

The Visitor

March 2019

Volume 37 Issue 3

Tests

I woke up panicking and stressed. I was dreaming about a Russian History class from high school. This class pushed me to my limit and took every ounce of my energy to stay on top of the reading. I worked hard just to keep my head above water. In my dream, my teacher handed me the results of a difficult test I had just taken. I looked at the score at the top.....120 out of 300. A whopping 40%!

Nothing quite gets the adrenaline pumping like waking up from a dream that puts you in your sophomore year of high school, miserably failing. I know I'm not the only one who has had a dream like this. (Some may call it a nightmare.)

Life Tests

Even though many of us graduate and leave the classroom, we find that life continues to hand out tests. These are times when we work hard to prepare ourselves for a particular moment, praying our brains are sharp, our breathing calm, and our minds recall the necessary tools needed to solve the given challenge. Did we pass the “First Date” test or the “Half Marathon” test? How about the “Crucial Conversation” test or the “Third Round of Chemo” test? Or did you pass the “Just Barely Made it Through the Day” test?

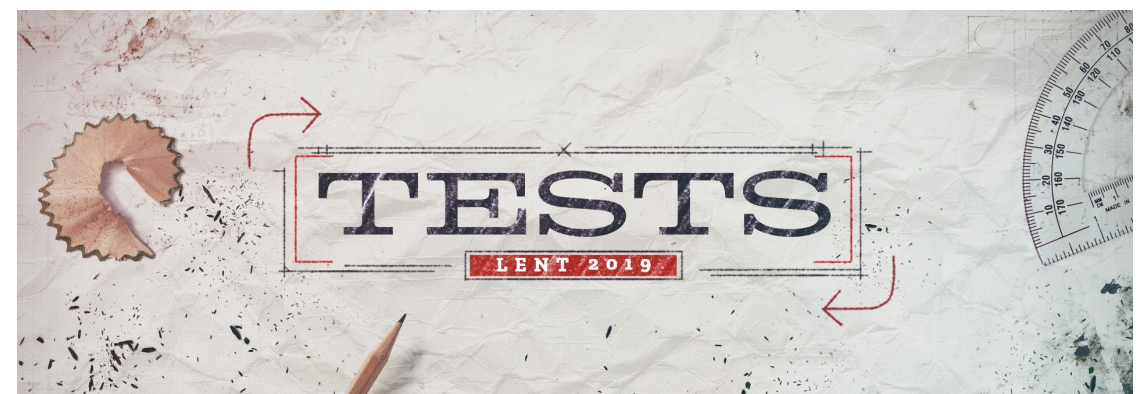
When we look to the Bible, story after story gives examples of life tests. Are Adam and Eve going to pass the “Bad Apple” test? Is Abraham going to pass the test of faith by sacrificing his son Isaac? Was Job tested when everything he knew and loved was taken away from him? How about Ruth, as she lost her husband, and her mother-in-law tested her by saying, “Go, I don't need you anymore?” Or what about Daniel, as he was thrown in the lion's den, testing his faith in God versus his allegiance to King Darius?

What do stories like these tell us about God?

How do we make sense of these passages? Do we have a God who gives us tests to see if we have a strong enough faith? Are these kinds of tests intended to make us stronger or to build our character? Or do they point to what could be interpreted as a heartless God? Might there be something more to these kinds of stories (and to our relationship with God), than meets the eye?

During this season of Lent, we will reflect on this theme of “Tests.” We will preach about these stories in worship. We will talk about them in small groups. And we will read the daily devotions of HTLC folks and friends reflecting on this theme. Whatever tests you've faced, or whatever tests you are currently facing, we invite you to bring your anxieties, fears, victories, and failures to this Lenten journey of 2019.

-Pastor Ben Hilding



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Key Dates

3/6	Ash Wednesday
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In Our Prayers

We ask that you keep in your prayers: Barb Loebner, Laurie Tolzmann, Bonnie Tupy, Pastor Diane Goulson, Barb Warner, Kareen Jacobson, Ellie Grace, Jim Morris, granddaughter Vada, granddaughter Piper, Don Mattson, and for family and friends mourning the loss of Margaret Sticha. In Jesus' name we pray Amen.

Please inform the church office of any illness, hospitalizations, or prayer requests as desired.

Also, we have a prayer shawl team that is ready to distribute prayer shawls to those in need. If you know someone who needs one, please contact the office.

Wednesday Meals

Served weekly from 5:00-5:50pm.

Soup Supper Supreme during Lent March 6—April 10. Please check out the website to sign up to bring dessert, soup, or help serve.

Holy Trinity's Staff

Co – Pastors: Pastor Alicia Hilding & Pastor Ben Hilding
Office Manager: Jamie Bisek
Custodian: Jim Cody
Ministry Coordinator: Karen Taylor
Facility Manager: Jon Bergquist
Worship Team: Rita Sapp, Rose Fife, Tim Price, Toby Thietje, & Lexie Lammers
Special Music / Mission Outreach Coordinator: Rose Fife
Adult Choir Director: Toby Thietje
Hospitality Coordinator: Donna Galvin

Holy Trinity's Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m.

Coffee and Fellowship follow Sunday's worship service.

Wednesday Worship 6:00 p.m.

A meal precedes Wednesday's Worship Service.

Distribution of the Lord's Supper is celebrated on the 1st and 3rd Sundays and following Wednesdays of each month. All are welcome to the Lord's Table.

Learn more about us at www.holytrinityonline.org, or check us out on our facebook page!

Holy Trinity's Church Council

President: Dirk Berger
Vice President: Karla Klingfus
Secretary: Mary Hanson-Busch
Treasurer: Eric Flala
Jay Schoenebeck
Dan Jacobson
Tim Ditberner
Tyler Klenow
Jesse Hemann

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Lent is a season in the church year when we often prioritize spiritual practices. This year we would like to invite HTLC into three community faith practices during the season of Lent: 1) worship, 2) daily devotions, and 3) a four-week small group Bible study. Our theme for Lent is “Tests” and in each of these practices we will be reflecting on the tests of some Old Testament Bible figures and how we can relate to the tests they have faced in our own lives.

- 1. **Worship:** Join us this Lenten season for worship on Sundays at 9am and/or Wednesdays at 6pm. On Sundays, we will worship using a liturgy from the Gather hymnal’s morning prayer. On Wednesdays, we will worship using the Holden Evening Prayer liturgy. Sermons will remain consistent at both services.
- 2. **Daily Devotions:** We have asked 40 individuals to reflect on how they have faced a challenge/test in their life of faith. I think you will agree that they each have written a meaningful reflection. Please consider making a commitment to this daily faith practice for the season of Lent (beginning March 6th, Ash Wednesday). Place this book somewhere where you’ll be reminded to read it as a routine part of your day or follow Holy Trinity on Facebook where you can also read these daily devotions.
- 3. **Small Groups:** The third invitation we’d like to extend to you is to join a small group. Throughout the month of February, we’ve been talking about these groups with our worship theme, “Get Connected.” These groups will meet 4 times over 4 weeks, for approximately an hour each. There are a variety of times to fit your schedule. You can sign up for a group either online or on the bulletin board by the office. Here’s the list of available groups. If you don’t see one that fits your schedule, maybe you could start your own group!

Group	Leader	Dates	Time	Location
• Food Lovers Group	Melissa Horejsi	3/3, TBD	10:30-11:30am	Fireside Room
• Sunday School Family Group	Laurie Thorp	3/10, 3/17, 3/31, 4/7	10-11am	HTLC Room 205
• Inter-generational Breakfast Club	Karla Klingfus	3/10, 3/17, 3/31, 4/7	10:30-11:30am	Klingfus Home
• God and Games Group	Gullicksons/ Reemts	3/10, 3/17, 3/31, 4/7	1-2pm	In home
• George’s Group (Grouches, Unfriend-ly’s, No-goods, & No Norwegians)	George Winn	3/12, 3/19, 4/1, 4/8	9-10am	Fireside Room (HTLC)
• Praha Group	Dennis Jasperson	3/19, 3/26, 4/1, 4/8	10-11am	Praha Village
• Post Amazing Grays Group	Audrey Austin	3/13, 3/20, 4/3, 4/10	10-11am	Fireside Room (HTLC)
• Mom’s Group	Christa Smith	3/13, 3/20, 4/3, 4/10	4:30-5:30pm	Fireside Room (HTLC)
• Couples Dinner Group 1	Tyler & Kate Kienow	3/13, 3/20, 4/3, 4/10	5-6pm	South Wing Room 303
• Guys Group 2	Jeff Jacobson	3/13, 3/20, 4/3, 4/10	6:45-7:30pm	Fireside Room (HTLC)
• Parents of Teens Group	Dan & Julie Popple	3/13, 3/20, 4/3, 4/10	6:45-7:30pm	Room 205 A & B
• Parents of Confirmation Kids Group	Christie Will	3/13, 3/20, 4/3, 4/10	6:45-7:30pm	Room 206
• Misfits Group	Luke Friendshuh	3/14, 3/21, 3/28, 4/11	1:30-2:30pm	Fireside Room (HTLC)
• Couples Dinner Group 2	Dirk & Darbie Berger	3/14, 3/21, 4/4, 4/11	6-7:30pm	Berger Home
• Guys Group 1	Joel Loose	3/14, 3/21, 4/4, 4/11	7-8pm	Fireside Room (HTLC)
• Post Dinner Intermixed Group	Jenny & Mark Walser	3/15, 3/22, 4/5, 4/12	6:30-7:15pm	Walser Home
• Morning Group	Jamie Bisek	3/14, 3/28, 4/4, 4/11	10-11am	Library (HTLC)



1/28/19 Council Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 6:32 called to order by Kienow
Present: Berger, Dittberner, Fiala, Pastor Ben, Hemann, Schoenebeck, Hanson-Busch, Pastor Alicia, Kienow
Approval of Agenda: Motion by Schoenebeck, 2nd by Berger Motion passed
Introductions/Newsletter/Snack Sign up: Members introduced themselves, Monthly sign ups to be distributed/finished at council re-treat.
Elections: Nominations for offices as follows: Treasurer: Eric Fiala nominated by Schoenebeck 2nd Berger, Secretary: Mary Hanson-Busch nominated by Hilding, 2nd Fiala, Vice President: Karla Klingfus nominated by Fiala, 2nd Berger, President: Dirk Berger nominated by Hanson-Busch, 2nd Schoenebeck. All nominations elected.
Approval of December 2018 Minutes: Motion by Kienow 2nd Schoenebeck motion passed
Approval of January 20, 2019 Minutes: Motion by Fiala, 2nd Kienow motion passed
2018 Annual Congregational Minutes: Review only, to be approved next annual meeting.
Opening Devotions: Pastor Alicia
Pastor Alicia Report:
New member class January 6th, new format for family picture insert, include short biography of family copies available for all members. First class since August. Children, Family & Youth (CYF) 3rd grade Bible class February 3 includes meal, Bibles to be distributed February 10/13 during services. VBS dates July 8-11 (pending date confirmation) Theme chosen : ROAR. Council installation February 10/13 during services.
Risk management team to continue with current members, Kim Gassner, Paul Newton. Pastor Alicia to serve as council liaison. Feedback/ Review of Summit Celebration/Pre meeting: discussed 1 hour length, annual report, information and format, budget presentation format. Topics: how can we encourage more questions at pre-meeting, how can we best answer questions in timely manner, discussion of quorum clarification, inclusion of more specific confirmed membership numbers in statistics.
Co-Pastor Alicia 0.5 time, Co-pastor Ben Fulltime started 2019. Ben assumes additional roles with Faith Formation, Communications, Caring Ministry and oversees Jamie Bisek. Preaching will be 2 weeks Ben, one week Alicia rotation.
Minneapolis Synod offering Toolkit and conference assemblies with break out timely topics workshop Feb 23- Alicia to attend, and to email information- interested council members can attend also. Review key dates for council this year and dates for summer worship finalized. Awaiting confirmation from synod office that new constitution has been officially ratified- emailed 1-27-19
Pastor Ben Report:
Review Christmas historical numbers: worship and music to consider adding 1 pm service in 2019. Large attendance for children’s program noted, parking lot overflow. Snow day plan for Wednesday, discussion included plan for school cancelled or school closing early on a Wednesday would mean no worship service in addition to no dinner, no CREW time and no Confirmation. A/V team formed working on sound system proposal to be presented later meeting 2019. Small groups for Lent: Pastor Ben looking to council members to be leaders-signups and information to follow. Lakeside service dates set: Endowment fund supporting the services this summer as fits Evangelism mis-sion. Confirmation had different format most recent month with large group presentations of timely topics for youth and families, positive feed back
Ministry Team Report: Mission Outreach Team – Pastor Ben introduced Rose Fife as Mission Outreach Coordinator, the team brings recommendations of specific caps for emergency and discretionary funds use from the total of the Benevolence of the congregational tithe amount as follows:
1. \$3000 cap for the emergency relief effort generally distributed through the church office staff.
2. \$3000 cap for the \$250 discretionary giving for special requests- Pastor Ben and Rose to review and approve.
Motion by Hilding to approve the suggested caps as above with recap of giving provided to council, 2nd by Kienow, motion passed.
New Business:
Rose Fife, with guests, Dennis Jasperson and Mary Eagen representing Hope House presented request for Holy Trinity to provide space to host the program one week in 2019 and 4 separate weeks in 2020. Brief review of Hope House history and family impact, number of participants and report of site visit by Hope House board and city officials. Considerations for adjusting space use while we host with other groups who use HTLC discussed.
Motion by Hilding to approve use of Holy Trinity space for Hope House hosting one week in 2019 and four separate weeks in 2020 pending consideration for successful review of insurance information and requirements needed. 2nd Schoenebeck, motion passed.
Follow up with insurance to be done by Rose Fife and Risk management team, Pastor Ben.
Treasurers Report: Overview of documents to be presented each month. Budget and continuing balance sheet
Budget had just been reviewed at annual meeting. Capital improvement fund reflects adjustment of \$4633 in December. Made to reflect payment for engineering drawing for proposed road project to come from capital improvement and not general operating fund.
Old Business: Schoenebeck: Child protection policy- few questions set for review, with Risk management and CYF input- expected to be presented to council February meeting. Hilding; Road project, no change to report. Brief review of history and current situation for new members, no urgency indicated for start of project currently.
Closing Prayer: Dirk Berger **Meeting Adjourned:.** 8:06 Motion Hanson-Busch, 2nd Fiala, motion passed
Next Meeting: Monday February 18, 2019 6:30 Respectfully submitted by Mary Hanson-Busch

Holy Trinity Happenings

March Food Collection

March is Minnesota FoodShare’s campaign, the largest food drive in the state. They rely on the generosity of congregations and businesses to help feed the hungry. Here at Holy Trinity, we want to do our part as well! All monetary and food donations will go directly to the Peace Center Food Shelf to help those in need in our community. We will collect donations in a shopping cart by the Welcome Center. The Peace Center needs the following items:

- Canned meat and fruit
- Seasonings/ Spices
- Condiments
- Breakfast items (hot/cold cereal, bars)
- Salad dressing
- Personal care items (shampoo, soap, toothpaste, and deodorant)

With questions, please contact Rose Fife (missions@holyltrinityonline.org).



Endowment Update

Holy Trinity's Endowment Fund supported HIS Haven Ranch in purchasing a steel shelter for shade for the safety of their participants and horses. HIS Haven Ranch is a faith-based horsemanship program that provides one-to-one mentoring for individuals (5+ years of age) struggling with depression, self-injurious behaviors, suicidal thoughts, loneliness...etc. Many of the individuals they reach out to are in the foster care system or currently in family situations that are out of their control. What makes HIS Haven unique is that everyone who participates helps take care of HIS Haven Ranch by learning to muck stalls, fill feed tubs, scrub water buckets, bale hay, groom/saddle/bridle their horses as well as ride their horse. Another characteristic that sets HIS Haven Ranch apart is that each participant also has a private devotion/Bible study/prayer time with their mentor during individual sessions. Thank you HTLC Endowment for supporting these partners in ministry!



Hope House

For a number of years, New Prague has been blessed with Hope House, an ecumenical collaborative effort (under the umbrella of Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative) to respond to the needs of families needing temporary housing. This summer, the Hope House will no longer be able to be used for such purposes. Holy Trinity was asked to step up and respond to this need in the community on an interim basis (1 time in 2019, 4 times in 2020). The Missions/Outreach team fielded this request, and recommended to the church council that we do this. The council approved. In response, Mary Eagan of the Hope House board sent a thank you note that read, “The Hope House Foundation would like to thank the Outreach committee and the Church council for allowing the use of Holy Trinity Church to house families in need for the coming year. The five weeks, starting next Christmas, will give much needed time for us to find a long term solution. Several churches will join ours in volunteering to bring food and fellowship to the guests. Thanks again, Hope House Board.” While our first week of hosting won’t be until December, we are already taking steps to prepare ourselves for this faithful ministry opportunity. If you would like to be a part of a team of people who take ownership for this responsibility, please contact Rose Fife (missions@holyltrinityonline.org).

*Dear Friends at Holy Trinity,
Thank you so much for partnering with
the ministry of Hope at HIS Haven Ranch!
Your continued support will provide some
much needed shade for the horses and the
participants this summer and for the
summers to come!! Blessings,
Laurie
HIS Haven Ranch*

Church Council Letter

Karla’s Letter to the Holy Trinitarians

The amount of snow that fell in February was astounding! During the blizzard warning this weekend, we had two special guests at Sunday’s service that made it to New Prague – Jordan Leggett and Pastor Deb Stehlin. If you weren’t able to make it to church, the service is available on FaceBook and the church website. It was a powerful service; take the time to watch it if you have the chance. I know it’s hard to imagine after our weather this weekend, but spring is only three weeks away. As we prepare for Lent and spring, I’m also excited for the “Get Connected” small groups and hope you are as well.

We’ve been given a unique opportunity to get to know one another and/or to build a deeper connection with those that we already know. I agreed to be a group coordinator and the thing that intrigued me the most is that I don’t have to lead anything and I’ll be provided the framework to get to know others at Holy Trinity. I’m coordinating a group called the “Intergenerational Breakfast Club” at our home on Sundays after church. My hope is that the group will have participants at various stages in their lives and from different backgrounds, as it’s beneficial to see life through someone else’s perspective.

If you’ve not yet signed up to participate in a group, please give it some consideration. It’s only a four week commitment and, in our society, as we seek to optimize the return on our investment (in this case, time), I think those that participant will be astounded at the return on our investment as we enrich our relationships with one another. The sign-up sheets are listed outside the office and also on Sign-Up Genius on the church website and you’ll find different groups, times, and dates. I’m hoping you’ll find one that intrigues you enough and provides you the courage to sign up.

Blessings - Karla Klingfus

Finance Update

Revenue & Expenses

(Finance update as of January 31, 2019)Revenue:
YTD Budget \$41,651 YTD Actual \$43,849
Expenses: YTD Budget \$45,230 YTD Actual \$37,971
Revenue-Expenses: YTD Budget \$-3,579 YTD Actual \$5,878

** If you haven’t picked up your 2019 offering envelopes or your church directories, they are available in the church office.

A/V Upgrade

A faithful team of people with Audio/Visual interests and gifts has been investigating upgrades for our sound system and tech support in the sanctuary. This team (led by Karen Taylor) made a proposal to the church council on an A/V upgrade that includes a digital sound board, two computers, new projection software, microphone upgrades, and making it possible to have one cohesive sound system (rather than two). The total project is estimated at \$8,500. On March 10th and 13th, there will be a special offering to go towards this system that we aim to have installed in time for Holy Week. If you'd like to support this project, please bring your special offering to one of those two services.

Council Activities

On February 2nd, the church council went on a retreat to Prairie Oaks Institute in Belle Plaine, MN. They reviewed the 2018 year of “Foundations” and reflected together upon the mission and vision of Holy Trinity going forward. They concluded the retreat by signing, “Be Thou My Vision”, and president Dirk Berger seems to have taken this literally!

On February 23rd, councilpersons Mary Hanson Busch, Jesse Hemann, Karla Klingfus, Dirk Berger, and Pastor Alicia Hilding represented Holy Trinity by attending the Minneapolis Area Synod Toolkit event held at St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church in Bloomington.



Volunteers of the Month

This group of volunteers are part of the behind the scenes crew that magically make things happen. They are responsible for changing the colors of the parament on the altar, and preparing and cleaning up communion. You may not even see them at work...it's as if the bread and wine just appear on the altar. This month, we recognize the hardworking members of the ALTAR GUILD! Please give a big thank you to these people:

- Shari Nytes

Donna Gulbranson

Deb O'Malley
- Nancy Slechta

Tonya Jacobson

Dirk & Darbie Berger
- Dee Matson

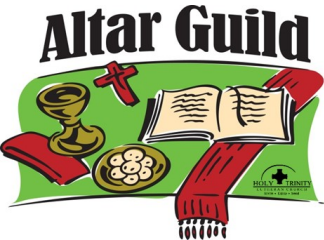
Melissa Horejsi

Audrey Lamping
- Mary Eagen

Lois Ryan
- Jen Fiala

Shirley Privratsky

The Altar Guild always has room for more members. Currently, we have openings in December. If you are interested in joining the Altar Guild, please connect with Karen Taylor before or after worship services or email volunteer@holyltrinityonline.org. Thank you Altar Guild for serving our church with your time! Karen Taylor, Ministry Coordinator



Looking Ahead

Spring Clean Day

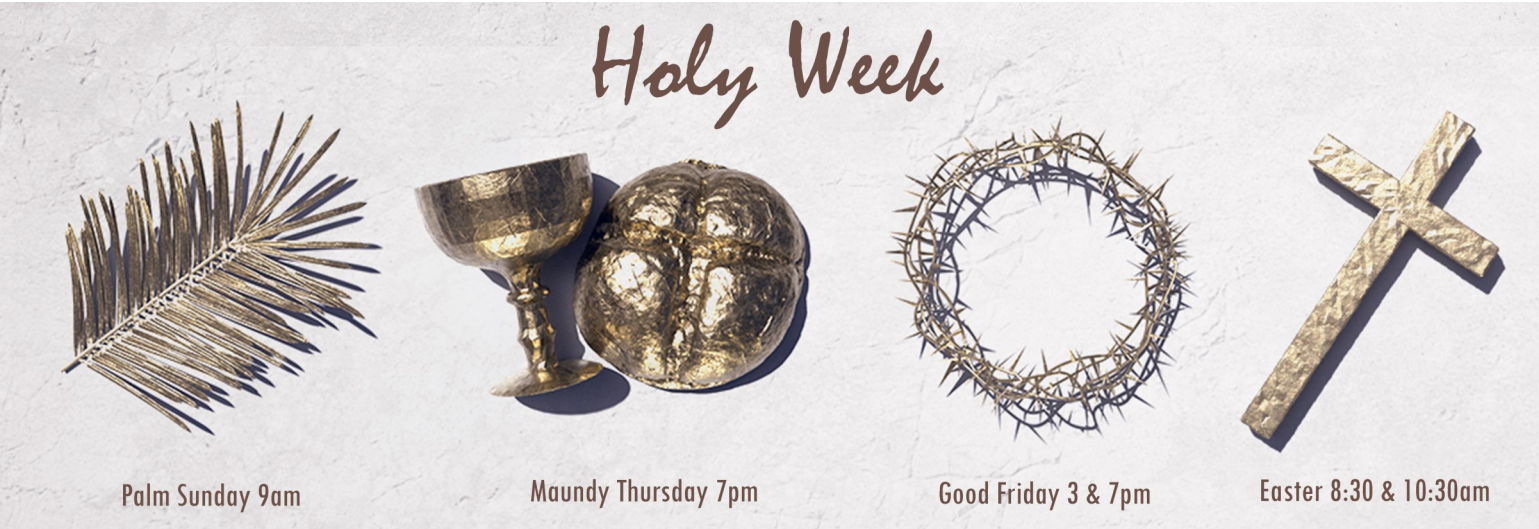
Please watch the bulletin and website for the date! One of the ways we come together as a church is to do a spring clean of the facilities. We'll have some painting, cleaning, patching, and even sharpening pencils. All ages welcome!

Next New Members

Do you know someone looking for a church home? Invite them to Holy Trinity! Our next New Member Gathering will be held from 10am-12:00 p.m., on Sunday, May 5th. We will take some time to hear stories, share about Holy Trinity, and enjoy a meal together. Childcare, if needed, will be provided. To sign up, please go to Holy Trinity's Website and click on the "Sign-up Genius" logo or call the church office. We will welcome new members in worship on Sunday, May 12th and Wednesday, May 15th.

Summer Dates

- Are you a planner, always looking ahead and coordinating schedules in advance? We invite you to mark your calendars for some exciting summer dates!
- May 19th: Senior Led Worship Service
 - June 5th: Blessing of the Bikes Service
 - June 26th: Holy Trinity Lakeside
 - July 8th-11th: Vacation Bible School
 - July 24th: Holy Trinity Lakeside
 - July 31st: Blessing of the Pets service
 - August 2nd: RibFest
 - August 4th: Polka Service
 - August 21st: Blessing of the Backpacks Service
 - August 28th: Holy Trinity Lakeside (baptism service)



Children, Youth and Family

Crew Time

(Pre-K through 5th Grade)
Meets Wednesdays during 6pm worship

Upcoming Schedule

- 3/6: Crew Time
 - 3/13: Crew Time
 - 3/20: Crew Time
 - 3/27: Crew Time
- * If there's a school cancellation, then Wednesday evening church activities will be cancelled as well.

Sunday School

(Pre-K through 5th Grade)
Meets Sundays after 9am worship

Upcoming Schedule

- 3/3: Sunday School
- 3/10: Sunday School (Sunday School children sing during worship)
- 3/17: Sunday School
- 3/24: Sunday School

Confirmation

(6th through 8th Grade)
Meets Wednesdays after 6pm worship

Upcoming Schedule

- 3/6: Ash Wednesday
 - 3/13: Adam & Eve
 - 3/20: Abraham
 - 3/27: Job*
- *Due to spring break, we will still have confirmation, but a modified small group format.

First Communion

4/7: First Communion Class (4:30-7pm)
4/18: 1st Communion Celebration (7pm worship service)

Calling all 4th graders! An important day is coming up for you! You get to celebrate your First Communion! On April 7th, there will be a class for 4th Graders (with parents/guardians) to learn about this important Sacrament. We will talk about Biblical passages, the history of the Sacrament, as well as preview what will happen during the worship service. This is a special year as we get to celebrate First Communion on Maundy Thursday, when Jesus had his Last Supper. Invite friends and family to join you for this special day! *If you or someone in your family has not had first communion and is older than 4th grade, please email letting Pastor Alicia know and we will coordinate accordingly. This is a great opportunity to jump in and attend the class.

3rd Grade Bibles



Congratulations to the 3rd graders who received their Bibles this past month!

Easter Egg Hunt & Brunch



Mark your calendars for an Easter Egg Hunt and Brunch on Sunday, April 14th! (Kids will sing in worship that morning.)

Family Fun Night



Thanks to all who came out to the Family Fun Night! And those who stayed late to try out Pastor Ben's game of Salvation!