

# TRINITY TRIBUTE

December 2025 Newsletter

*"We believe there is no person or created thing which is outside the active love and grace of God shown so clearly in Jesus Christ. And through the active love and grace of God, we, as a body of Christ, are called to invite, welcome, and care for all."*

*Trinity Lutheran Church-ELCA Cook, Minnesota*

*December Star Word Prompt: Reflect on your star word journey this year – where it's taken you, what you've learned, etc.*



**It's Time!**  
**Saturday, December 6, 2025**  
**4:00 - 6:00 pm**

*Time to think about LUTEFISK!*

*Annual Community Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner.*

Adults: \$25  
Youth 10-17: \$10  
Under 10: Free

Lutefisk, meatballs, potatoes and gravy, green beans, rutabagas, lefse, homemade bread, cranberries, pickled herring, Kransekake, cookies and more!

*Take-out available; sorry no delivery.  
All proceeds from this year's meal will be donated  
to the Cook Area Food Shelf.*



## **Trinity 2025-2026 Council Installed - Officers Elected**

Sunday, November 16, was a busy day for newly elected members of the Trinity Council. Worship included their installation by Deacon Kari Olson. The group then met following the service to conduct business and elect new officers for the coming year. Those officers are: President Laura Aune, Vice-President Larry Lange and Secretary Laure Maki. The remainder of the council includes Greg Aune, Patti Naughton, Leo Wilenius, and Greg Wilson.

*Pictured above: (l to r) Dn. Kari, Greg Wilson, Laure Maki, Larry Lange, Laura Aune.*

## **Cook Lions Annual Trunk - or - Treat**

Trinity was represented on October 31 at the Community Center, in spite of the rain. They had candy/goodies for the kids and were a walking advertisement for the upcoming Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner on December 6.



"Chefs" Deacon Kari Olson, Nick Nicklow & Brenda Tibbetts dishing up treats for the kiddoes.

As a bonus, they were set up right next to Ashley Skorseth and Bill Aune Construction with their own treats.



Thanks to the crew for serving 70+ meals to area veterans and their families at the annual Veterans Day Lasagna Luncheon. It is always an honor to serve those who have served.



**PLEASE NOTE: DUE TO THE CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS, THE TRINITY OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED:**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25**  
*(Will reopen Monday, December 29)*

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31**  
**THURSDAY, JANUARY 1**  
*(Will reopen Tuesday, January 6)*



## **COMMUNITY MEALS DONE FOR 2025**

There will be **NO** Community Meals during *November or December*, due to the holidays.

Community Meals will resume January 22, 2026.

Last January I had the wonderful opportunity to explore the footsteps of Paul as part of an ELCA Deacons' *Trip to Greece and Turkey*. On that trip, I became more aware of just how difficult things were in New Testament times. I remember standing in places like ancient Ephesus and wondering why we haven't evolved more as a society as I heard stories of fear, oppression, economic disparity, instability, and injustice. The circumstances we live in may be different, but the feelings are similar.

This is why I am so glad that we are focusing on Hope this year. In the Introduction to the *Sparkling Hope Resource Booklet* for the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Bishop Amy Odgren defines hope in these words:

*Biblical hope is a confident expectation in the promises of God, grounded in God's character And faithfulness. Unlike a wish or vague desire, it is anchored in the certainty that God fulfills what God proclaims. As it is written, "Faith is the assurance of what we hope for and the certainty of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)*

This past weekend, I experienced great hope as Suzie Holter and I attended our Synod's All Youth Gathering, *United in Hope*, with 14 of our 7 – 12 grade youth. We joined about 300 others on Saturday and Sunday for a wonderful overnight led by high school youth. The focus was on mental health and creating a brave space of hope and healing. The guest speaker was Joe Davis, and he provided us with fantastic hope-filled messages. We experienced wonderful worship and workshops, heard incredibly brave youth share their faith stories, sang together, played together,

laughed together, had meaningful conversations, and made new friends. Thank you to Jesse and April Glass for helping us get there and back.

As we enter into the season of Advent, let us continue to focus on hope and insist on it even in our fear.

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*  
Romans 15:13  
(NRSVue)

Deacon Kari (she/her)



### *"What Do You Fear? Insisting on Hope this Advent"*

*for Advent-Epiphany from Sanctified Art LLC*

A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshipping communities. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Learn more about their work at [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org).

#### **Scripture Readings December 2025**

#### **December 21**

*4th Sunday of Advent  
When you're afraid,  
give me your hand.*  
Isaiah 41:5-10  
Matthew 1:18-25

#### **December 7**

*2nd Sunday of Advent  
When we're running out  
of hope, God is at work.*  
Isaiah 43:19-21  
Matthew 11:1-11

#### **December 14**

*3rd Sunday of Advent  
Even in our fear, we are  
called forward.*  
Jeremiah 1:4-10  
Luke 1:26-39

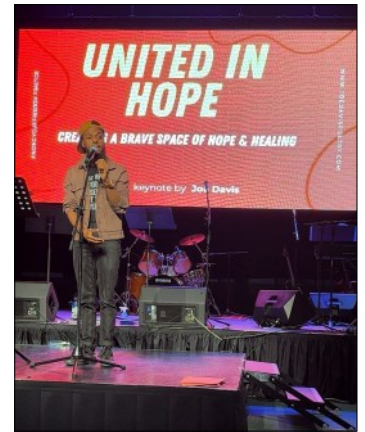
#### **December 24**

*Christmas Eve  
Good News is louder  
than fear.*  
Luke 2:1-20

#### **December 28**

*1st Sunday after Christmas  
Let fear fuel a  
fire for justice.*  
Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23





And the “big kids” spent some quality time at Cragun’s with Deacon Kari Olson & Suzie Holter during the *All Youth Gathering* on November 22-23 in Brainerd. A great group!



*Christ the King* Sunday, November 23, 2025  
Rev. Sanna Reinholtzen stepped in for Deacon Kari Olson, who was with the youth in Brainerd. Brenda Tibbetts shared the Children’s Sermon, talking about Jesus’ crown of thorns.



# Trinity Lutheran Church - Giving in Grace - Financial Report

## **General Fund**

Budget Receipts \$19,574.37  
 Budget Expenditures \$21,055.92  
 Checkbook Balance \$5,336.75

2025 Budget = \$287,207.99

## **Offerings Needed**

Monthly = \$23,934.17  
 Sunday = \$5,523.26

	<u>Income</u>	<u>October Receipts</u>	<u>Monthly Anticipated Budget</u>	<u>YTD Received</u>	<u>Anticipated YTD Budget</u>
Envelope Offering	\$	18,406.75		\$ 200,015.54	
Loose Offering	\$	1,092.62		\$ 12,410.02	
Church usage	\$	75.00		\$ 2,060.00	
<b>Total Regular Income</b>	\$	<b>19,574.37</b>	<b>23,934.17 **</b>	<b>\$ 214,485.56</b>	<b>\$ 239,341.70</b>

## **Mission Support**

	<u>October paid</u>		<u>YTD Paid</u>	
NE Synod	\$ 635.00	\$ 635.00	\$ 6,346.00	\$ 6,350.00
VLM	\$ 81.00	\$ 81.00	\$ 810.00	\$ 810.00
<b>Total Mission Support</b>	<b>\$ 716.00</b>	<b>\$ 716.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,156.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,160.00</b>

## **Expenses**

Education	\$ 180.00	\$ 350.01	\$ 2,443.70	\$ 3,500.10
Wellness Ministry		\$ 12.50		\$ 125.00
Stewardship	\$ 86.50	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,043.68	\$ 1,000.00
Mental Health & Wellness		\$ 41.67		\$ 416.70
Social Outreach Ministry	-\$ 500.00	\$ 166.67	\$ 2,035.72	\$ 1,666.70
Worship	\$ 1,177.71	\$ 827.60	\$ 8,832.39	\$ 8,276.00
Church Operations	\$ 11,533.33	\$ 8,711.88	\$ 94,478.35	\$ 87,118.80
Pastoral Salary & Bene	\$ 182.00	\$ 7,090.53	\$ 12,350.98	\$ 70,905.30
Congreg Care Minister Sal & Bene	\$ 7,580.38	\$ 5,892.30	\$ 73,133.57	\$ 58,923.00
Misc	\$ 100.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 1,906.77	\$ 250.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 21,055.92</b>	<b>\$ 23,934.16</b>	<b>\$ 203,381.16</b>	<b>\$ 239,341.60</b>

<u>October</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Oct 5	81
12-Oct	88
19-Oct	74
26-Oct	90

Receipts for the month BELOW budget by \$4,359.80. Receipts, are BELOW budget for the year \$24,856.14.  
 Expenses are BELOW budget for the month by \$2,878.25. Expenses are BELOW budget for the year 35,960.54.

Memorials received this month in memory of:

Ivy Reinholtzen  
 Pat Lindberg

Given by:

Kathy Jowaski  
 Leo & Lindy Wilenius, George Carstens, Delores Zika, Lois Nyrhinen,  
 Gail Gwash, Steve & Laurie Lindberg, Bill King, Kathy Stanton, Linda Lindberg,  
 Audrey Armagost, Harold & Joyce Carstens, Bruce & Deb Maki, Judy Vaughn,  
 Margaret & Dale Rinne, Sunny Hecomovich

VancoMobile link



## **GIFTS**

	<u>Received</u>	<u>Submitted-YTD</u>
Noisy Offering		\$1,533.06
Cook Food Shelf		
Social Outreach Ministry	\$620.00	\$2,893.05
Pastor's Discretionary Fund		
Salvation Army		
Lenten Offerings		\$1,076.00
Mental Health and Wellness		\$2,695.00
Cook Lions Club-flood relief		
Camperships		\$2,005.00

Regular offerings keep Trinity going; **Thank You** for continued support. Whether worshipping in person or online, TLC ministries and missions are dependent on faithful giving.

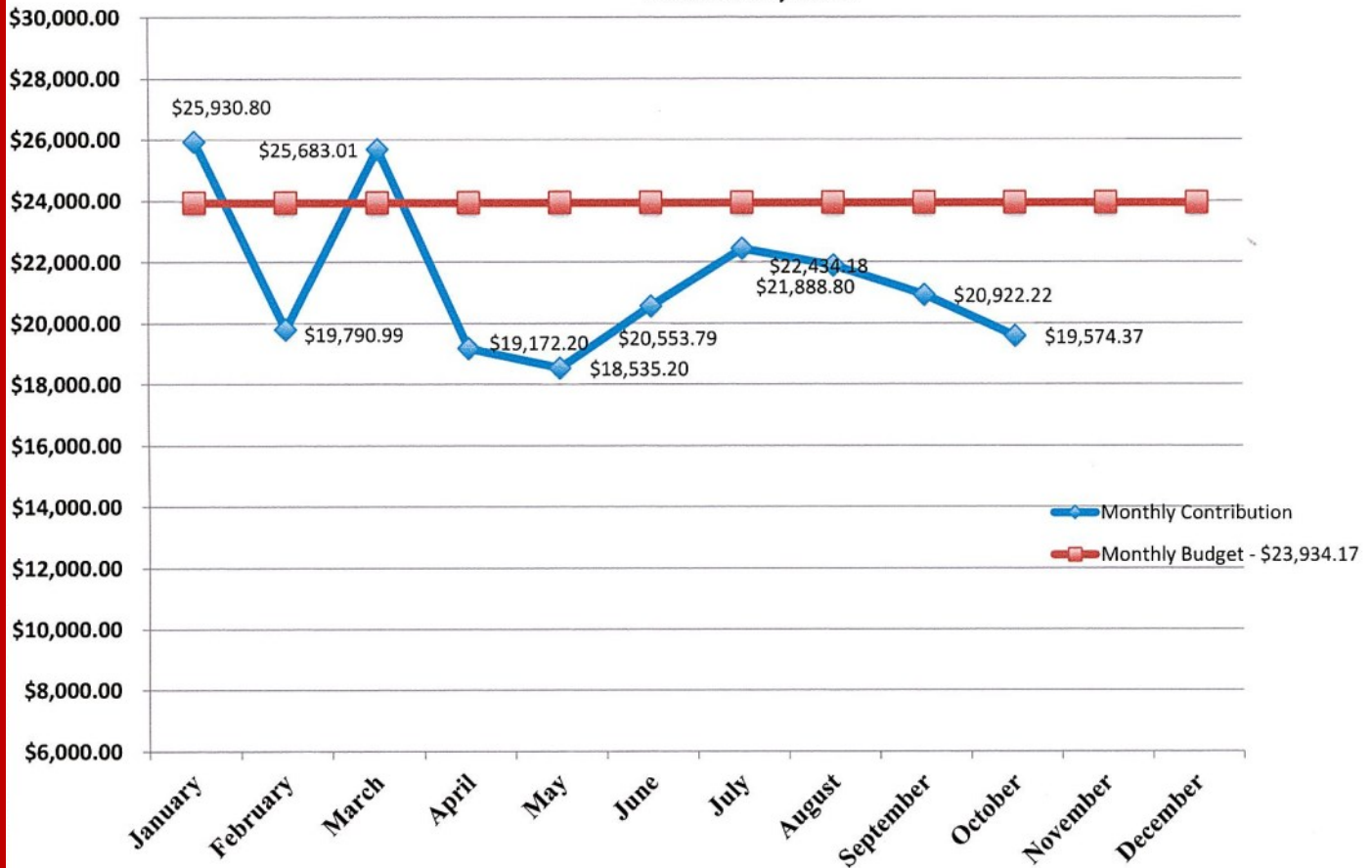
If you would like to set up regular electronic payments contact Sue for more information at 218-666-5965 or email [sue@trinitycook.org](mailto:sue@trinitycook.org).

Submitted by Sue Carstens, Bkkp



## Giving in Grace

### 2025 General Fund Offerings October 31, 2025



### Parsonage Update -

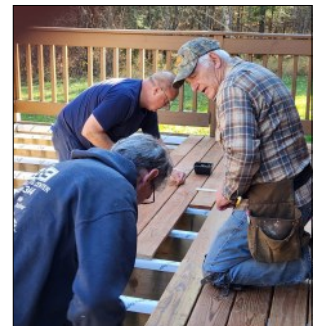
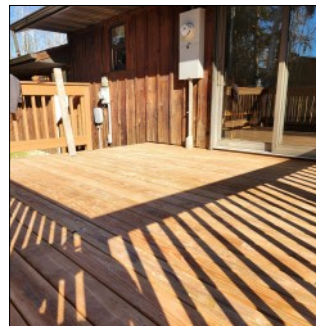
During October the crew upgraded the two decks in several steps:

- Cody Bixby, Dale Bixby, Roger Lindbeck, and Peter Stone removed the old flooring.
- Nick Nicklow, Peter Stone, and Leo Wilenius leveled the decks, added concrete supports, and hand-placed about 5 cubic yards of soil (including a plastic barrier) against the foundation under the decks to direct surface water away from the foundation.
- Dale Horihan, Jim Mueller, Peter Stone, Bill Tibbets, and Gary Whitenack installed a moisture barrier flashing over the deck joists and laid new decking.



This was difficult, strenuous, volunteer work over four days between October 6 and October 23. Much appreciation for these volunteers and all their hard work. Please take a moment to acknowledge this effort and thank these volunteer crew members.

Larry Lange & Jodi Bixby, Co-Chairs, Building. & Grounds Team





Trinity's Women of the ELCA will meet Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 9:30 am, and will include a short Bible study,

The group will have a craft table and baked goods table available with sale items during the Lutefisk & Meatball on December 6. Items will be located inside the main church entryway. If you would like to contribute or have questions, please contact Norma Thomas, coordinator.

## QUILTERS

Due to the enormously productive weeks of quilting in October, the group gathered one more week -- on November 4 -- to finish up their goal. Because of their continued dedication and hard work, they were able to complete a total of **205 quilts**, which have been gracing the backs of the pews all month. Of those, 50 were delivered to The Salvation Army, with

most of the remaining quilts boxed up and ready to be added to the truckloads heading to the Lutheran World Relief warehouse in the Twin Cities.

The group will take a well-deserved break and will be back at it in March 2026. Thankful for all their hard work, they are truly a blessing.



Most of the "regulars" pictured amongst their many beautiful creations. Back row (l to r): Audrey Armagost, Lorraine Carlson, Gerry Ruuska, Edna Albertson  
Middle row: Lindy Wilenius, Josie Krueger, Leigh Zika  
Front row: Vickie Lange, Sue Gustafson, Norma Thomas, Barb Schmidt

Deacon Kari blessing the quilts before they are packed up to be send on to where they are needed.



The group also chose a quilt constructed by long-time quilter, Lorraine Carlson, to be packed and sent along with greetings to former Trinity and current Bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Melissa Larson Stoller



*Thanks to all the helpers who made sure each and every quilt from the sanctuary was safely delivered to the Fellowship Hall. That's a lot of quilts to move!  
God's Work...Our Hands!*



## BIRTHDAYS

1	Sharry Hill		
2	Rick Aune		
4	Alex Hartway		
5	Judy Vaughn		
6	Natalia Cotton	22	Marcia Price
8	Jason Palm	23	Michaela Brunner
11	Katrina Chapman	25	Sandi Buchanan
14	Cork Conner		Betty Lindgren
15	Ron Kmett	28	Cindy Aune
17	Duane Gustafson	29	Lynn Conner
18	Nancy Reing		
19	Peggy Pearson	21	Michael & Lorene Enzmann
	Michael Enzmann		



## ANNIVERSARIES

*Lord, Hear Our Prayers for those  
needing healing and comfort:*

**PRAYERS  
and  
LOVE**

Mickey Maki, Ryann Lee, Cindy Aune, Kim Marwick, Mary Adriani, Mary Lindberg, Marilyn Jenkins, Gary & Patty Carlson, Roni Sarazine, Walter Putney, Art Dale, Dave O'Melia, Marla Kahn, Bruce & Judy Anderson.

Family & friends of Paula Swanson, as they continue to mourn her death on October 30, 2025. A celebration of life will be held next summer.

The Call Committee as they move forward in preparing to call a pastor.

Those in the community and elsewhere feeling confused, disrupted and unsure; all affected by the government shut-down; and for all those who contribute to the flow of information; those facing medical testing, challenges, and difficult situations; those serving in the armed forces; and all those seeking Jesus Christ in their lives.

## Suggested Items Include:

Cooking Oil	Gluten Free Foods
Condiments	Dishwashing
Canned Food w/ easy-pull tops	Detergent
Canned Meats	Formula
Coffee	Diapers
Spices	Hygiene Products
Sugar	Cough Drops
Dry Milk	Pain Relief Meds
Yeast	Wet Pet Food
Flour	Kitty Litter



## FREE PANTRY

Trinity is now offering a Free Pantry in the Corner of the main entryway of the church, near the temporary location of the Cook Library.

Availability is Tuesdays --Thursdays, 9 am-4 pm during library hours and whenever the church is open. To make other arrangements, please contact the church office.

*Please take what you need  
and leave what you can*

## DECEMBER SUNDAY COFFEE SERVERS

12/7/25	Sonja & Dale Foss Jane Kujala
12/14/25	Jody & Dale Bixby Limdsey Stachovich
12/21/25	Ivette & Danny Reing Nancy & Dan Reing
12/28/25	Trisha Aune Ashley Skorseth Kerrisa & Joel Anderson

## JANUARY SUNDAY COFFEE SERVERS

1/4/26	Lindy & Leo Wilenius Jennifer & Tom Kinler
1/11/26	Vickie & Larry Lange Lauren & Garrett Simensen
1/18/26	Marcia Price Diane & Mark Pascuzzi
1/25/26	Leigh Zika Lois & Bruce Garbish

## Community Carol Festival News

After a nine-year absence, the Cook Community Carol Festival, sponsored by the Cook Ministerial Association, will be held once again on the afternoon of Sunday, December 21, at 3:00 pm. It will be hosted at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Cook.

Vocalists are invited to join in the massed choir to tell the story of the Savior's birth in song. Four rehearsals are scheduled in hopes that singers will be able to attend at least two, if not all, rehearsals. Music can be obtained by calling or texting director Bailey Conger at 218 780 4337, or will be available at the first rehearsal. Marji Miller from St. Mary's will be the accompanist.

The rehearsal schedule is:

**Wednesday, December 3** at 7:00 pm Trinity Lutheran in Cook  
**Wednesday, December 10** at 7:00 pm Trinity  
**Wednesday, December 17** at 7:15 pm Trinity  
**Saturday, December 20** at 9:00 am St. Mary's

All area vocalists are invited and encouraged to participate in this inspiring Yuletide event.

*Contact Bailey Conger for more information.*





***There will be No Youth Activities December 24 & 31 -- Bible Quest & Confirmation Will resume January 7***



Lots of activities since Bible Quest began in October...stories, games, singing, experiments, making goodie bags for the Veterans Luncheon, designing Thanksgiving placemats for the Cook Care Center and learning about *Kindness*.



Thanks to all of wonderful volunteers who make every BQ Wednesday happen. Shout out to the older "alums" for lending a hand.



***Your kindness will inspire kindness in others. Think Kindly. Speak Kindly. Act Kindly.***



*Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday*

	<p>1</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>The Well 9:30 am Knit/Crochet 10:25</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 am</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Bible Quest 3:45 pm Confirmation 6 pm Grace Notes 5:15pm Choir 6:30 pm</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>6</p> <p><i>Lutefisk &amp; Meatball Dinner 4:00 – 6:00 pm</i></p>
<p>7</p> <p>Worship 9:30 am w/communion Council Mtg. 11am AA, Al-Anon 6:30pm</p>	<p>8</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>The Well 9:30 am Knit/Crochet 10:25</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 am</p>	<p>10</p> <p><i>WELCA 9:30 am Worship Team 10am Bible Quest 3:45 pm Grace Notes 5:15pm Advent Spiral Svc 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm</i></p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14</p> <p><i>All God's Children Worship 9:30am w/communion</i></p>	<p>15</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>The Well 9:30 am Knit/Crochet 10:25</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 am</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Bible Quest 3:45 pm Confirmation 6 pm Grace Notes 5:15pm Choir 6:30 pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p><i>Blue Christmas Worship Service 6:30 pm</i></p>	<p>19</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Worship 9:30 am w/communion <i>Cook Community Choral Festival 3:00 pm (St Mary's)</i> AA, Al-Anon 6:30pm</p>	<p>22</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p><i>Newsletter Deadline NOON</i></p>	<p>23</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 am</p>	<p>24</p> <p><i>Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship 5:00 pm</i></p>	<p>25</p> <p><i>Merry Christmas</i>  CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>26</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Worship 9:30 am w/communion AA, Al-Anon 6:30pm</p>	<p>29</p> <p>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Bible Study 9:30 am</p>	<p>31</p>	<p><i>December 2025</i></p> 		

Trinity Lutheran Church, ELCA  
P O Box 1196  
231 Second Street SE  
Cook, MN 55723



**DECEMBER  
2025**

## *Trinity Lutheran Church Information*

*Congregational Care:* Dn. Kari Olson  
*Music Director:* Bailey Conger  
*Financial Manager/Bookkeeper:* Sue Carstens  
*Secretary:* Beth Sprouls



### **Sunday Worship 9:30 am**

***(Holy Communion Most Sundays)***

Livestream Available on  
*Facebook & YouTube*

#### Office Hours

Mondays by appointment  
Tuesday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: 218-666-5965

Email: [info@trinitycook.org](mailto:info@trinitycook.org)

Website: [www.trinitycook.org](http://www.trinitycook.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TLC.Cook.MN](https://www.facebook.com/TLC.Cook.MN)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

(Trinity Lutheran Church of Cook)

***The Trinity Tribute*** newsletter is published monthly to keep members and friends informed of church programs and to report news about the Trinity Lutheran Church community.