

Trinity Lutheran Church of Blanco, Texas

Where God is Seen

1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:19

Love is Felt

John 13:34-35

Lives are Changed

Romans 12:1-2

Ministers All People of Trinity
Pastor David Mayer

Music Director Leta Garcia
Media Director Sheila Mercer
Parish Administrator Angie Daniels

How to Contact Trinity:

- P.O. Box 487,
703 North Main Street,
Blanco 78606
- Office: 830-833-4771
- Fax: 830-833-1381
- Email: trinityblanco@gvtc.com
- Website: www.trinityofblanco.com

Pastor David Mayer
Email: dtmayer75@yahoo.com
Cell: 830-426-9146



December Events at Trinity:

Thursdays, Dec 7, 14, & 21st Movie Nights!

Inspirational movies shown at Trinity from 7-9pm, popcorn is provided!

Dec. 2—Decorate the Church for Christmas!

Join Altar Guild to set the scene for the holiday—All are Welcome to join us!

Dec. 3—Breakfast at Trinity, 8:30-9:15a.m. hosted by the Hannah & Deborah Women's Teams

1st Sunday in Advent Worship, 9:30a.m.

Dec. 4—Rotary Club meeting here at Noon

Dec. 10—2nd Sunday in Advent Worship and Holy Communion

Dec. 17—3rd Sunday in Advent Worship, 9:30a.m. with Children's Christmas Video

Youth Blessing Project gifts due for Gift Wrapping TODAY at Noon!

Dec. 24—4th Sunday in Advent Worship with Holy Communion at 9:30am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion, 5:00pm

Dec. 25—Merry Christmas!

Church office Closed this week and reopens January 2nd!

****If you should need to contact Pastor in an emergency, please call him at 830-426-9146, or Angie Daniels, secretary, at 830-385-0518**

Dec. 31—Annual Reports for 2023 from committees due to the church office by today. Please email to trinityblanco@gvtc.com, or drop off a copy.



Christmas...Incarnation...God become flesh...Jesus, born in a manger...

Have you considered the amazing wonder of God coming in such a way that in Jesus we know we have "the image of the invisible God?" God is a missionary God. He made sure that his love was expressed in a way and in a language that we can understand. The language is Jesus. Jesus "was in the form of God," he "emptied himself," "being born in human likeness," "he became obedient to the point of death on the cross" (Philippians 2:6-8).

God did the missionary thing and used the language of our experience, our joys, our pain, our culture, our manner of speech so that we could understand this important truth: we matter to God; God loves the world (John 3:16,17). God is going to great lengths to get this across to us. As people who have come to know this love and purpose we are called to be missionaries to take the Christmas truth to all our world. We find ourselves in the tradition of the shepherds who couldn't keep it to themselves; "Go tell it on the mountain...and everywhere."

Former missionary Leslie Newbigin states, "It is the work of the sovereign Spirit to enable men and women in new situations and in new cultural forms to find ways in which the confession of Jesus as Lord may be made in the language of their own culture. The mission of the church is in fact the church's obedient participation in that action of the Spirit by which the confession of Jesus as Lord becomes the authentic confession of ever new peoples, each in its own language." This is Christmas lived out.

How does Christmas come to people for the first time?

George Hunter III, in his book, *"Church For the Unchurched,"* gives Ten Pioneering Principles of Outreach in Apostolic Churches:

- 1. They prepare their people in multiple ways.** "The apostolic church prepares its people for witness and invitation by rooting them in Scripture, deepening them in prayer, teaching them compassion for sinners and obedience to the Great Commission, and by scripting them with an apostolic vision of what people can become. The apostolic church further prepares the way for outreach by involving its people in pastoral care, small groups, and lay ministries, and by offering many ministries to pre-Christian people – including a celebrative culturally relevant worship service that eliminates the 'cringe factor' and frees Christians to invite their friends."
- 2. They clarify the goal of outreach.** "Apostolic churches are clear that the goal of the gospel's communication is not merely to persuade people to believe, accept Christ's benefits, and join the ranks of nominal Christians...Nominal Christianity does not meet the deep needs of people's souls." The goal of outreach is to bring people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. If no difference can be seen between a pagan and a "Christian" in name only, then the work is also necessary among those nominal Christians.
- 3. They see evangelism is a process.** Joining is not enough. Conversion is not enough. Evangelism is a process of bringing people to maturity in Christ.
- 4. They regard outreach as a lay ministry.** The "amateurs" have been shown to outperform the "professionals" (pastors).
- 5. They train their people for outreach.** First, the whole church needs to be prepared for outreach, but most people are not ready without specific training.
- 6. They practice social network evangelism.** They use the web of influence among family and friends.
- 7. They offer "the faith once delivered to the saints."** They are true to the Scriptures and the faith passed on, not to be dogmatically correct, but because God's truth meets people's needs.
- 8. They address the "life concerns" of pre-Christian (and Christians).** They address daily issues of life and not only the theological principles of the faith. An apostolic congregation studies the target population and takes them seriously.
- 9. They use the language of the target population.**
- 10. They represent the gospel with generational relevance.** Apostolic congregations recognize that the culture can change from one generation to the next. "If the churches simply perpetuate the forms the old people like, they risk missing a generation of non-Christians and losing the rising generation of Christians."

Merry Christmas from the Mayers. May the traditions of Christmas fill you with love and joy. May God's Christmas story challenge and motivate us to bring the gospel of Jesus to all people.

Pastor Dave

Veterans' Sunday

Seven of Trinity's many military veterans strike a handsome pose after Vet Sunday Service on November 12, 2023. Held yearly on the Sunday closest to Veterans Day, November 11th, Trinity's service honors those who have served in the U.S. or an allied nation's armed forces.

(L to R: Jerry Gass, Hal Switzer, Norman Eubank, Jon Brones, David Barker, Wayne Gosnell and Stan Steiger)

We salute our veterans and thank them for their service!



Trinity's Altar Guild—December Schedule

Thank you to Sophie Johnson, Sandy Mann, Sheri Riley, Janice Culton and Clara Gourley for their service to the altar and to Sunday worship during the month of November! During the month of December, Jan Gass, Leta Garcia, Martha Gosnell and Christine Bushong will prepare the altar for worship services.



Saturday, Dec. 2nd DECORATE FOR CHRISTMAS—Help is needed to decorate the church, sanctuary and tree for the Christmas Season! Contact Bonnie Triesch for more information at 210-705-2811.

Sign up for poinsettias! If you would like to help off-set the costs of poinsettias for the church to decorate the altar during the Christmas season, please sign up on the bulletin board to purchase a poinsettia. The cost per plant is \$7/each and may be designated "in Honor" or "in Memory" of loved ones. A complete list of will be included in the bulletin for Dec. 24th.

DECEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

**Please use this handy section to keep track of monthly responsibilities organized by Sunday. Each Sunday there are many important opportunities to serve your church.

	December 3	December 10	December 17	December 24 9:30am & 5pm Candlelight Worship	December 31
Altar Flowers	Hal & Sandy Switzer	<i>OPEN</i>	<i>OPEN</i>	<i>OPEN</i>	<i>OPEN</i>
Usher Team	David Hesskew David Barker Charles Riley	David Hesskew David Barker Charles Riley	David Hesskew David Barker Charles Riley	David Hesskew David Barker Charles Riley	David Hesskew David Barker Charles Riley
Greeters	Robert & Tara Seymour	James Dollahite	Paul & Brenda Moore	Wayne & Martha Gosnell	Trinity Youth
Acolytes	Darby Kersten	TBA	Briley Thomas	9:30am—TBA 5pm—Darby K.	Creed Finch
Lectors	Roland Pfeiffer	Kathy Kersten	Lacy Lukich	Keith Morgenroth	Ron Bigler
Communion Assistants	<i>No communion</i>	Sheri Riley	<i>No communion</i>	9:30am, Norman Eubank 5pm, Travis Kersten & Ashley Finch	<i>No communion</i>
Altar Guild	In December:	Jan Gass, Leta Garcia, Martha Gosnell, Christine Bushong			

Sunday School News!

Dec 17th Youth Christmas video will be shared during the worship service and again on Christmas Eve. Also today, following Sunday School, we will be wrapping presents for the Blessing/Angel Tree project.

★ **PLEASE NOTE**—There will not be Sunday School for Children on December 24th.

Looking ahead to 2024--Senior Sunday School (6th-12th grades) will kick off the new year with a new purpose driven program.

2023 The Angel Tree/Blessing Project—There are several ways to be a **Blessing Project Sponsor**: Full Sponsor: take a child from the board and purchase their clothing and wish list. Partial Sponsor: take a child from the board and purchase either their clothing or wish list. Donating Sponsor: choose a name and donate to that name or just make a general donation towards all Blessing Project kids. Dedicated shoppers will use the funds donated to make sure every child receives their special gifts. Item Sponsor: donate general items that can be divided where needed. Some common wish list items are coloring books, coloring supplies, arts & crafts, sports balls and stuffed animals. Also, common needs are socks and underwear. Bike Sponsor: donate towards the bike fund, there are children this year that have a bike on their wish list. We will be watching ads to get the best deals possible on bikes.

ALL GIFT DONATIONS ARE DUE BACK AT CHURCH BY SUNDAY, DEC. 17TH

After Sunday School Dec. 17th, we be wrapping gifts and organizing the project!
EVERYONE is welcome to join! For more information, contact Ashley Finch (830-237-6288)



Mission Moment

by Pastor Bryce Formwalt
Director of Mission Growth



Advent: More Than a Countdown

As a kid, I LOVED Advent! Why? Because it was a countdown to the best day of the year in the minds of most kids: Christmas! Why? Because Christmas meant PRESENTS! What kid doesn't love getting to unwrap Christmas presents?!? As I have grown and matured (hopefully) I have come to realize that Advent is so much more than a countdown... it is an invitation to give the best gift of all: God's grace through Jesus.

Entering the season of Advent, we are reminded of the extraordinary gift of God's grace given in the advent or arrival of Emmanuel (God with us), Jesus. As we anticipate the Christmas celebration and reflect upon the gift of God's grace in sending His son, I can't help but take note of what I think is often overlooked: our call to share that grace with others. Advent is a season of intentional love and outreach in Jesus' name.

Our call to share Christ's love is rooted in our identity as recipients of a grace that knows no bounds. It is God's grace that forgives our sins, heals our brokenness, and transforms our lives. Grace is a free gift of God that can never be earned or deserved. Jesus reminds his followers Matthew 10:8 (CSB): "*Freely received, freely give.*" As followers of Christ this Advent season, we are called not only to celebrate this grace but to be conduits of it, sharing the transformative love of Christ with the world we live in.

In the hustle and bustle of this season, be attentive to the opportunities that God gives you to be instruments of God's grace for others. How can you joyfully demonstrate the love of Jesus in your interactions with friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and even strangers? It could be as simple as extending a helping hand to a neighbor, showing kindness to a stranger, or speaking a word of encouragement. It may be through sharing the story of Christ's birth, offering a listening ear to someone going through a tough time, or extending forgiveness in Jesus' name. Pray each day for God to give you eyes to see the opportunities and the courage and power of the Holy Spirit to embrace them. I believe God will indeed answer your prayer and give you both!

This Advent, I pray that our lives can be a testament to the transformative power of grace, as we actively and intentionally extend God's love to a world in need. In 1 Peter 4:10 (CSB) we read, "*Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God.*" Our faith calls for us to respond to God's grace by not just receiving it but also stewarding it by sharing it generously with a world that so desperately needs it.

Pastor Bryce Formwalt is the Director of Mission Growth for LCMC Texas District and Program Director of Harvest Workers, an online ministry training program (learn more at www.harvestworkers.net). Residing in Georgetown, Pastor Bryce is available to coach congregations on mission. Feel free to contact him with any questions or comments: 512-942-7776 ext. 2 or bryce@lcmctexas.org.

© 2023 Bryce J. Formwalt, All Rights Reserved. Reprinted with permission. December 2023

Memorials in November

In Memory of Birdie Bruemmer

By Marie Anna Lindeman
Kenneth & Carolyn Moore
Gloria & Shelly Gass
Cicero Rust III
Carolyn & Dan, Mark, Debbie & Brian
Virginia Hanz
Sidney & Connie Cox

In Memory of Paul Gosnell

By Sidney & Connie Cox
Wayne & Martha Gosnell

In Memory of Jo Wicker

By Sidney & Connie Cox

Life Thoughts

2024 Lutherans for Life Essay Contest: The Lutherans For Life Council of Federation Presidents sponsors an essay contest each year for Lutheran students in two grade categories: 6-8 and 9-12. This contest is available for students in all states who attend a Lutheran school or a Lutheran church.

This year's theme is ***Life Shines In Darkness*** based on the Bible verses in John 1:4-5 (ESV): "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

I encourage Trinity's youth to submit an essay affirming *your* gift of this Life and this Light and *how it has impacted your own life*. For the rules and more information, please contact Barb Geistfeld, Life Team Leader. bgeistfeld@gvtc.com 830-388-8640

Here is a special essay from *last year's* contest that will warm your heart! Submitted by Virginia Flo, Lutherans for Life Director of [Volunteer Relations](#). *Published in LifeDate, Fall 2023*

"I received an email from Timothy, who wanted to submit an entry in our Lutherans For Life essay contest. Writing is a challenge for him, so he used "talk to text" to write his essay while his mother asked questions. It turns out that Timothy, a sixth grader from southern Minnesota, has Down syndrome. I was so moved by Timothy's essay that I gave him an award ...called the "Spotlight Award." It is given to a student who did not win anything in our contest but who wrote an essay from a unique perspective. What stood out was his statement that he has *"autism, Down syndrome, and Baptism."*

"My name is Timothy. My name means "valued by God." I live in Minnesota. I live with my mom, dad, and sisters—Abby and Hannah. I am in sixth grade. I like classes at school like P.E., band, choir, social studies, and Mrs. Momberg's class. I play trombone and piano. I like to listen to Christian music in my bedroom. I like to play games with my family. I have autism, Down syndrome, and Baptism. Baptism means I'm God's child. I love everyone. I like riding my bike. I want to travel to Waupaca so I can kayak. I like to sing to God and I lead my family in praise songs during family devotions. I love God. I was in a video with my friends. [YouTube: *World Down Syndrome Day Video for Kids*] Lots of schools saw it. It was about World Down Syndrome Day explained for kids.

God loves everybody. God loves people that are big and small. God loves people that are every age. God loves people no matter where we live. All people are special to God. The Bible says, **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand"** (Ephesians 2:10). God has good things for each of us."



Trinity Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 487, Blanco, TX 78606 830-833-4771 email: trinityblanco@gvtc.com

DECEMBER 2023 EVENTS CALENDAR--TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, BLANCO

Pastor David Mayer--Worship: 9:30 AM, Sunday School: 11:00 AM

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 Decorate the church for Christmas— Everyone is welcome to join us!
3 1st Sun. in Advent Breakfast hosted by Hannah & Deborah Teams, 8:30-9:15am 9:30am Worship	4 Harvest Workers Class, 10a & 6p <i>Noon Rotary</i> <i>Meeting here</i> Stephen Ministry Training 7pm	5 6pm Barnabas Time	6	7 11am Pastor leads Bible Study, here	8	9
10 communion 2nd Sun. in Advent 9:30am Worship	11 Harvest Workers Class, 10a & 6p Stephen Ministry Training 7pm	12 Newsletter articles due TODAY!	13 6:00pm Council meeting	14 11am Pastor leads Bible Study, here	15	16
17 3rd Sun. in Advent 9:30am service, with Youth Christmas Video <i>Blessing Project gift-</i> <i>wrapping TODAY</i>	18 Harvest Workers Class, 10a & 6p Stephen Ministry Training 7pm	19 6:30pm Men's Group, TBA	20	21 11am Pastor leads Bible Study, here <i>Church office</i> <i>closes today at</i> <i>Noon and reopens</i> <i>Jan. 2, 2024</i>	22	23
24 —communion 4th Sun. in Advent 9:30am service <i>No Youth Sunday School</i> <i>today</i> Candlelight Communion Service, 5:00p.m.	25 Merry Christmas! <i>Church office closed</i> <i>this week and</i> <i>reopens Jan. 2, 2024</i>	26	27	28	29	30 Annual Reports for 2023 due to the church office today
31 9:30am service						

News From Your Council of Ministries

Jerry Gass—President
Hal Switzer—Vice-President
Karen Steiger—Secretary
Medora Beckmann—Treasurer
Sheri Riley—Financial Secretary

Travis Kersten—Worship
Karen Wagner—Evangelism
Norman Eubank—Property
Ashley Finch—Education/Youth
Sally Anderson —Stewardship

Notes from the Church Council Meeting on October 18, 2023

President Jerry Gass called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. Council members present were Medora Beckmann, Norman Eubank, Ashley Finch, Jerry Gass, Travis Kersten, Pastor David Mayer, Sheri Riley, Hal Switzer, and Karen Wagner. Guest, Keith Morgenroth, a member of the Budget Committee had been invited by Hal to observe the financial operations/discussions of the Council meeting. Pastor gave a devotional on Powerful People, Powerful Relationships. Powerful people do not try to control other people. They don't try to get people to respect them; they create a respectful environment by showing respect.

There were no corrections to the Minutes of September 20, 2023. Travis Kersten made the motion to accept the Minutes, Hal Switzer seconded the motion, and the Council members voted to approve the motion. Sheri Riley gave the Financial Report through September 2023, and Medora Beckmann gave the Treasurer's Report as of September 25, 2023. A discussion was held concerning how the PEC gift could be used, concluding it be placed in the Undesignated Pass thru (Liability 3a) for now. Travis made a motion to move the Building Fund monies into an account earning higher interest. Hal seconded the motion, and the Council members voted to approve the motion.

Pastor David submitted his report. 5 funerals have been held since our last Council meeting. He met with the 6 Confirmation students on September 16th. Their next meeting will be October 28th. Pastor attended The LCMC Annual Gathering Oct 1-4 in St Charles, Missouri. He announced that the Instant Church Mobile App has been updated with new photos thanks to Alexis Pawelek. Harvest Workers Bible Study meets on Mondays at 10:00am and 6:00pm. And the new Bible Study will start this coming week on Tuesday, October 24th at 10:30am. He will be conducting a wedding in Porter for Hondo friends, so has requested vacation days on December 2-3. And he and Tanya are requesting one extra week of vacation to the one already planned after Christmas to visit their daughter and family in Nairobi, Kenya.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

-Youth and Education – Ashley announced that the Youth Rummage Sale will be held October 21st from 7:00am-6:00pm. Trinity will be hosting the 5th Quarter event on October 27th after the football game. The Youth are planning an outing to the Corn Maze on October 29th. And on November 9th Trinity will be hosting a Middle School Football players and Cheerleaders event.

-Stewardship - Correspondence and Thank-yous were received from ILT, Ethnomedia, Vina and Young Life.

-Evangelism – Karen W. announced that the 5th Sunday Potluck would be October 29th. Stephen Ministry has 4 new recruits. Karen W. has been busy stocking the pantry, and the Women's Group is looking for a new leader.

-Worship – Travis reported that all is well with the Ushers, Pianist, and the Altar Guild. Leta Garcia is enjoying her time in Ireland. Sheila is dealing with a few media issues. During funerals the words to the hymns will be printed.

-Property – Norman submitted his report. The Fellowship Hall bathroom windows were frosted to provide more privacy. A new Bunn coffee maker was purchased and set up. Pending projects include updating the outside sign, underground water leaks, and repairing/replacing the water damaged cabinet at the ice machine.

Sheri made a motion to accept all the Committee reports and Travis seconded the motion. The Council members voted to approve the motion.

Old Business –

The Communion Assistants Schedule is complete through the end of the year. The Coffee Truck operation is pending the city meetings to grant permits. It was discussed that perhaps the rent collected from the Truck could go into the Youth Scholarship Fund. The Council Retreat will be held on Saturday, November 11th at the Fellowship Hall from 12:00pm-3:00pm (eat lunch ahead of time). And the Congregational Meeting to elect incoming Council members will be held Sunday, November 12th. Hal is working with the 2024 Budget Committee to have the numbers ready for the November council meeting.

New Business –

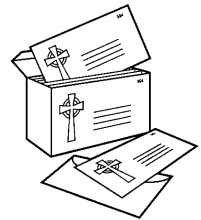
Christmas Eve Sunday there will be two services: a regular morning service at 9:30am and an evening service at 5:00pm.

Norman made a motion to accept \$6,700. as the 3rd quarter Benevolence amount. Sheri seconded the motion, and the Council members approved the motion. There will be no Movie Night on Thursday, November 9th.

Sheri made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Hal seconded the motion, and the Council approved the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm with everyone reciting The Lord's Prayer.

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2023 DUE BY DECEMBER 31st According to Trinity's constitution, "*All committees, ministries, and organizations within the Congregation shall submit reports to the church office at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the Annual January Business Meeting. These reports shall be made available to the Congregation the Sunday prior to this annual meeting.*" **December 31 is the deadline to submit reports. Please email reports to trinityblanco@gvtc.com or drop off a copy in the church office.**

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES—You may pick up your 2024 offering envelope sets on Sunday mornings from the narthex table. Each member, that chooses to use envelopes for their weekly offerings, is assigned a contributor number, and confidential contribution records are recorded each time an offering is received. It is your decision whether or not to utilize the envelopes. At the end of the year, each contributor receives an annual contribution statement, which totals contributions of record for the year. Members are also able to use one envelope and one check to make multiple contributions to separate funds. If you do not find a box of contribution envelopes with your name on them, and would like to use a set, please call Angie in the church office, 833-4771. Thank you!



BE A GREETER! Each Sunday morning a dedicated team of volunteers stand at the door of the narthex to greet members, friends and visitors to worship. If you are interested in learning more about serving as a Greeter, please contact Wayne Gosnell at gossnelltexas@gmail.com or call him at 830-833-0586.

Wayne schedules Greeters for each Sunday of 2024 and also sends reminders when it is your Sunday to Greet. Join the greeters and welcome everyone that comes to worship.