



# Trinity Trumpet

January, 2025

## The Pastor's Letter

Dear Trinity,

What is a Chrismon

This year I used the children's sermons to unpack some of the symbolism of Advent. When I got to the Chrismons, I ended up so far down the rabbit hole that I decided to write it up as a newsletter article. If you saw the children's sermon on the Third Sunday in Advent, this is the more detailed version of that.

The Chrismon Tree was invented by Frances Kipps Spencer in 1957. Mrs. Spencer was a member of Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia. Ascension is still an active ELCA congregation today. Mrs. Spencer traces the origin of the tree to Christmas 1940, when the Rev. George Pass came by the Spencer home to wish them a Merry Christmas. When he saw the discarded gift wrap, he made the unusual request of asking if he could take it. He explained that the little church he served couldn't afford to buy decorations for their Christmas tree, and when he saw the pretty paper and bows, it inspired him that he could take those items and make decorations himself. The Spencers were so moved by Rev. Pass's devotion that they started making their own Christmas ornaments to decorate their family tree. She wrote, "Because of the minister's inspiration, I became a semi-professional at creating new and unusual Christmas trees."

For years the Spencer family tradition of crafting their own ornaments remained simply a family tradition. All that changed in 1956 when, for whatever reason, Mrs. Spencer first noticed, really noticed the Christmas tree in the sanctuary at her church. She'd seen trees in churches before, but had always shrugged them off as secular, not really belonging in worship. But that year, wrote Spencer, "I saw, and appreciated, the people behind the tree. That tree made me aware of those members who cared

enough to do what they could; I again recognized the simple and profound dedication of being willing to give. And the one who was a professional was giving nothing. Because I was not willing to participate, the congregation was not making its full offering.”

And so, that spring, Mrs. Spencer volunteered to decorate the tree in the church for Christmas. She decided to create ornaments that would tell the story of Jesus through symbols. As she was learning more about Christian symbols, she stumbled across the word “chrismon.” Chrismon is the combination of two words, Chris from Christ and mon from monogram. Chris-mon, Christ monogram, refers to the Greek letters Chi ( $\chi$ ) and Rho ( $\rho$ ), which are the first letters in the Greek spelling of Christ ( $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ ). The first Chrismons were just plays on the basic  $\chi\rho$  design. From there, she expanded and got more complicated, bringing in different themes and images. Because, said Mrs. Spencer, “There is always something new to say about God, always a better way to say it. Through the ages the church has found varied ways of telling the Good News, and the living church of today will find still other ways of making God’s love more meaningful and apparent to humanity.”

The most important part of the Chrismon tree tradition for Mrs. Spencer was that people be able to interpret and understand the symbols, to learn and tell the story of Jesus from the tree. She felt that any tree displayed in public should have explanations of all the symbols available for people to learn and study. Here are a few of the Chrismons from our tree and the explanations of them.



#### **Triangle and Trinitarian**

Both are symbols of the Trinity



#### **Tau Cross With Snake**

The Tau Cross, the oldest form of the Cross, reveals that similar to Moses' lifting of a bronze serpent to save Israel, Christ saved humanity after being raised on a cross.



### **Jerusalem Cross or Crusaders Cross**

*The Four Evangelists:* The four smaller crosses represent the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

*The spread of Christianity:* The four smaller crosses represent the spread of Christianity to the four corners of the Earth.

*The five wounds of Christ:* The five crosses represent the five wounds of Christ, with the four smaller crosses representing the wounds of his hands and feet, and the large cross representing the wound to his heart.



### **Fish**

The first letter of each Greek word for “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, savior” spell the Greek word for “fish”. The Ichthys symbol was used by the early Christians as a secret sign to designate themselves as believers in Jesus.



### **Chi Rho**

Two Greek letters which are the first letters in the Greek word for Christ.



### **Jesus Christ Victor**

IC (iota and sigma) are the first and last letters in the Greek word for Jesus. XC (chi and sigma) are the first and last letters in the Greek word for Christ. NIKA (nu, iota, kappa, alpha) is the Greek word for victor. Jesus is the Victor!



### **Triquetra (Triangle)**

The three equal arcs express eternity in its continuous form and indivisibility in its interweaving. It symbolizes the One God who showed Himself to humanity in three separate and distinct persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



### **Five-Pointed Star and Rose**

The symbolism of the rose is derived from Isaiah’s prophecy of Zion’s glory.

“The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” It has come to symbolize the Messiah. It is also used for Mary. The combination of the rose and the five-point star is the two natures of Christ: He is true God and He is true Man.

Peace, Pastor Kjersten

### **DECEMBER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

At the Congregational Meeting held on December 8, the 2025 Budget was accepted. Also, Linda Hermann and John Kolodieziyck were elected to fill current vacancies. Thank you John & Linda for your willingness to serve on the Council.



### **CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING**

**SAVE THE DATE:** At their December meeting, the Council set March 2, 2025, as the date for the Annual Meeting. Watch for more information in the February Trumpet!

## **January Happenings at Trinity**

### **ADVENT BAGS**

On Tuesday, January 7, the Advent Bags will be delivered to the Franklin Food Pantry. **THANK YOU** to everyone who took a bag and returned it filled with food and necessities.



## ROAD RUNNERS

On **January 16 Road Runners** will meet at **Bob Evans** on Beckley at **11:30**. All are welcome so come, bring a friend and enjoy our first lunch of 2025.

Wayne



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 1

On Sunday, December 1, we had a double baptism!! Bishop Satterlee presided over the baptism of Levi Lehman and Nik Sullivan. It was a joyful service welcoming Levi and Nik into the family of God. As is our custom, we celebrated with cake!





## CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 2

On Sunday, December 8, in addition to the brief congregational meeting, our annual cookie exchange was held during coffee hour. We also made cards for the families we adopted from Santa's Helper and for our shut in. Our artists produced some beautiful cards!!



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 3

Friday, December 13, we met at The Oaks and The Legacy to share our musical talents by caroling for the residents. It's truly a joy to watch them sing along when they hear the familiar carols. Afterwards, we gathered at the Eversons for a light meal and a little ornament making by one of our "resident artists".



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 4

On Sunday, December 15, four families picked up gifts and the makings for a Christmas meal. A big THANK YOU to everyone who selected a name from the tree and provided a wrapped gift for a family member. A \$250 grant from Thrivent covered the cost of most of the groceries. It's always a fun Sunday when we get to load the Christmas goodies into their cars.



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 5

On Thursday, December 19, Road Runners gathered in the evening at Clara's to share fellowship, a festive meal and an opportunity to view the Festival of Lights in downtown Battle Creek.



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 6

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Advent, Pastor Kjersten took the opportunity to discuss the origin and meaning of the Chrismons that adorn our tree during Advent and the Christmas season during the Childrens Sermon. See her Pastor's Letter for more information.



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 7



We celebrated the birthday of Jesus a little early on Sunday, December 22, with cake (of course)!

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 8

A beautiful Christmas Eve Service was held to celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus. What a treat to have little people at our service as a reminder that Baby Jesus entered this world as a babe in a manger.





## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH ... PART 8

Our annual Pop-Up Christmas Pageant was held on Sunday, December 29. The story of Zechariah, Elizabeth, the Angel Gabriel, Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus was retold by Pastor to a reluctant lobster named Larry who was not sure it was an exciting tale to be shared. As always, it was a fun and unique way to tell the stories of the season. A big thank you to Pastor Kjersten for writing the pageant and our willing congregational members who participated in the presentation.



## STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Thanks to everyone for a very successful stewardship campaign. We truly are a welcoming, joyful and giving church.

Total Pledged: \$67,486.00

Partners in Christ Finance Committee



## Chalking the Doors for Epiphany 2025

The tradition of blessing houses by chalking the door is part of Epiphany celebrations around the world. The C + M + B stands for the traditional names of the three wise men along with the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat*. “May Christ bless the house.” Trinity has had the practice of blessing our church home on Epiphany for several years now. And Pastor Kjersten will once again be taking house blessing on the road. In January, she is hoping to visit as many houses as she can to bless and chalk your home. House blessing is a great pandemic activity, as it takes place outside. Call or email Pastor Kjersten ([pastor@tlcbattlecreek.org](mailto:pastor@tlcbattlecreek.org)) to let her know if you would like your house blessed and when.

Note: Sorry Arizona and Florida Trinitarians, as much as Pastor Kjersten would LOVE to bless your home, this is a Michigan only offer. The transportation budget doesn't account for cross-state travel.

## Wednesday Bible Chats



If your New Year's Resolution included growing in your faith, Wednesday Bible Chats are a great place to start. Each week we deep dive into the Gospel text for the coming week to see how it speaks in our lives. Pastor Kjersten records a chat on Facebook Live on Tuesdays at 1pm. On Wednesdays at 10:30am and 5:30pm we cover the same information, but in an interactive format. All are invited.

## ELCA Human Sexuality Social Statement Revisions

The 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly called for two reconsiderations of specific sections of the 2009 social statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust. As a first step in this process, a task force from across the ELCA has released draft edits to the social statement, which address possible word changes without changing the substantive meaning of the statement. Your feedback is needed as the church considers the draft edits.

Resources, including a survey, FAQs and a discussion guide, are available at [ELCA.org/reconsiderations](https://elca.org/reconsiderations). Provide feedback by January 31, 2025, using this online survey or emailing [Reconsiderations@elca.org](mailto:Reconsiderations@elca.org).

## Educational Opportunities through the Synod “Jesus and the Little Children”! with The Rev. Dr. Amy Lindeman Allen

Join The Rev. Dr. Amy Lindeman Allen, Indiana Christian Church Associate Professor of New Testament at Christian Theological Seminary (Disciples of Christ) in Indianapolis, Indiana, for a six-week course titled, “Jesus and the Little Children”!

Based on Dr. Allen’s book, *The Gifts They Bring: How Children in the Gospels Can Shape Inclusive Ministry* (WJK, 2023), sessions will include presentations on the following topics:

- The Gift of Participation: Little Children as Proprietors of the Realm of God
- The Gift of Proclamation: The Bethlehem Shepherds
- The Gift of Advocacy: James and John, Fisherfolk
- The Gift of Listening: Mary at the Feet of Jesus
- The Gift of Sharing: The Child with the Fish and Loaves
- The Gift of Partnership: A Son and His Mother at Nain

The class will meet on six consecutive Tuesday evenings: January 14, 21, 28; February 4, 11, 18, 2025 from 7:00 – 8:15pm ET via Zoom. This course is open to all adults, both laypeople and rostered ministers, and is free of charge. Registration is required and will close on **January 6, 2025**. Sessions will be recorded and available to those registered for one week. Register at the synod website: <https://www.mittensynod.org/events/adult-theological-education/>.



### IS IT COLD, FLU, OR COVID?

COVID-19, influenza, and the common cold are all respiratory illnesses that are contagious and have many similar symptoms. This chart lists the most common signs of each illness, but yours may vary.  
**NOTE:** Go to [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for tips on preventing and treating these illnesses, or talk to your healthcare professional.

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU	COVID-19
Muscle or body aches	Mild	Yes	Yes
Cough	Mild	Yes	Yes
Chills	Rare	Yes	Yes
Shortness of breath	No	No	Yes
Fatigue or weakness	Sometimes	Yes	Yes
Fever	Rare	Yes	Yes
Headache	Rare	Yes	Yes
Sneezing	Yes	Sometimes	No
Sore throat	Yes	Sometimes	Yes
Stuffy or runny nose	Yes	Sometimes	Yes
New loss of taste or smell	No	Sometimes	Yes
Nausea or vomiting	No	Sometimes*	Yes
Diarrhea	No	Sometimes*	Yes

\* More frequent in children.

**COVID-19** Seek emergency medical care for the following:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

If someone is showing any of these signs, call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility. Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

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OCEAN BEACH HOSPITAL  
& Medical Clinics



## RECIPE CORNER

### Butter Pecan Pretzel Bars

(We had a chance to taste these at the Cookie Exchange.)

#### Ingredients:

- 1 roll (16.5 oz) Pillsbury refrigerated chocolate chip cookies
- $\frac{3}{4}$  C chopped toasted pecans
- 1 bag (11 oz) caramels, unwrapped
- 2 Tbsp milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp kosher (coarse) salt

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a medium bowl, crumble cookie dough; stir or knead in 12 C of the pecans until well mixed. Press evenly in an ungreased 9-inch square pan
3. Bake 18 to 22 minutes or until they're a deep golden brown. Cool 30 minutes.
4. In medium microwavable bowl, microwave caramels and milk uncovered on High 2 to 3 minutes, stirring every 60 seconds, until melted and smooth. Pour evenly over the cooled bar cookies. Sprinkle with pretzels and remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  C pecans, pressing slightly into caramel. Sprinkle with salt. Cool about 1 hour, 30 minutes or until caramel is set. For bars, cut into
5. 4 rows by 4 rows. Store covered in refrigerator.

#### **CORRECTION FROM LAST MONTH'S RIBBON JELLO**

**RECIPE:** It's  $\frac{1}{4}$  C Sour Cream instead of  $\frac{1}{2}$  C. added to the  $\frac{1}{2}$  C of Jello. Sorry.



## January Prayer Partners

We are praying weekly for Lutheran Congregations in our Synod. Our prayer partners for January are:



- January 5** – Trinity Lutheran Church, Battle Creek, Rev. Kjersten Sullivan  
**January 12** – Messiah Lutheran Church, Bay City, Rev Timothy Jahn  
**January 19** – Immanuel Lutheran Church, Big Rapids, Supply Pastors  
**January 26** – St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Battle Creek, Rev. Diane Sponheim

## Worship Volunteers & Readings for December

### Lay Assistants, Sound Board

**January 5** – LA: Jeff Andert  
Sound: Doug Martens  
Streaming: Quenten Valenzuela

**January 12** – LA: Chase Lehman  
Sound: Staff  
Streaming: Travis Sullivan

**January 19** – LA: Tresa Garver  
Sound: Ellis Cutler  
Streaming: Quenten Valenzuela

**January 26** – LA: Doug Martens  
Sound: Staff  
Streaming: Travis Sullivan

### Readings

Jeremiah 31: 7 – 14  
Psalm 147: 12 – 20  
Ephesians 1: 3 – 14  
John 1: 1 – 18

Isaiah 43: 1 – 7  
Psalm 29  
Acts: 8: 14 – 17  
Luke: 3: 15 – 17, 21 – 22

Isaiah 62: 1 – 5  
We feast on the abundance your house, O Lord (Ps. 36:8)  
1 Corinthians 12: 1 – 11  
John 2: 1 – 11

Nehemiah 8: 1 – 3, 5 – 6, 8 – 10  
Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 31a  
Luke 4: 14 – 21

# January Birthdays & Anniversaries

## Birthdays

**1/19** – Kathleen Millard  
**1/29** – Travis Sullivan  
**1/30** – Dick Everson  
**1/31** – Linda Herman

## Anniversaries



## Prayer Requests

### COMMUNITY

Sharon Cutler  
Pam Ellison-Kring  
Linda Hermann  
Tish Gancer

### IN OUR HEARTS/ON OUR MINDS

Jim Hines (Maxine's Nephew)  
Bob Kamphuis



## **OTHER WAYS TO CONNECT WITH TRINITY**

Trinity's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/trinity.church.581>

"Like" the Trinity Facebook page to follow events and activities.

### **WEBSITE**

Trinity website: <http://www.tlcbattlecreek.org>

Check out the **What's New** tab to see the latest events going on at Trinity. You can also find transcripts of Pastor Kjersten's sermons under the **Worship** tab.

### **TRUMPET**

To update your newsletter email/mail preferences, contact Pastor Kjersten at [pastor@tlcbattlecreek.org](mailto:pastor@tlcbattlecreek.org) or 963-5356. Let us know if you would like to be added our quarterly mailing list to receive a color brochure of what's new at Trinity.

### **ONLINE GIVING**

Trinity now has online giving. Simply go to Trinity's website, <http://www.tlcbattlecreek.org> and click on the yellow button that says "Donate" on the bottom left corner of the page. Or go to Trinity's Facebook page and click on the blue button that says "Donate" on the right side of the page.

# JAN2025

SUN      MON      TUE      WED      THU      FRI      SAT

			<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>05</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour	8:30am-4pm Woman's Co-Op Monday Mixer	<b>12:30, Pantry</b> 1:00 Bible Chat FaceBook Live	10:30 & 5:30 Bible Chat 6:45 Choir			
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour <b>Epiphany</b>	8:30am-4pm Woman's Co-Op Monday Mixer	1:00 Bible Chat FaceBook Live	10:30 & 5:30 Bible Chat 6:45 Choir	<b>11:30 Road Runners @ Bob Evans</b>	<b>Pastor Gone through the 21<sup>st</sup>..</b>	
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour  <b>Pastor Gone</b>	8:30am-4pm Woman's Co-Op Monday Mixer	1:00 Bible Chat FaceBook Live	10:30 & 5:30 Bible Chat 6:45 Choir			
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour	8:30am-4pm Woman's Co-Op Monday Mixer		10:30 & 5:30 Bible Chat 6:45 Choir			



