily stopped due to this random disruption to completing their tasks. I thought for sure that this UPS truck that was stopped and blocking traffic, and the source of my delay, was having some type of mechanical failure. But then right before I was about to join the other two cars before me and do a three point turn so that my waiting would be over, a man stepped out of the sliding door on the right hand side of the UPS truck. The man to my surprise was not dressed in any UPS attire at all, and in fact, was not dressed in much of anything and looked pretty shabby. After the gentlemen stepped out of the UPS truck, he turned and faced my direction and slipped his hand, which appeared to have some dollar bills in it, into his pants pocket. His face seemed to have a small hint of contentment on it, and after his hand had come back out of his pocket, he bent over to pick up a piece of cardboard off the ground. And as he stood up, I got to read what it said, "Homeless. Anything will help." I think he could see that his brief visit inside that UPS truck had brought traffic to a standstill. He held up his free hand and gave a nod to all as to say "Thank you for your patience", and then resumed his place on the corner holding his sign.

#### Trinity Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes- December 14, 2022

<u>Members Present:</u> Kathy Soetmelk, Dale Krohn, Ron Winter, Shela Jacobsen, Sue Paulsen, Pastor Matt, and Amber Johnson. Absent: Mike Jacobsen, Nicole Krohn, Beth Buboltz, and Alan Blakestad.

<u>Call to Order</u>: Kathy called the meeting to order by reading a chapter in the Book Of Luke for devotion. <u>Recognizing Guests</u>: No guests present

<u>Thank You Cards:</u> Thank you card was sent to Beth Buboltz and Angela Sieh for the Sunday School Christmas program. A thank you card was also sent to Nick Denning for the yard work.

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Ron Winter, seconded by Dale Krohn, motion carried.

<u>Approval of Last Meeting Minutes:</u> A motion was made to approve the minutes by Ron Winter, seconded by Dale Krohn, motion carried.

<u>Treasurer's Report</u>: No bills were submitted. A motion was made to approve the report by Dale Krohn, seconded by Ron Winter, motion carried.

<u>Pastor's Report</u>: Finalizing the Christmas worship services. Matt is trying to get out to see the people who are home bound to share communion.

<u>President's Report/Comments</u>: Kathy feels the students attending confirmation class are making progress in their learning. The nativity scene for outside needs to be set up. Considering if it's time for an updated nativity scene for the church.

<u>Sue's Report:</u> LYO met on Sunday, November 27th for a "Friendsgiving Potluck". Teens made and mailed cards to two people each who had served them recently. LYO met on December 11th and baked Christmas cookies. Youth made another card and attached it to a plate of cookies. Each member was to deliver a plate of cookies to their neighbor. Second semester dates/activities are being planned.

Council Reports:

<u>Education</u>: Sunday school is on a break for the holidays and resumes on January 8th. Schedules for volunteers, teachers, and treats are lined up through the end of the school year ending on May 14, 2023. Outreach: No report.

Finance: Offering envelopes are available in the narthex for Sunday services.

Property Management: Starting to work on the church roof project.

<u>Stewardship:</u> Connection cards are ready to be printed. Continued plans to rearrange the narthex in the new year.

<u>Worship:</u> Plans for a new worship committee to be created in the new year. Looking for 5-7 members. A motion was made to approve the council reports by Ron Winter, seconded by Dale Krohn, motion carried.

<u>Old Business:</u> The following names will be able to sign checks for the church: Kathy Soetmelk, Shela Jacobsen, Ron Winter, and Dean Krohn. Dale Krohn made a motion to approve these four individuals to sign checks, seconded by Amber Johnson, motion carried. Nominating committee will need to be formed to replace the following people on the church council: Mike Jorgensen, Ron Winter, and Alan Blakestad.

<u>New Business:</u> Annual reports are due January 8th. Annual meeting will be held on January 22, 2023. Dale Krohn made a motion to purchase the electric fireplace for the basement of the parsonage, seconded by Ron Winter, motion carried. Local advertisements for the Christmas Eve church services were discussed. Clarification for supplies available for snow and ice due to poor weather. Ron Winter made a motion to purchase the new audio/visual equipment box used for church services, motion seconded by Dale Krohn, motion carried.

<u>Membership Changes:</u> No new address changes. Tayler Engle is now Tayler Herbst. No new members, transfers out, and removal from rolls. Deaths and funerals: Steve Frum, DOB- 12/08/1943, DOD-11/09/2022, Funeral-11/14/2022, Officiated by Pastor Matt Bahnfleth; Carolee Rock, DOB-11/06/1934, DOD- 11/25/2022, Graveside service- 12/02/2022, Officiated by Pastor Matt Bahnfleth; Judy Robinson, DOB-10/20/1947, DOD- 12/06/2022, Funeral-12/12/2022, Officiated by Pastor Matt Bahnfleth. Baptisms: Vance John Pattee, DOB- 05/02/2022, Baptism-11/20/2022, Parents- Daniel and Johnni Pattee, Sponsors- Chelsy and Charlotte Pattee. Weddings: Taler Engle and Josh Herbst, December 10, 2022. Dale Krohn made a motion to approve the membership changes, seconded by Ron Winter, motion carried.

<u>Adjournment:</u> Amber Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ron Winter, motion carried. Next meeting will be held on January 11, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Amber Johnson, Secretary

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 a.m. Worship / No Communion	2 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir	m	4	5 2 p.m.– TLCW Meeting 4 p.m–6 p.m. Food & Clothing Pantry 6:15 p.m. Peace Haven Worship	6 Pastors Day Off	7
8 8 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Worship / Sunday School	9 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir	10 8:30 a.m3 p.m. Christian Service	11 5:30 p.m.–7:15 p.m. Confirmation Class 8 p.m. Council Meeting	12 4 p.m—6 p.m. Food & Clothing Pantry	13 Pastors Day Off	14
15 8 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Worship/ Sunday School	16 9:30 a.m. Salem Lutheran Nursing Home Worship 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir	17	18 5:30 p.m.–7:15 p.m. Confirmation Class	19 2 p.m. Avoca Nursing Home Worship 4 p.m—6 p.m. Food & Clothing Pantry	20 Pastors Day Off	21
22 8 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Worship/ Sunday School Annual Meeting following Worship	23 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir	24 8:30 a.m3 p.m. Christian Service	25 5:30 p.m.–7:15 p.m. Confirmation Class	26 4 p.m—6 p.m. Food & Clothing Pantry	27 Pastors Day Off	28
29 8 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Worship/ Sunday School	30 5:30 p.m. Bell Choir	31				

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 301 N. CHESTNUT STREET P.O. BOX 456 AVOCA, IA 51521-0456

### **RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



# **Trinity Lutheran Church**

301 N. Chestnut Street Avoca, IA 51521 (712) 343-2518

For assistance or to leave information, contact the church office at the number shown above. In an emergency, contact Pastor Matt Bahnfleth at (cell) 402-750-8327.

Worship Services Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Holy Communion: Celebrated during each worship service. Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.