

TRINITY TRIBUTE

January 2026
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
trinitycook.org info@trinitycook.org



January Star Word Prompt: What initial thoughts, impressions, and prayers do you have for your star word?

Christmas Carol Festival

After a nine year break, the Cook Community Ministerial presented a program on Sunday, December 21, at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Directed by Bailey Conger and accompanied by Marjie Miller, the choir included vocalists from most of the area churches. Musical numbers were also shared by the Trinity bell choir, Grace Notes, and a men's chorus. Offering was collected to support ministerial aid work.



Star Words



It is a prayer practice in churches all over the world to give people a star word on Epiphany Sunday. There are many reasons behind this tradition. First, we know that the magi followed a star, which ultimately led them to Jesus. Therefore, we too use all the resources we have available to us -- including creative prayer practices and intention words for the new year -- to move closer to Jesus.

Secondly, we trust that God uses multiple ways to guide us and speak to us. Star words offer a tool to actively seek and reflect on God's presence among us, both in the moment and in hindsight.

Finally, we know that the most common prayer practice for many involves speaking to God as opposed to silence or contemplation. However, this practice invites a new prayer rhythm of reflection and review that can be a powerful way to connect with God.

So on Epiphany Sunday (January 4), you will be invited to select a star word. Consider this a guiding word for the year ahead. We invite you to remember your star word often, seeking the ways God might be moving through the meanings and definitions the word contains.

"Adapted from liturgy by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org."

There will be Star Words available later for those who are unable to attend on Epiphany Sunday.



Annual Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner Raises Nearly \$4000 to benefit the Cook Area Food Shelf

Trinity's annual Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner was held on Saturday, December 6 and this year we served 282 meals (both in-house & pick-up). Those attending were served a traditional Scandinavian dinner of lutefisk, meatballs, lefse and more. We fed the community, and are honored to pass along the blessings and proceeds to the Cook Area Food Shelf so they can feed even more people. Thank you to the many, many volunteers who contributed their time, talents and donations to make it another successful event. Special thanks to Julie Horihan for coordinating all the details and workers.

(More pictures, pg. 6)

FREE COMMUNITY MEALS RESUME

January 22, 2026

Meals are served Drive-Thru or Eat-In
4:00 - 5:30 pm (or until gone)

January's menu: Spaghetti w/
Meat Sauce, Bread Stick & Cookie



It has been noted by some that the Trinity Lutheran livestream products are lacking in production value. The solution to that problem requires finding someone who is interested in correcting the problem by upgrading current procedures and equipment that are used, and in manning the streaming equipment during services. If anyone is interested in taking the lead in the livestreaming function, I would be more than happy to get that person started.

Contact the church office or me directly to get the ball rolling. All you need is a small amount of computer literacy and a desire to learn and contribute to the Audio/Visual ministry team. Young people are more than welcome.

Bless you all, Bill Conger

Happy New Year 2026!

We ushered in 2025 in grief with the loss of Pastor Erika. We comforted each other and wondered, “what’s next”?

During this time, the council was looking for an interim pastor to call to serve us in our time of need. Deacon Kari increased her hours; Pastor Denise agreed to serve us as a quarter-time Pastor. We formed a Transition Team to establish what our desires for the church are moving forward. From this committee we then formed the Call Committee, who have been working diligently to create our Ministry Site Profile to find our new Pastor!

This summer also brought about changes to the Trinity parsonage. Led by Susan and Peter Stone and Larry Lange, the main floor of the parsonage has been remodeled and looks beautiful!

In September we said “farewell” and “thank you” to Pastor Denise. We once again opened our doors Wednesdays after school for all the children at Bible Quest, as well as the many, many volunteers. Confirmation started up again.

November brought the Veteran’s Day Luncheon and of course, who could forget Trinity’s annual Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner to kick off the holidays?

Lastly, we were able to come together with other churches again after nine years for a Community Carol Festival, held at St. Mary’s in late December.

In the New Year, may we continue to serve our church as well as our community. My wish for you is that you have Peace, Joy and Love in the New Year. And may we end this year with hope.

In Peace,
Laura Aune, Council President



SPIRITUALITY -- ONE PILLAR OF HEALTH

New Year’s Greetings from the Mental Health and Wellness Team!
As promised last fall, we are looking at the Four Pillars of Health this year, starting with Spirituality.

To satisfy my curiosity, I googled “*the effects of religion/spirituality on mental and physical health*”. The response was lengthy, from the past and recent. One research paper studied and evaluated available research since the late 1800’s. An extremely brief summary of this paper: People involved in supportive religious or spiritual practices tend to demonstrate better mental health (as less anxiety, depression, addictions as examples) and better physical health (decreased rates of high blood pressure, cardiac illness, cancer). The one area that is not improved is maintaining a recommended body weight! The study was found on the National Institute of Health web site and titled “*Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications*” by Harold G. Koenig.

What a wonderful example of how the Four Pillars of Health are intertwined. We are involved in spiritual practices as an expression of how and why we are created. And our Creator cares for us in totality.

Recognize that you already are doing spiritual work. Consider trying some new practices. There will be more information coming in the next two months.

WORSHIP SERVICES Opportunity for praise of God in word and song, recognition of our imperfections and forgiveness, hearing the word of God, learning, prayer for our needs and thanksgiving, and Belonging in a supportive group.

BIBLE STUDY Small group opportunity to study, learn and discuss.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS Read God’s word, reflect, and pray.

MEDITATE Reflect, ponder, contemplate in mind or body.

ACTS OF SERVICE Support neighbors, the congregation, the community.



Dear Friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.

3 John 1:2 (NLV)

Dn. Kari Olson 218-290-5984
Lauren Simensen 610-507-0051
Vickie Lange 507-412-1117
Kathy Leppert 218-232-7923

Trinity Lutheran Church - Giving in Grace - Financial Report

General Fund

Budget Receipts \$24,937.20
 Budget Expenditures \$17,578.67
 Checkbook Balance \$8,827.73

11/30/2025

2025 Budget = \$287,207.99

Offerings Needed

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

<u>Income</u>	<u>November receipts</u>	<u>Monthly Anticipated Budget</u>	<u>YTD Received</u>	<u>Anticipated YTD Budget</u>
Envelope Offering	\$ 24,572.20		\$ 224,587.74	
Loose Offering	\$ 290.00		\$ 12,700.02	
Church usage	\$ 75.00		\$ 2,135.00	
Total Regular Income	\$ 24,937.20	23,934.17 **	\$ 239,422.76	\$ 263,275.87

<u>Mission Support</u>	<u>November paid</u>		<u>YTD Paid</u>	
NE Synod	\$ 635.00	\$ 635.00	\$ 6,981.00	\$ 6,985.00
VLM	\$ 81.00	\$ 81.00	\$ 891.00	\$ 891.00
Total Mission Support	\$ 716.00	\$ 716.00	\$ 7,872.00	\$ 7,876.00

<u>Expenses</u>				
Education	\$ 926.54	\$ 350.01	\$ 3,370.24	\$ 3,850.11
Wellness Ministry		\$ 12.50		\$ 137.50
Stewardship	\$ 86.50	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,130.18	\$ 458.37
Mental Health & Wellness		\$ 41.67		\$ 1,100.00
Social Outreach Ministry		\$ 166.67	\$ 2,035.72	\$ 1,833.37
Worship	\$ 950.21	\$ 827.60	\$ 9,677.56	\$ 9,103.60
Church Operations	\$ 7,164.24	\$ 8,711.88	\$ 101,642.59	\$ 95,830.68
Pastoral Salary & Bene		\$ 7,090.53	\$ 12,255.08	\$ 77,995.83
Congreg Care Minister Sal & Bene	\$ 7,580.38	\$ 5,892.30	\$ 80,713.95	\$ 64,815.30
Misc	\$ 154.80	\$ 25.00	\$ 2,061.57	\$ 275.00
Total Expenses	\$ 17,578.67	\$ 23,934.16	\$ 220,758.89	\$ 263,275.76

<u>November</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Nov 2	88
9-Nov	65
16-Nov	79
23-Nov	70
30-Nov	87

Receipts for the month ABOVE budget by \$1,003.03. Receipts, are BELOW budget for the year \$23853.11.
 Expenses are BELOW budget for the month by \$6,355.50. Expenses are BELOW budget for the year 42,516.98.

Memorials received this month in memory of:
 Ivy Reinholtzen

Pat Lindberg
 Jimmy Laine
 Paula Swanson

Given by:
 Lorraine Carlson, Mike & Lorene Enzmann, Duane & Sue Gustafson,
 Larry & Vicki Lange, Leo & Lindy Wilenus, Ron & Mickey Maki,
 Judy Nelson, Norma Thomas
 Bill & Bailey Conger
 Tom & Marla Kahn
 Leo & Lindy Wilenius

VancoMobile link



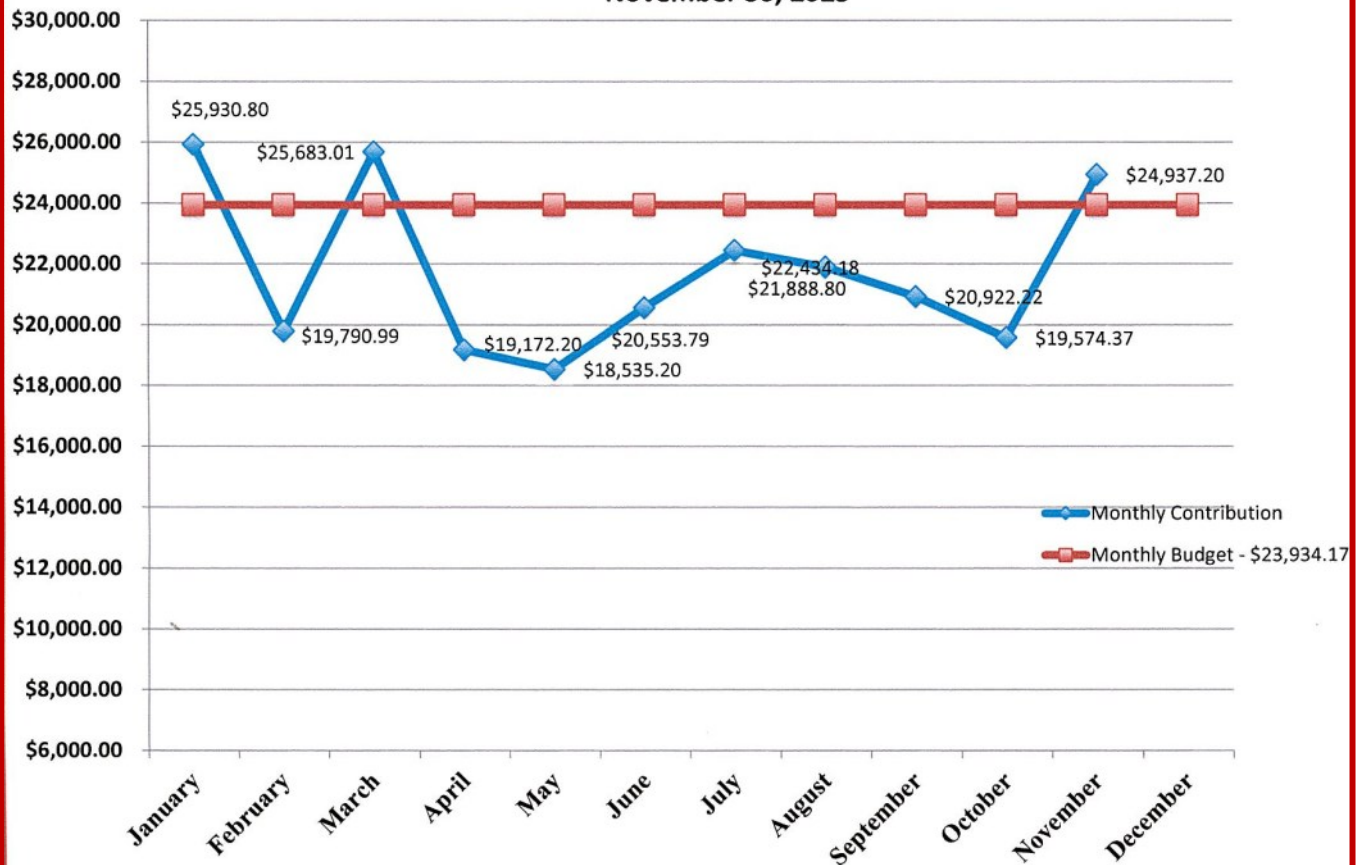
GIFTS	Received	Submitted-YTD
Noisy Offering	\$232.41	\$1,765.47
Cook Food Shelf		
Social Outreach Ministry		\$2,893.05
Pastor's Discretionary Fund		
Salvation Army		
Lenten Offerings		\$1,076.00
Mental Health and Wellness		\$2,695.00
Cook Lions Club-flood relief		
Camperships		\$2,005.00

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.

Submitted by Sue Carstens, Bkkp

Giving in Grace

2025 General Fund Offerings November 30, 2025



*Lots of Christmas happenings --
t's that time of year. Whew!*



*All God's Children Christmas
Program December 14, with
Bible Quest & Trinity Youth.*



Grace Notes, Trinity's bell choir, treated residents, visitors and staff at the Cook Care Center to a short holiday music program on the afternoon of Sunday, December 21. It is always fun to share some Christmas cheer.

Pictured above (*l to r*): Sue Carstens, Leigh Zika, Diane Pascuzzi, Julie Horihan, Beth Sprouls, Bruce Garbisch, Bailey Conger, Laura Aune, Marge Rinne, and Lindy Wilenius. Some of the musicians have been a part of Grace Notes since from the beginning in the late 1980s.



Duane & Sue Gustafson, a couple of the originals.

*The piece of Cod
that passeth all understanding*

Thanks to ALL the SUPER volunteers who make the annual Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner such a success! You make it all possible to share our ministries and celebrate the season with the community. From start to finish, you make it all worthwhile. Enjoy just a few of them in action.



Mike & Lorene Enzmann selling tickets at the door.

*See You All
Next Year!*



Bakers Bailey Conger & Lizzie Pretti



Roger Lindbeck & Garrett Simensen soaking, rinsing, and prepping the fish in a heated garage.



Greeters Arlene Jershe & Jim Aune welcoming all.



Vickie Lupica & Barb Brenna prepping utensils.



It takes teamwork to get to the finish line...

Bob Walker carving...

Leigh Zika, Steve Maki & Nicole Hed serving the meal to the many.



The chefs in the kitchen, slaving over a hot stove.



Nick & Margaret Nicklow behind the scene as part of the kitchen crew.



Even the youth were part of the crew. Thanks Libby, Lauen, Kate & Vera!



Elizabeth Storm & Crystal Whitney, along with many others helping fill those plates for our guests.



Barb Brenna, Kathy Leppert, Judy McGlynn, Barb Schmidt serving up the goodies.



Laure Maki, Susan Stone, and Peter Stone doing their parts for the cause...behind the scenes.



And just a small portion of the lutefisk lovers: Sanna Reinholtzen, Bill Conger, Ray Reinholtzen, and some of the Simensen family.



Celebrate your special day!

BIRTHDAYS

3 Brian Anderson
Lorraine Bowman
Bob Zika
4 Sue Aune
5 Lois Garbisch
Diane Pascuzzi
6 Charles Bergman
Glen Weum
8 Judy Anderson

ANNIVERSARIES

14 Bill & Karen Woods
20 Philip & Lisa Simensen
17 Amanda Pascuzzi
23 Diane Cin
Jenifer Moberg
Jocelyn Pascuzzi
26 Dale Horihan
Kim Marwick
30 Lisha Pearson



Trinity's *Women of the ELCA* will meet on
Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 9:30 am,
and will include a short Bible study,

On Friday, December 19, thirty-four (34) boxes of completed quilts (approx. 150) were loaded into an enclosed trailer, destined for the Lutheran World Relief warehouse in St. Paul. The trailer was provided by Deb and Randy Bradt, who then transported the boxes to the warehouse. Assisting in the load up were Norma Thomas, Glen Aune, Dale Bixby, and Bruce Garbisch.

A BIG THANK YOU to all who sewed, tied boxed and transported the quilts. Many men, women and children around the world will be comforted by your generosity.

God's Work -- Our Hands

Thanks to all who have prepared, served or shared coffee and goodies Sunday mornings.

Please be sure to check the table in the Fellowship Hall for monthly lists and updates.

For more information or to sign up, please call or text:

Leigh Zika (218-780-1769) or
Lindy Wilenius (218-780-4644)

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 Garbisch

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



Rev. Ellen Taube, Mickey Maki, Ryann Lee,
Cindy Aune, Kim Marwick, Mary Adriani, Mary Lind-
berg, Marilyn Jenkins, Gary & Patty Carlson, Roni Sara-
zine, Walter Putney, Art Dale, Dave O'Melia, Marla
Kahn, Bruce & Judy Anderson.

Arline Antus & family as they continue to mourn the
death of Greg on December 19, 2025.

The Call Committee as they continue to move forward in
preparation 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 in-
formation; those facing medical testing, challenges, and
difficult situations; those serving in the armed forces; and
all those seeking Jesus Christ in their lives.

FREE PANTRY

Trinity's Free Pantry is located in the corner of the main
entryway of the church, at the far end of the coat closets.

Availability is Tuesdays --Thursdays, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
and whenever the church is open. To make other arrange-
ments, please contact the church office. Please share with
others who may benefit.

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

Fall Prevention -- Maximizing Your Safety

Back by popular demand, Physical Therapist Deb Bradt
will again provide a presentation on preventing falls.
By using written material, demonstrations, her experience,
and especially her humor, she gives tips and tricks to help
us stay safe in our homes and when out and about.

Mark your calendars for *Wednesday,*
January 28 at 10 am.

Invite your family, friends & neighbors to
join us. This opportunity is open to all in
the community. Deb (Thomas) Bradt, Norma Thomas



Scripture Readings **January 2026**



January 4 *Epiphany*

Matthew 2:1-12, 16-18

January 18

2nd Sunday After Epiphany

Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 40:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

January 11

Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 3:13-17

January 25

3rd Sunday After Epiphany

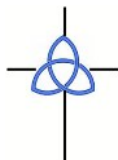
Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 27:1, 4-9
1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 4:12-23

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

January 2026

				1  CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	2 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	3 AA Open Book Mtg 5:00 pm
4 Epiphany Worship 9:30 am w/ communion Star Word Sunday AA, Al-Anon 6:30pm	5 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED The Well 9:30 am Knit/Crochet 11 am	6 Bible Study 9:30 am	7 Bible Quest 3:45 pm Confirmation 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm	8 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	9 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	10
11 Baptism of Our Lord Worship 9:30 am w/ communion AA, Al-Anon 6:30pm	12 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED The Well 9:30 am Knit/Crochet 11 am	13 Bible Study 9:30 am Library Board Mtg 6:00 pm	14 WELCA 9:30 am Worship Team 10am Bible Quest 3:45 pm Confirmation 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm	15 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	16 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	17  Building an Inclusive Church Training (Herrmantown)
18 Worship 9:30 am w/ communion Council Mtg & Retreat 11:00 am AA, Al-Anon 6:30pm	19 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED The Well 9:30 am Knit/Crochet 11 am	20 Bible Study 9:30 am	21 Bible Quest 3:45 pm Confirmation 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm	22  Community Meal 4:00 - 5:30 pm	23 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	24
25 Worship 9:30 am w/ communion AA, Al-Anon 6:30pm	26 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED The Well 9:30 am Knit/Crochet 11 am	27 Bible Study 9:30 am NEWSLETTER DEADLINE NOON	28 Fall Prevention w/ Deb Bradt 10 am Bible Quest 3:45 pm Confirmation 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm	29 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	30 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	31 

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



TRINITY
TRIBUTE



JANUARY
2026

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

Website: www.trinitycook.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/TLC.Cook.MN
YouTube: 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.