

Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends in Christ,

For as long as I can remember, every Lutheran church I've been to has had a wreath with candles in the sanctuary during the season of Advent. But have you ever wondered why we light candles on the wreath, why we even have a wreath, or where this ritual comes from? The ELCA website has an answer for us.

"The Advent wreath has its roots in the pre-Christian practices of northern Europe. People sought the return of the sun in the dark time of the year (at the winter solstice) by lighting candles and fires. As early as the Middle Ages, Christians used fire and light to represent

Christ's coming into the world. Using this same symbolism, the Advent wreath developed a few centuries ago in Germany as a sign of the waiting and hopeful expectation of the return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The wreath, a circle, came to represent the eternal victory over death through Jesus Christ. The evergreens were a sign of the faithfulness of God to God's people, even in death, and the lighted candles were a reminder of the light of Christ brought into the world."

This symbolism can be just as strong for us today. As is the case with all symbols, they speak most loudly to remind us of God's promises of life ... the circular shape, a symbol of eternal life, is most important. Four candles are placed in the wreath, three blue and one pink. Each candle has its own meaning that we will highlight while lighting the candles during worship on each of the four Sundays in Advent.

The four weeks of Advent are ones of "hope and expectation of the coming of the Christ. This hope looks forward not only to celebrating the child in the manger, but even more to Christ's coming in glory at the end of time ... candles in rich royal blue are symbolic of this hope ... the symbolic colors of royal blood and of longing; the natural colors of the dawn before the sun rises and the deep shades of midnight." While the pink candle in the third week reminds us to rejoice.

And so, we wait. We wait for the birth of our Savior. We wait for Christmas season, which begins with Jesus' birth and ends with Epiphany, when the Magi appeared with gifts fit for a king. We wait for the second coming of Christ, our Savior. And, we do so with hope, peace, joy and love.

Blessings,

Pr. Jane

HIGHLIGHTS

- Dec. 3: Visitation Training
- Dec. 7: Poinsettia Orders due
- Dec. 14: Christmas Crafts
- Dec. 20: Open Mic Night
- Dec. 21: Brown Bag Christmas Pageant
- Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Worship @ 4:00
- Dec. 25: Merry Christmas!
- Jan. 6: Epiphany of Our Lord
- Jan. 10: Christmas Undecorating
- Jan. 11: Baptism of Our Lord
- Jan. 17: Bunco
- Jan. 17: Open Mic Night
- Feb. 1: Annual Meeting

Holy Trinity in December

Visitation Training

Come and learn how to be the church through visitation on **Wednesday, December 3 at 12:00 noon** in the lounge. A light lunch will be provided. Sign up on the board in the narthex, online on our website or by calling the church office.

Poinsettias

Order your Christmas poinsettia by **Sunday, December 7**. Poinsettias are available in two sizes – 6-inch (one plant) and 10-inch (3 plants) pots. Flowers are placed in the altar area on Christmas Eve in honor of or in memory of loved ones in celebration of Christ's birth! The donor names are printed in the Christmas Eve bulletins. Order forms are available at the Welcome Desk or can be downloaded from our weekly eBlast and website. Please return your form, along with your payment, to the labeled box in the narthex or send to the church office.



Christmas Crafts

Join Pastor Jane after worship on **Sunday, December 14** as we make simple bead ornaments to share! We will enjoy hot cocoa and cookies as we make candy canes and wreaths and talk about how these common Christmas decorations fit in our Christian journey. This event is open to all ages and will be fun for all!

Brown Bag Christmas Pageant

Everyone is invited to be a part of our Christmas pageant during worship on **December 21**. Just take a brown paper bag on your way into the sanctuary – each bag contains a random costume from the Christmas story.

Musically speaking, as we journey into the Christmas season...

Advent invites us into a beautiful season of preparation — quieting our hearts and readying our spirits for the coming of our Savior. As part of that journey, beginning the week after Thanksgiving, we'll open each Advent service by singing *"Even So Come"* by Chris Tomlin and Jason Ingram during the lighting of the Advent wreath. It's a simple, meaningful song specifically for Advent that we hope becomes a companion to you throughout the season.

A graphic featuring five lit candles of different heights and colors (purple, pink, red, orange, yellow) arranged in a cluster. Below the candles, the words "CHRISTMAS EVE" are written in a large, stylized, purple font.

This year's **Christmas Eve service at 4:00 pm** will be a joyful celebration of music and worship! Many of our congregation's musicians will join together to lead upbeat, full-band arrangements of beloved Christmas carols — complete with festive brass. The service will also include a candlelit "Silent Night," paired with the choir's beautiful rendering of "Night of Silence."

Come ready to sing — ***really sing!*** We're planning a service filled with more congregational music than ever before, and we would love for you to be part of it. Invite your family and friends, too. The more voices we have, the more joyfully we can fill the sanctuary with the sound of worship. There's truly nothing more moving and uplifting than a room full of voices joining together on Christmas Eve.



to the Stewardship Committee of Phylaine Nicholas, Pete Jensen, Karen Brienzo and John Balzer for all their efforts which will benefit our church next year and hopefully into the years to come.

to Doug Westphal, Peter Milosevich and Owen Wagner for their efforts on getting the second camera working in the sanctuary.

to Jason Meissner for working on issues regarding the hearing-assisted devices.

to Pete & Lori Jensen for the donation of the push snowblower.

To Randy Bubolz and George Jonovic for their creative messages on our outdoor sign.

to Jeff Ferstad and Peter Milosevich for running the "yellow beast" snowplow and saving the church a huge expense and the whole snow crew who clear the sidewalks after each snowfall.

Connecting Roots & Labyrinth Event Teams Merge

The Connecting Roots team has now joined forces with the Labyrinth Event team to strengthen their volunteer support across both committees. While Connecting Roots has traditionally organized fellowship activities for members and guests, the Labyrinth team has concentrated on wider community involvement. This merger ensures that fellowship events will continue at Holy Trinity.

The Labyrinth Planning Committee will begin preparations for the 2026 season at its inaugural meeting of the year on **Thursday, January 8 at 6:00 pm** in the lounge. Labyrinth events offer enjoyable and meaningful experiences, and our goal is to foster community spirit through free summer gatherings.

Additionally, we will be finalizing arrangements for the highly anticipated "Valentine's Day Cookie Sale".

Extra help with planning and managing our events is always appreciated — it's a great way to connect with others at Holy Trinity while having fun. We invite you to join us for our first meeting of the year — Thursday, January 8th at 6:00 pm in the lounge.

If you need more information, please contact Phylaine Nicholas or reach out to the church office.

Christmas Undecorating

Join us on **Saturday, January 10 at 9:00 am** to help undecorate the church from Christmas. Watch for a sign-up in the narthex.

Open Mic Nights

Join Paul Terrien and local musicians on **Saturdays, December 20 & January 17 at 7:00 pm** in our lounge for a fun & free, family-friendly evening of music and fellowship. Come to just listen or to perform.

For artists: limit of 3 songs or 10 minutes

Sign up on site: first come, first served

Small amp, keyboard and one vocal mic provided



BUNCO is BACK!

Kick off the new year enjoying an afternoon of fun and fellowship playing this fast-paced, easy to learn game with fellow members. We'll meet on **Saturday, January 17 at 1:00 pm**. Watch for the sign-up board in the narthex after Christmas.

Annual Meeting Date is set for **Sunday, February 1, 2026** following the worship service.

Stewardship

Step Up Your Giving – From the Heart

A Stewardship Reflection on Generosity and Purpose

Thank You for Your Generosity!

As we conclude this year's Stewardship Campaign, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to every member of our Holy Trinity family. Your thoughtful gifts and purposeful commitments have made a profound difference — not only in sustaining our ministries but also in touching lives and fostering spiritual growth.



Because of your generosity, we can support outreach programs, enhance our worship experiences, and care for those in need. Each contribution, whether big or small, reflects the love and compassion that defines our congregation.

Thank you for stepping up and giving from the heart. Your faith, hope, and dedication inspire us all to continue building God's kingdom together. May the spirit of generosity continue to guide us throughout the year.

With gratitude,

Stewardship Committee

Karen Brienzo, Pete Jensen, Phylaine Nicholas

In November:



On November 16 we welcomed three new members! A very warm welcome to Ann Gallagher, Nancy Bagguley and Michelle Burton. We're so glad you've joined us!

On November 2 we celebrated All Saints Day. We remembered our church family members and loved ones, who have gained their crowns in heaven. We look forward to our reunion with the saints in heaven but remember that as saints still here on this earth - our job is not done. Pray, praise, and give thanks always.



What Is Advent?

Advent is a four-week period that prepares us for Jesus Christ's birth at Christmas, while also pointing ahead to his promised return. Each Sunday invites reflection, prayer, and expectant celebration.

Join our welcoming community to experience inspirational messages and music of thanks and praise. Attend our weekly gatherings on Sundays at 9:15 am, in person or join the conversation online. Everyone is welcome!



Christmas Collections

We will be collecting the following items for those less fortunate to help their holidays be a little brighter.

For Hope Ministries:

- 3.) **Christmas toys:** Deliver to Holy Trinity **November 30 - December 7**.
Suggestions : cars/trucks, baby toys, action figures, legos/duplos/building toys, dolls, accessories that go with phones, shaving kits, jewelry making kits, art kits.

Eras Senior Programs of Milwaukee & Waukesha Counties:

- 1.) **\$10 gift cards** to Pick n Save, Walmart, Walgreens, Target, and packs of Forever stamps. Deliver to Holy Trinity **November 30 - December 7**.

Thank you for your generosity!





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Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Milwaukee, WI
Permit No. 905

Electronic Service Requested



Connect with us on
Facebook:
facebook.com/htwa.church

**Have You Moved or Will You Be
Temporarily Away?**

Please notify the church office (see
contact info above)



JOY to the WORLD

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH US AT HOLY TRINITY

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP

DEC. 24 | 4:00 PM

VISIT US AT HTWA.CHURCH