



Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church

DECEMBER 2023 and JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

The Rev. Frederick W. Kopp, Pastor

The Rev. Phillip Vender, Pastor Emeritus

Pastor's Ponderings

The Advent of our Lord...The arrival of our Lord!

The arrivals I have experienced are sometimes prepared for and expected, and other times they are a surprise. Some arrivals are positive, and one looks forward to them, and others bring dread or worry. Some arrivals are on time, and some are late or even early.

Well, the arrival of our Lord, the advent of our Lord, that we remember, anticipate, and celebrate for 4 weeks before Christmas is coming too quickly for me this year. I do not feel ready. My mind, heart, and spirit still need to get in line with the joy and hopefulness of Jesus's coming. Maybe you feel the same way?

One of my favorite Bible verses is from 1st Peter 3:15 in which the author challenges Jesus' followers, servants of the Lord, disciples like you and me, to "Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence."

It is difficult to "always" be ready and prepared. My readiness ebbs and flows, but it feels like our Lord's arrival is sure. Therefore to acknowledge it, and focus on what that means for us, is our calling for Advent.

Being prepared, and to act in accordance with the teachings of Jesus is a goal of Advent. Getting our lives in order, in order to reflect Jesus in the world. Reflect the light coming into the world. Be to the least of these as Jesus is and was to the lepers, sinners, tax collectors, sick, mentally ill, marginalized, meek, lonely, misunderstood, and to all the humans in our lives.

To prepare for the arrival of Jesus is to "fire up" our energy, to actively obey Jesus' command to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind: and your neighbor as yourself."

In a kind of circular way, I got to what Advent is all about. LOVE.

May God's Love shine in and through you this Advent season.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Fred he/him/his

BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION



Pastor Fred's current Bible Study is on Revelation. The last meeting is Friday, Dec. 8 from 10—11:30 am in Luther Hall at Augustana. You can also participate on Zoom. Everyone is invited to this class, even if you have not participated in prior sessions. To receive a Zoom invite, contact Pastor Fred at augustchurchpastor@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICES

Mid-Week Advent Services and Soup Suppers

Area ELCA churches are having soup suppers during Advent at 6:00 pm, followed by worship services at 7:00 pm. The host church provides the meal. All are invited!

Dec. 6	Abiding Savior, 1534 Ruie Rd., North Tonawanda
Dec. 13	Good Shepherd, 2669 Sheridan Dr., Tonawanda
Dec. 20	St. Martin's, 322 Old Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda

Blue Christmas Service

Abiding Savior will hold a special "Blue Christmas" worship service On Friday, Dec. 22 at 7:00 pm for those struggling with grief, loneliness or depression.

See flyer on page 7 of this newsletter.

Christmas Eve Services Sunday, December 24



On **Sunday morning, Dec. 24**, Augustana will have a morning service at our usual worship time of **9:30 am**. The congregation of Trinity Old Lutheran (TOL) will be worshipping with us at Augustana.

Augustana's Candlelight Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols (with Communion) will be at **4:30 pm**. Families with children are invited to arrive a few minutes early so the children can choose a costume to wear. When Pastor begins the Christmas Gospel he will guide the children in presenting the Christmas story.

TOL's Christmas Eve service will take place at **7:00 pm**.

All three services will also take place on Zoom. If you are not yet on the Zoom email lists for Augustana or TOL and would like an invite, please contact the church office of Augustana (augustchurch@yahoo.com) or TOL (trinityoldlutheranchurch@gmail.com).

OUTREACH

ELCA World Hunger



Our amazing church community raised \$1200.00 this year.

Our gift to *God's Global Barnyard* includes a variety of the following:

Chicks: their eggs not only provide an ongoing supply of protein-rich meals — they can also help start a small business and generate a steady source of income.

Rooster: More chickens on the farm mean more eggs to eat and sell at the market.

Honeybees: Honeybees provide honey to eat, beeswax that allows a farmer to start a small business selling their products, and a boost to crop growth by pollinating plants everywhere they go.

Piglet: This gift is a source of natural fertilizer that helps crops grow tall and strong, and can also be sold at the market for extra income when it's needed.

Goat: Goat's milk provides nutrition for children and their families, and goats are quick to reproduce — which means a family can pass this life-saving gift onto others.

Many thanks to our **CHURCH FAMILY** for making this year's drive a terrific success. May God bless you through this holiday season and New Year with the best of health and abundant joy and happiness.

Paula Kerr



Collection for the Homeless: mittens, gloves, scarves and hats

We are collecting specific clothing for the Homeless through mid-December: mittens, gloves, scarves and hats.

There is a designated bin in the Narthex.



Community of Good Neighbors

We continue supporting those locally who have food insecurity by collecting food items for Community of Good Neighbors. Thank you for your continued donations of: Peanut Butter and Jelly, Cereals (non-sugary types), canned vegetables, Pasta and Tomato Sauces etc.... Bins are located in the Narthex.

See next page for our Driving Program update.

“Serve one another humbly in faith.” Galatians 5:13

Last month was the last quarterly meeting of the year with representatives of Lutheran Charities and grant winners. It is an opportunity to share how things are going and connect with other groups. There is a similar program that offers bicycles to refugees, so they will share our information with those they help, and we will do the same for them.

We are so very thankful to Lutheran Charities and our congregation for their and your help and support.

This month, I was invited to speak with three English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in Buffalo. I shared our program: offering learning permit classes, assistance/support in any way we are able, and monetary assistance for their learner permit and ten professional driving lessons with Stevens Driving School (which also includes the required five-hour course and the road test).

Two of the students in these classes were also students of the Learner Permit classes we held this past summer. Both passed their learner permit tests and one of them has received his driver license! The other student should begin driving lessons soon. Very exciting!

Johanna (716-870-8518)

By Johanna Andritz

Sunday school got off to a great start! Our first Sunday together, we got to know each other a little



better and then got to know things in the narthex and sanctuary a little better. We searched for seventeen things including: wheat, lambs, the Pascal or Christ candle, and a saint. We also learned why we would find them in our church. The only thing that wasn't found was the word "outreach." Let us know if you find it! You might just give us a clue! Here's another one of the things we found --- the word "rejoice." Have fun looking for it. Just a reminder that Sunday school is on the first and last Sunday of the month. (December has 5 weeks, so the last Sunday is 12/31.) Class begins after the children and their families have communed. We're looking forward to learning more about our church, God, the Bible, and so much more!

Many thanks to Dave Ellis and Linda Sokoley for also volunteering to be Sunday School teachers.



Learning about the creation story in Genesis 1 and 2.

RECONCILING WORKS

We invite you to be part of Augustana's group that studies the full welcome, inclusion, and equity of LGBTQIA+ Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their church, congregations and community. Please talk to Pastor Fred if you would like to participate. The next meeting is in January.



HAPPENING AT TRINITY OLD LUTHERAN CHURCH (TOL)

Adult Education December 2023 and January 2024

Biblical events – examining context and discussing what they mean. Instructor: Charlie Schmidtke

Classes are at TOL and on Zoom on select Mondays, from 1:00 pm—2:30 pm.

The next two classes are Dec. 4 – Deborah's victory and Jan. 22 – Elijah and the Prophets.

The complete list of topics and dates are on the flyer on Augustana's bulletin board, available for you to take one home. If you are interested in participating, let TOL know so that you can receive email updates if needed regarding possible rescheduling of classes due to weather, etc.

Lutheran World Relief Quilters Group

The quilters are taking a break for the holiday season, resuming in January. In the meantime, they are collecting flat or fitted bedsheets in new or like-new condition. If you have sheets to donate, bring them to Augustana and we will make sure they receive them. If you have any questions, ask Barb Maugans: (716-692-8116).

(716) 836-4868 / trinityoldlutheranchurch@gmail.com

3445 Sheridan Drive, Amherst, 14226

Weekly Sunday worship is at 11:00.

Contact TOL for a Zoom invite for Sunday worship and Adult Education classes.

OPPORTUNITY FOR SERMON DISCUSSION / INPUT

Pastor Fred invites everyone to join him in a **bag lunch** discussion of the texts for the next month of sermons. These lunchtime meetings usually take place on the **4th Wed. of each month, however, there will not be a meeting in December; the next session is Wed. Jan. 3 at noon**, for two hours. All sessions are held in **Trinity Old Lutheran's Fireside room**. Let Pastor Fred know if you plan to attend; there will be some preparation in order to have a discussion about the text/world events/church challenges: augustchurchpastor@yahoo.com / (716) 984-8541.

ELCA DISASTER RESPONSE

There is a wealth of information available from the ELCA about how Lutheran Disaster Response benefits people in the United States and in other countries around the world. Magazines from the ELCA are available in the narthex.

You can also read these magazines and additional articles at [ELCA.org/disaster](https://www.elca.org/disaster).

Lutheran Disaster Response also publishes a magazine named Thrive.

You can read it by clicking on this QR code.



Read the latest issue of "Thrive."

This is a list of projects that Lutheran Disaster Response is currently leading.

If you are reading this via email, the links should work so that you can click and learn more.

If you are reading this in print, to go <https://www.elca.org/our-work/relief-and-development/lutheran-disaster-response> and then you can click on the links.

International:

[Middle East Crisis](#)

[Eastern Europe Crisis Response](#)

[Horn of Africa Drought](#)

[Middle East & Europe Refugee Crisis](#)

[South Sudan Relief](#)

[AMMPARO: Protecting Migrants](#)

Domestic:

[Flooding](#)

[Hurricanes](#)

[Severe Storms](#)

[Tornadoes](#)

[Wildfires](#)

Details from the first link, Middle East Crisis:

Due to escalating conflict in Gaza and Israel, a severe humanitarian crisis is rapidly unfolding in the Holy Land. The ELCA has a longstanding relationship with partners in the region, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and Augusta Victoria Hospital. Lutheran Disaster Response has a history of providing support for our partners and will be prepared to answer calls for assistance when the time comes.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has issued a letter of solidarity to Bishop Dr. Sani-Ibrahim Azar of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. In it, she writes,

"I encourage the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to unite in prayer for the families of innocent civilians whose lives were lost, as well as pray for healing for all the injured, fearful and traumatized.

"I pledge our accompaniment and support to you as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and its ministries provide 'critical and timely assistance (psychological and otherwise) to those affected by this war.'"

What you can do: Please pray for people in the Middle East who have been impacted by the conflict. May God's healing presence give them peace and hope in their time of need.

Pie Fundraiser at Augustana

Augustana is grateful to Amy Schintzius for organizing a Pie fundraiser again this year, with all of the proceeds going directly to offset our budget deficit. We are also grateful for all the pie makers, Including Amy's friend, Maria.

On pie-making day (Nov. 22) the aroma of pies filled the air, and the delicious pies were enjoyed by many families on Thanksgiving.



The Lutheran Chorale Of the Niagara Frontier

Julia Anne Cordani, Director
Presents

“Merry and Bright”

Featuring
Haydn's "St. Nicholas Mass"
&
Shaw's "Many Moods of Christmas"

Saturday, December 9, 2023
2:00 p.m.
First Trinity Lutheran Church
1570 Niagara Falls Blvd.
Tonawanda, New York

Tickets: \$15 Adults

Call 716-741-4573 for more information
or visit our website:
www.thelutheranchoraleoftheniagarafontier.com

A Blue Christmas Service

Friday 22 December 2023 @ 7pm
Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
1534 Ruie Rd.
North Tonawanda

A service of healing and a safe space
for those struggling with loneliness, grief,
or depression during this time of year.

CHRISTIAN CANCER SUPPORT: Hope and Healing



For anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis, Linda Sokoley can give support through phone calls, emails, texts, or 1:1 In-person conversations and prayers. If you or someone you know is in need of support, or if you have questions, please contact Linda through the church office: (716) 832-5720 / augustchurch@yahoo.com .

DIRECTORIES

New directories are available. You can pick one up at church or call the office and we will mail you one.

FELLOWSHIP ROOM MAKEOVER

Talk to Paulette if you would like to be on a committee to give the Fellowship Room a makeover.

WNY Church Unleashed

If you are unable to join us for in-person or Zoom worship, you can watch Lutheran worship on Cable TV Channel 5, MeTV, Sundays at 10 am. "Church Unleashed" is led by Lutheran Pastors Beigner, Griffiths and Smith. For previous weeks, go to YouTube and search for "WNY Church Unleashed."

Covid Health and Safety

If you start to feel sick or test positive for Covid after you have been in church, please contact Beth Kerr (553-0385), trained contract tracer.



Happy Times magazine for kids, Dec. + Jan. and Christ In Our Homes daily devotionals for adults, Oct.–Dec.

are available in the church entry hall, or contact the church office and we will gladly mail one to you. The Jan. –March Christ in our Homes will be available in mid-December.



Augustana Lutheran Church 3143 Eggert Road Tonawanda, NY 14150

Sunday Worship at 9:30 in the church and on Zoom.

Contact the church office for a Zoom invite.

Church Office: (716) 832-5720 / augustchurch@yahoo.com

Pastor Fred Kopp: (716) 984-8541 / augustchurchpastor@yahoo.com

www.augustanaonline.org

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