

HTLC

December 2024 Newsletter

Holy Tender Loving Care



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Christmas represents an in-breaking of the Kingdom of God into the world.

I say it “re-presents” rather than “remembers” because what Christmas means—what God did at Christmas—was not a one-and-done event. Rather Christmas started a new thing, where God took on flesh and dwelt among His people as promised. In Jesus we see Emmanuel: “God who is with us.” But when we celebrate Christmas, it is as a people who know the whole story of Jesus. That God chose to become one of us, and in a wonderful mystery remains with us “even to the end of the age.” And while now we recognize Him among us through faith, we confess that He will come again as victorious Lord of all.

So, at Christmas we consider the Lord's three-fold coming (the word "Advent," our season of preparation for Christmas, means "arrival" in Latin). He came to us in Bethlehem; He comes to us today, in the Word and Sacraments and in the "least of these" our brothers and sisters; And he will come again at the end of the world to make all things new.

These three things are related. And recognizing how they're related is something that helps us live our lives abundantly. Each of these arrivals of Jesus into the world is something unexpected. Despite all the prophecies and forewarning, the Bible tells us that Jesus "came to his own, but his own did not recognize him." This doesn't just refer to the wise men who expected to find the King born in a palace instead of a stable, but it refers to the whole human race. The world was not expecting this kind of Savior. Instead, we expected (and often still want) one made in our own image. Likewise, Jesus tells his disciples something unexpected where to find him after his ascension. He tells us to receive him in the Word and in the Sacraments, and to serve him by serving the needy and our neighbor.

We spend so much time trying to worship God in our own way, according to our preferences, but God sends us flesh and blood humans and says that he will meet us in those encounters—often encounters that make us uncomfortable and force us to grow. And lastly Jesus says that his return at the end of time will be unexpected "like a thief in the night." He tells us that no one knows the hour of his return. This is said not to scare us or make us wonder, but to encourage us to live the kind of lives that don't need to scramble to prepare. We are to be always ready for our judgment and our end, whether our end comes unexpectedly or the whole world ends unexpectedly. We should always have confidence in God's goodness and a clean conscience. "Ready to go."

We don't merely commemorate something that happened a long time ago, as if Jesus came once and has left us on our own. No! He is with us always, even to the end of time, he promises. And this is important because if we believe that Jesus IS with us, even now, then we should be living different lives. We don't act as if Jesus was once with us and isn't now. Instead, we believe that we are filled with his life and should strive to live like him. Loving all people, serving one another, glorifying God the Father with our every action.

We don't act as if Jesus has left us puzzling how to serve him. Instead, we recognize that he has given us to each other and told us to love our neighbor and our enemy and the stranger as if they were the Lord himself. This is hard at times but in loving all people, we not only fulfill the Lord's command, but learn something about ourselves. After all, as Dorothy Day put it paraphrasing the Apostle John, "I only really love God as much as I love the person whom I love the least."

And lastly, we don't act as if Jesus has promised us a Kingdom that is somewhere far away and in a distant future. Instead, we recognize that Jesus is already King, and that his Kingdom has already begun. That all the things described above are part of living in God's Kingdom and as citizens of God's Kingdom already now. Someday, when Jesus returns, everyone will experience this way of living. But already now, we are supposed to be living as citizens of the Kingdom of God. That means that we don't put our trust in earthly rulers to establish God's Kingdom on earth. We don't elect politicians to enforce what we think is God's will through coercion. But we live in a Kingdom of the

heart, where we love our enemies until they become our siblings and where we care less for our rights and exercising our privileges and more about using what we have to imitate Jesus and persuade people of his goodness with lives of humility and holiness.

God is in our midst. He is now and will be forever. Let us encourage one another to live lives convinced that Jesus is strengthening us, Jesus is challenging us, Jesus is showing us what truly matters, and that Jesus is with us in our joys and in our sorrows, making all things new.

Peace and Joy,

Pastor Tom



Thank you to all who helped on the Thanksgiving dinner



Pastoral Care

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
7 Green St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1334
Office Phone-860-684-7571
Church – htlc-church@att.net
Website – htlcstafford.org
Pastor Tom (860-806-2440)
Email t.s.drobena@gmail.com
Rev. Dr. Thomas Drobena

Members of the Council are:

Rev. Thomas S. Drobena
President – Walter Kovaciny
Vice-President – Michael Marvonek
Treasurer – Sheila Welch
Secretary – Amelia Hinchliffe
Leonard Lichanec
Patricia Marvonek
(Non-Council position)
Financial Secretary – Leigh Maxa

Service Teams

† Worship & Music Team: Leigh Maxa
† Hospitality Committee: Amelia Hinchliffe and Jennifer Welch
† Property Team: Michael Marvonek, Adam Tremblay and Michael Welch
† Learning & Youth Group Team:
Rev. Thomas Drobena, Cathy & Leonard Lichanec

Shut-in Members of Holy Trinity

Mrs. Paul Mandak
116 Crystal Lake Rd.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3343
Mrs. Olga Panciera
10 Franklin Woods Dr.
Somers, CT 06071
Mrs. Pauline Valery
24 Holburn Ave.
Cranston, RI 02910

Electronic Giving

For those who are not able to attend in person regularly, we have an online giving page that can be used for recurring giving or for one-time Donations. The cost of the service is 2.75% for using a credit card and only 1% for direct debit.

You will have the option to add the fee to your donation.

We would much prefer to see you in person.

We have social hour after church on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Join us for fellowship.

To donate copy this link <https://secure.myvanco.com/YJ24>

The website is very easy to navigate.

December Birthdays

05 – Rev. Dr. Thomas S. Drobena
08 – Daniel Lichanec
09 – Jennifer Welch
20 – Melissa Fisher

Anniversaries

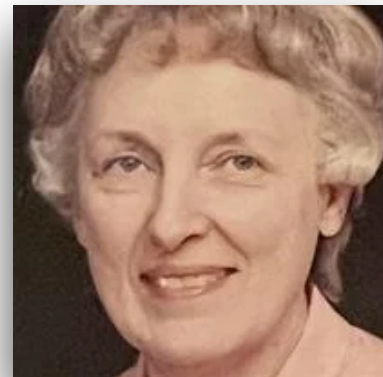
10 – Richard & Nan Hayden

Christmas Offering for Pastor

For the members that wish to use the Christmas Offering for Pastor Envelope found in the offering box, please use cash or a check written to Rev. Dr. Thomas S. Drobena. The envelope isn't opened by the Tellers. The envelope is given directly to Pastor. Thanks.

Obituary

Barbara P. Bulick passed away on Monday, November 18, 2024. She was a long-time, active member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.



Activities

Please reference the December 2024 calendar to learn everything that is scheduled during the month. Hopefully everyone will take part in the activities planned.

December Service Schedule

These readings are from **Series C** and can be found in the front of the ELCA hymnal

Tellers

Worship Assistant

Reader

December 1 – First Sunday in Advent – Blue

Amelia Hinchliffe

Leigh Maxa

The Lichanec Family

Walter Kovaciny

Readings: Jeremiah 33: 14-16

Hymns:

#246 Opening

Psalm 25: 1-10

#257 Gospel (vs 1&2)

1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13

#436 Hymn of Day

Luke 21: 25-36

#715 Communion

#244 Closing

December 8 – Second Sunday in Advent – Blue

Jennifer Welch

Sheila Welch

The Hinchliffe Family

Michael Welch

Readings: Malachi 3: 1-4(**or Baruch 5: 1-9**)

Hymns:

#239 Opening

Luke 1: 68-79

#257 Gospel (vs 3&4)

Philippians 1: 3-11

#249 Hymn of Day

Luke 3: 1-6

#253 Communion

#264 Closing

December 15 – Third Sunday in Advent – Blue

Cathy Lichanec

Leigh Maxa

The Lichanec Family

Lenny Lichanec

Readings: Zephaniah 3: 14-20

Hymns:

#311 Opening

Isaiah 12:2-6

#257 Gospel (vs 5&6)

Philippians 4: 4-7

#253 Hymn of Day

Luke 3: 7-18

#737 Communion

#439 Closing

December 22 – Fourth Sunday in Advent – Blue

Walter Kovaciny

Sheila Welch

The Welch Family

A Volunteer

Readings: Micah 5: 2-5

Hymns:

#254 Opening

Psalm 80: 1-7(**or Luke 1: 46b-55**)

#257 Gospel (vs 7&8)

Hebrews 10: 5-10

#263 Hymn of Day

Luke 1: 39-55

#295 Communion

#267 Closing

December 24 – Christmas Eve – White

Leigh Maxa

Readings: Isaiah 9: 2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2: 11-14
Luke 2: 1-20

Hymns: #283 Opening
#289 Hymn of Praise
#281 Gospel Acclamation
#277 Hymn of Day
#295 Agnus Dei
#296 & #300 Communion
#270 Closing

December 25 – Christmas Day – White

Sheila Welch

Readings: Isaiah 62: 6-12 (or Isaiah 52: 7-10)
Psalm 97 (or Psalm 98)
Titus 3: 4-7 (or Hebrews 1: 1-12)
Luke 2: 1-20 (or John 1: 1-14)

Hymns: #283 Opening
#275 Hymn of Praise
#270 Hymn of Day
#288 & #300 Communion
#290 Closing

December 29 – First Sunday of Christmas - White

Walter Kovaciny
A Volunteer

Leigh Maxa

The Lichanec Family

Readings: 1 Samuel 2: 18-20, 26
Psalm 148
Colossians 3: 12-17
Luke 2: 41-52

Hymns: #269 Opening
#277 Hymn of Day
#299 Communion
#288 Closing



Happy Birthday Pastor!

December *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church* 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 The First Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Social Hour	2	3 Pastor's day off	4 John of Damascus, <i>Hymnwriter</i> 5:30 – 7 p.m. Safe Net Distribution	5	6 Nicholas, <i>Bishop</i>	7 Ambrose, <i>Bishop</i>
8 The Second Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Council meeting	8	10 Pastor's day off	11	12	13 Lucy, <i>Martyr</i>	14 8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution
15 The Third Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:30 Christmas Party	16	17 Pastor's day off	18	19	20	21 Cookie & Kolach Sale Pickup 10-11:30 a.m.
22 The Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion Christmas Caroling 4 p.m.	23	24 Christmas Eve 8:00 p.m. Holy Communion	25 Christmas Day 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion	26 Stephen, <i>The First Martyr</i>	27 John, <i>Evangelist</i>	28 The Holy Innocents of Bethlehem 8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution
29 The First Sunday of Christmas 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion Last day for 2024 contributions	30	31 Pastor's day off				

Christmas Bake Sale

Cookies and Kolache

Saturday, December 21, 2024
10 am to 11:30 am

Order with attached form

All orders need to be placed by
Wednesday, December 18th

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
104 W Main St Stafford Springs
Green St Entrance



Name: _____

Phone: _____

Check One:

Check Enclosed Payment at Pick Up

Mail Orders to: HTLC
104 Main St
Stafford Springs CT 06076

Or Drop in Mail Slot at the Converse St Entrance

Cookie Platters

An Assortment of Cookies
Chocolate, Molasses, Oatmeal, Fudge, Lemon,
Spritz, Pizzelles, Double Chocolate, Sugar,
Gingersnap, Peanut Butter

Kolach

Sweet Raised Bread Roll filled with walnuts,
cranberry-nut, poppy seed, or apricot

Orders must be received by Wed., Dec. 18
For Questions Call 860-806-2440

Pick Up is Saturday, December 21st
10 am to 11:30 am

Item	Quantity	Price Each	Total Price
Sm Cookie (24)		\$10.00	
Med Cookie (36)		\$15.00	
Lg Cookie (60)		\$25.00	
Full Nut Kolach		\$16.00	
Half Nut Kolach		\$8.00	
Full Cran Nut Kolach		\$16.00	
Half Cran Nut Kolach		\$8.00	
Full Poppy Kolach		\$16.00	
Half Poppy Kolach		\$8.00	
Full Apricot Kolach		\$16.00	
Half Apricot Kolach		\$8.00	
**New Apple Strudel		\$25.00	
		Grand Total	

Christmas Poinsettias

The members and friends of Holy Trinity are encouraged to donate poinsettias each Christmas in order to give Glory to God and beautify our sanctuary during the Nativity liturgies. Those who donate the poinsettias may take them after the 10:00 a.m. liturgy on Christmas Day, December 25th or the following Sundays. The cost of each poinsettia is \$12.00.

Your Name: _____

Given in honor of (for the living) _____

OR

Given in loving memory of (for the deceased) _____

Please return this form to Walter Kovaciny with the correct payment, by Sunday, December 15th. If paying by check, it should be payable to the: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. We are only getting Red Poinsettias this year. Thank you.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
104 West Main St.

Stafford Springs, CT 06076

[www.holytrinitystafford.Slovak Zion Synod](http://www.holytrinitystafford.SlovakZionSynod.com) –

ELCA Address Correction Requested



