



Trinity Lutheran of Blanco

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:

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February Events at Trinity:

Sunday Worship Services are held in the sanctuary and also livestreamed on Facebook at 9:30a.m.

HOLY COMMUNION CELEBRATED on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month

Feb. 4—Breakfast at Trinity, 8:30-9:15a.m. hosted by the Esther & Ruth Women's Ministry Service Teams

Feb. 5—No Harvest Workers Study today... but **Harvest Workers** will meet all other Mondays in February in the fellowship hall at both 10:00am & 6:00pm

Stephen Ministry Training, here, 7pm
Continues all Mondays in February!

Feb. 14—Our First Lenten Supper, 5:00pm!
Ash Wednesday Worship, 6:00pm,
Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes
Council of Ministries Meeting, 7:00pm,
fellowship hall

Feb. 20—Men's Group meets for fellowship,
TBA, 6:30p.m.

Feb. 21—Lenten Supper, 5:00pm, here
Mid-Week Lenten Worship, 6pm

Feb. 22—Trinity's Lenten Luncheon, Noon in
Trinity's Fellowship hall

Feb. 28—Lenten Supper, 5:00pm, here
Guest Speaker during supper will be Pastor Siimon Haamer from the Estonia Lutheran Church
Mid-Week Lenten Worship, 6pm
Pastor Haamer will remain after worship for further discussion in the fellowship hall

Trinity Family,

Lent!

I write "Lent" with an exclamation point because it is coming so soon this year. Ash Wednesday is February 14th. You know what day that is, Valentines Day. So, you will have to celebrate the Valentines of your life during the day and celebrate Christ that evening for a 6:00 PM Ash Wednesday service. Ash Wednesday service will include Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes for those who desire it. All other Wednesday Lenten services will be 30-35 minutes.

Our theme for the Lenten services will be "You Meant It For Evil, But God Meant It For Good." It is a word of hope that God is not boxed in by the evil intentions in the world. He is stronger than that. He knows how to take what is not right and make something beautiful.

We will begin our Lenten services with a light supper provided by different groups in the congregation. I hesitate to call it soup and sandwiches, because it might be a couple of pots of chili or spaghetti, depending on the wish of the cooks. Suggestion: keep it simple. Supper at 5:00 PM, service at 6:00 PM.

On February 28th, we will have a special guest. Pastor Siimon Haamer is from the Lutheran Church in Estonia, one of the Baltic countries that had been under Soviet rule but is now independent. Communism was harsh to Christians including the Lutheran Church, however, God preserved a remnant, including Pastor Haamer's family and they have been instrumental in rebuilding a Christian witness in their country. Pastor Siimon has been invited to present during the mealtime. We will still have our regular Lenten service at 6:00 PM.

Confirmation Sunday

Every month six confirmands and parents/sponsors have met with me for four hours of class. We are looking ahead at Confirmation Sunday. We have set April 7 as the day for our Confirmands to publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ. The Sunday after Easter is normally a "low Sunday" but having it set aside for Confirmation Sunday will make it a high day of celebration. Confirmation classes cannot produce faith in someone, but they can give an education of the basics of the Christian faith so that a Confirmand is clear about what our faith is and means. Please pray for Carson Cooley, Darby Kersten, Skyler Finch, Creed Finch, Briley Thomas and Layla Lukich. A young person's faith is tender and needs our support and encouragement.

Liturgy

As you know, we have been experimenting with the liturgy. Some are perhaps happy, others are preparing the tar and feathers. This is not the harebrained idea of myself, but a process discussed with church Council. It is not written in stone. After about a month we will give the congregation an opportunity to give feedback and evaluate. So, in the meantime, it is quite possible for us to have meaningful worship from the heart with a liturgy that is slightly different. For perspective, please note that on page 126 of the green Lutheran Book of Worship you will find a simplified liturgy called The Service of the Word, that is every bit Lutheran. Most of all, let us walk this walk together. I'm not doing this for myself.

Contemporary Worship Service

In the call process it was made clear to me that many wanted a separate service that is sometimes called contemporary (some might call it blended). A simple fact is that Trinity Lutheran will not grow much more with only one worship service. That is a function of space and demographics. The second fact is that we are not reaching the 20s, 30s and 40 somethings. It is not a sustainable direction.

A second service is a necessary step in having room to welcome new people among us. This is where the contemporary service comes in. To be clear, contemporary worship is more about the kind of music and the shape of the liturgy. It has nothing to do with creating a worship service that is “Christianity Light.” Neither is it entertainment evangelism or performance. All liturgies must be biblical, God-honoring, and Christ-centered. Will any second service, traditional or not, disrupt our congregational life as we know it? Yes, it certainly will. As you know from past experience when you had two services it will feel as if we have two congregations. When we have two services, we will have to make an effort to “meet in the middle” for fellowship. If we really want to grow, we must pay a cost, but for the sake of the Kingdom of God it will be worth it.

When might we begin a contemporary service? We will have to set a date. If not, it will continue to slide into the future. My suggestion is that we set April 14, the Sunday after Confirmation Sunday and begin without live-streaming it. When we are ready, we can consider that. These are my thoughts on this. If you can help, let me know.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Dave

Lent Begins!

Come early Wednesdays in Lent for a light supper, served in the fellowship hall at 5:00pm before the worship service. *see below***

Ash Wednesday Worship, 6:00pm February 14th at Trinity’s sanctuary with Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes.

NEW IN 2024—Lenten Suppers Before Worship

In an effort to extend hospitality during Lent, the Council of Ministries has decided to offer light suppers before each Mid-Week Lenten Worship Service. Supper suggestions include soups, sandwiches, chili, spaghetti, etc... The suppers will be prepared and served by the Women’s Service Teams and Men’s Group.

Our first opportunity to enjoy a light supper will be Wednesday, February 14 at 5:00pm, prior to the Ash Wednesday Worship Service. Hosting the soup and sandwich supper will be the Women’s Service Team Hannah.

Remaining Schedule for Hosting Lenten Suppers:

Feb. 21—Team Deborah

Mar. 6—Team Esther

Mar. 20—Men’s Group

Feb. 28—Men’s Group

Mar 13—Team Ruth

ECUMENICAL BREAKFAST

MEN'S

On January 13th, 77 men from throughout Blanco County gathered at the Buggy Barn in Blanco for the monthly Ecumenical Christian Men's Breakfast. The guest speaker was Mr. Sichan Siv, a native of Cambodia, who told his inspiring story escaping from Pol Pot's Killing Fields and, only 12 years later, becoming a member of the White House staff.



These breakfasts are held at 8 am, the second Saturday of the month at a floating location. (Trinity will host

these breakfasts here in the fellowship hall on April 13th and September 14th.) All Christian men are encouraged to attend!

Submitted by Wayne Gosnell

Altar Guild Report—

Thank you to Ashley Finch, Karen Steiger and Sandy Switzer for their service to the altar and to Sunday worship during the month of January! In the month of February, Marcie Wagner, Pam Nabers, Connie Cox and Rosalind Ellis will prepare the altar for worship services.

Altar Guild Service Schedule for 2024-25: The previous 2023-24 schedule of Altar Teams will end this month. A new schedule for March 2024 through February 2025 will be available from Altar Guild President, Bonnie Triesch, as well as a review of procedures and any new Altar Guild information.

As always, volunteers are welcome to join Trinity's Altar Teams! You will be joining an existing group of ladies who care for the altar, set up for communion, and prepare for baptisms and other special worship events once or sometimes twice a year. The teams rotate each year, with some teams only serving one month and other teams serving twice a year.

****Contact Bonnie Triesch, at 210-705-2811 to join a team or speak more with a current Altar Team member to find out how you can join in this important ministry of preparing the altar for Sunday services.**

Thank You!

Thanks to Trinity's Life Team, Women's Ministry, and the wonderful volunteers that assembled the Christmas Gift bags for the "Over-80's"! I enjoyed my gift very much!

Marie Anna Lindeman



Mission Moment

by Pastor Bryce Formwalt
Director of Mission Growth



How to Grow Your Church

In my role as Director of Mission Growth, a common question that church members and even some pastors ask me is “How do we grow our church?” I love this question because it tells me a few things about the person asking it. First, the very question itself communicates that the person asking recognizes that their church has a purpose to connect to more people and reveals a “holy discontent” with the present reality. Secondly, the question also informs me that the asker is genuinely interested and open to learning and implementing new ideas. Both having a heart to connect with more people and a teachable spirit are key components to ministry success and congregational revitalization.

The question also presents a bit of a challenge: Growing a bigger church should never be the mission of the church! Instead, church growth is a biproduct of a church engaging in and accomplishing its true mission and purpose. So, what is the true mission and purpose of the church? In my opinion, it can be summed up with “connecting people to Jesus.” Exactly what this looks like in each congregation and community can and should be very different: no two congregations are alike; nor are the contexts in which those congregations minister.

I truly believe that churches who prioritize connecting people to a life-giving relationship with Jesus will indeed grow. Yet growth, in and of itself, should not be the actual goal. What would happen if we stopped obsessing over worship attendance or confirmation class size or Sunday School participation and started prioritizing and praying for those in our community whom God is calling us to befriend with the purpose and intent of gently and lovingly connecting them with Jesus? How can churches prioritize this activity as their mission, encouraging and equipping one another for everyday mission work?

In the book *7 Habits of Healthy Churches*, Marcus Carlson notes that “Healthy churches are focused more on those outside the church than those inside the church.” I couldn’t agree more with Carlson’s assertion. To be clear, this does not mean that healthy churches do not care for one another within the church; healthy churches always love one another. What the author is pointing out is a reality I routinely observe: in the absence of a clear, outward-focused mission, congregations always default to pleasing their own members as their de facto purpose. Whenever a congregation focuses on member satisfaction, it becomes unhealthy and ultimately, inevitably declines.

God is calling the church to more. That more isn’t simply to worry about stopping decline and growing our congregation. The more God is calling the church to is a mission that extends beyond our church walls and prioritizes connecting people to Jesus.

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.

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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
Norm Eubank—Property
Ashley Finch—Education/Youth
Sally Anderson—Stewardship

COUNCIL NOTES—from the December 13, 2023 Meeting

President Jerry Gass called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. Council members present were Medora Beckmann, Norman Eubank, Jerry Gass, Travis Kersten, Pastor David Mayer, Sheri Riley, Karen Steiger, and Hal Switzer.

Pastor David's devotional centered around a favorite inspirational book of his, Prophetic Wisdom. When we understand how God interacts with us, we grow in confidence. When we know what God is doing in us and through us, then we no longer confuse the two. Waiting on God takes patience. He wants a relationship with us. We live in Christ, not in our circumstances. Joy is who God is, and rejoicing is our response to who God is.

There were no corrections to the November 8th Council Meeting Minutes. And the Action Items were briefly discussed as they had been taken care of. Travis Kersten made a motion to accept the Minutes, Sheri Riley seconded the motion, and the Council members voted to approve the motion.

Sheri gave the Financial Report through November 2023. Medora gave the Treasurer's Report as of November 24, 2023.

Pastor David submitted his report. The 6 Confirmands met on November 18th. Four Blanco pastors (the Pastor Ministerial Alliance) representing the Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, and Trinity Churches have begun to meet twice a month. Pastor David reminded members that he and Tanya would be on vacation from December 25-January 10, being back in the office on January 11, 2024. As a result of the Council Retreat, he reviewed Lagging and Leading Indicators to help Trinity move forward as a thriving Church community; and suggested potential Action Items, undergirding everything in prayer. Pastor David also included a Discipleship Roadmap in his handout as food for thought to be discussed later.

Committee Reports:

--Youth and Education – In Ashley's absence, Jerry reported that the Youth's Christmas video would be shown on Sunday, December 17th and again on Sunday, December 24th. There will be no Youth Sunday School on those Sundays. Sally Anderson is working on a new program for the 6th Grade & Up Class.

--Stewardship – There were thank you letters from Ethnomedia, ALWM, LFL, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Adult & Teen Challenge, Blanco Co Child Protection & Family Advocacy, Young Life, CRC, ILT, Share Center, Highland Lake Family Crisis Center, and Upbring.

--Evangelism – The Community Thanksgiving dinner was very well attended.

--Worship – Travis handed out his report. All is going well. He did mention that a Christmas tree had been donated for this year. And Bonnie Palmer (Altar Guild) will purchase a new one during the 'after-Christmas' sales.

--Property – Norman handed out his report and highlighted several items. Pastor David complimented Norman on his efficiency, and always being on top of solving property related problems.

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

Old Business –

--The Communion Assistants Schedule was completed through March 31, 2024, which is Easter Sunday. Two assistants will be needed on that Sunday. Hal reported that Brianna (Coffee Truck) would like to display a sandwich board on the North part of Trinity's property, pending City Council approval. Church Council members did not have a problem with this provided that she put up & take down a tastefully done sign daily, on the days when she is open.

--The Audit Committee consisting of Marie Anna Lindeman, Arlene Hamlin, and Karen Steiger performed the necessary audit for Trinity's 2023 year.

New Business –

--Hal reported on the finalization of the 2024 Budget he and his committee are going to present to the congregation, seeking Council's approval first. The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, January 21, 2024.
--Church employees are paid for 2 weeks' vacation, but any absences (other than illness) longer than 2 weeks are not paid vacation times. The employee's replacement will also be paid by the Church for 2 weeks.
--Annual Committee Reports need to be given to Angie before December 31st. Staff Christmas gifts were discussed and approved.

Upcoming events include the Confirmation Class's next meeting on Saturday, December 16th and the Angel Tree Gift Wrapping Project on noon Sunday, Dec 17th.

Travis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Hal seconded the motion, and the Council approved the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm with everyone reciting The Lord's Prayer.

Respectively submitted,
Karen Steiger

2024 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS—Active Trinity Lutheran Church students, either seniors in High School or those attending college are encouraged to apply for the Trinity Lutheran Church Scholarship—you may request an application from the church office. Email your request to trinityblanco@gvtc.com, or call the church office at 830-833-4771. Copies are available to pick up from the Narthex on Sunday morning.

Youth host fundraisers to benefit the scholarship account during the year, but gifts can be made at any time. Gifts given in memory or honor of loved ones can be designated to the scholarship fund, or Sunday morning offerings can be given to scholarships by marking your check or envelope with "scholarship fund."



Life Thoughts

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O Lord

Psalm 51: 10-12 is a very familiar and beloved King James text found in the *Lutheran Hymnal*. As many of you know, it is called the *Offertory*. My favorite source of this song is the 1941 copyright version that is my husband Jim's confirmation Bible, with his name and the year 1961 embossed in gold on the front cover.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

Now, we always end here and move on to the offering. But wait! Verse 13, which we do not sing, nor even mention, summarizes the whole *point* of this text.

Verse 13 says: **"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."** Or as stated in the ESV, **"Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you."**

"Then *I* will teach....". That personal pronoun, "*I*", identifies each one of us who reads that text as the person who will teach transgressors God's ways so that they will return to the Lord! Scary! Humbling! The whole point of God creating a clean heart and a right spirit **within us** is so we may be cleansed and strengthened to go out and do the job He created us to do....to teach others His ways so they can return to Him.

This should come as no surprise, of course, as another favorite text that we Lutherans are very fond of quoting is ***Ephesians 2:8-9***. ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”***

“This is most certainly true”, Dr. Martin Luther would say, but, here again, we often beam with joy at the gift and slide off into the day without hearing the very important words that follow: Verse 10 clearly states the *sole purpose* of this amazing gift from God. ***“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”***

It is so easy to hold tight to our personal salvation and our personal gift of forgiveness and forget why we are holding it. It is so easy to forget that we are born with a to-do list. It is so easy to be thankful for this forgiveness and forget that we are to be the lights in a dark world and the salt of the earth. We can barely comprehend the truth that, as believers in Jesus, “streams of living water will flow from within [**us**]. (John 7:38) What an incredible gift we have been given!

As we daily give thanks for this great gift of salvation and forgiveness of sins, let us ask God to remind us often that this gift is given to us to *share*. We have words that can help others. We can act in a manner that shows others the truth of a Spirit-filled life. As Lutherans, we have a rich liturgy that expresses our faith. Let us go out and live this liturgy to the fullest so that others may see the truth and return to the Lord.

Barbara Lane Geistfeld, Life Team Leader

FEBRUARY 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.

	February 4	February 11	Feb 14 Ash Wednesday	February 18	February 25
Altar Flowers	Doris Phipps	Open		Wayne & Martha Gosnell	Open
Ushers	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
Worship Assistant	Cindy Hawkins	Jim Clifton		Jim Clifton	Barb Geistfeld
Greeters	Arlene Hamlin	Jon & Casey Brones	Christine Bushong & Connie Russell	Medora Beckmann	Ronnie & Karen Wagner
Communion Assistants	No communion	Travis Kersten	Jerry Gass	No communion	Ron Bigler
Lectors	Lacy Lukich	Roland Pfeiffer		Keith Morgenroth	Ron Bigler
Altar Guild	In February:		Marcie Wagner, Pam Nabers, Connie Cox & Rosalind Ellis		

Trinity Lutheran Church hosts the community at the first Lenten Luncheon on Thursday, Feb. 22nd at Noon. This annual lunch event rotates between local congregations during Lent. Freewill offerings received benefit the Blanco Ministerial Alliance and their assistance to persons in need. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you will bring food for the lunch or contact Karen Wagner (210-601-8042 for more information about set-up, serving, and/or cleanup for the luncheon.

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

FEBRUARY 2024 EVENTS CALENDAR--TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, BLANCO

Pastor David Mayer—Worship: 9:30 AM—Fellowship Time: 10:30AM—Sunday School: 11:00 AM

Services are also available livestreamed on Facebook

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 11 am Pastor's Bible Study, hall	2	3
4 Breakfast at Trinity, 8:30-9:15am	5 <i>No Harvest Workers classes, today</i> Stephen Ministry Training, 7p	6	7	8 11 am Pastor's Bible Study, fellowship hall	9	10
11—Communion	12 Harvest Workers class, here, 10a & 6p Stephen Ministry Training, 7p	13	14 5pm Lenten Supper, here 6:00pm Ash Wednesday Worship , here 7pm, Council of Ministries Meeting	15 11 am Pastor's Bible Study, fellowship hall	16	17 8am-1pm Confirmation Class , here
18	19 Harvest Workers class, here, 10a & 6p Stephen Ministry Training, 7p	20 Newsletter articles due TODAY! 6:30pm Men's Group meets for fellowship, TBA	21 5pm Lenten Supper, here 6pm Mid-Week Lenten Worship Service	22 11 am Pastor's Bible Study, fellowship hall <i>Noon Lenten Lunch, TBA</i>	23	24
25--Communion	26 Harvest Workers class, here, 10a & 6p Stephen Ministry Training, 7p	27	28 5pm Lenten Supper, here with guest speaker 6pm Mid-Week Lenten Worship Service	29 11 am Pastor's Bible Study, fellowship hall <i>Noon Lenten Lunch, TBA</i>		

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