



Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church

Monthly Newsletter - August - September 2026

The Rev. Adam Arends - Transitional Pastor

The Rev. Phillip Vender, Pastor Emeritus

Sharing the love of Jesus in our changing world.

Pastor's Ponderings

Go in peace
Go in kindness
Go in love
Go in faith
Leave the day
The day behind us

Day is done
Go in grace
Let us go
Into the dark
Not afraid
Not alone
Let us hope
By some good pleasure

Safely to
Arrive at home

Let us hope
By some good pleasure

Safely to
Arrive at home

Sam Baker

These lyrics are from the artist Sam Baker's song, Go in Peace. I was doing a search to find some way of saying "peace be with you," for my last article and I stumbled on these song lyrics. The lyrics said what I was hoping for and what I was feeling in my heart.

The day before I started searching for a way to say peace be with you, we found out that Patrick was released from his detention in California City and is arriving in Buffalo today. By the time you get this newsletter that will be old news. However, the sentiment in this song sums up the journey that Patrick and his church have led these last seven months. The closing lines "safely to arrive at home" has been a mantra, refrain, and a continued hope for Patrick and we who want him to be reunited with his family away from danger and fear.

The lines "going in peace, kindness, love, and faith" describes Patrick and how he faced this journey. His entering darkness without fear has been a witness to us and one I will try to emulate when faced with a daunting and unknown future. I am so glad Patrick can continue his quest to have USA be his and family's "safely home" destination.

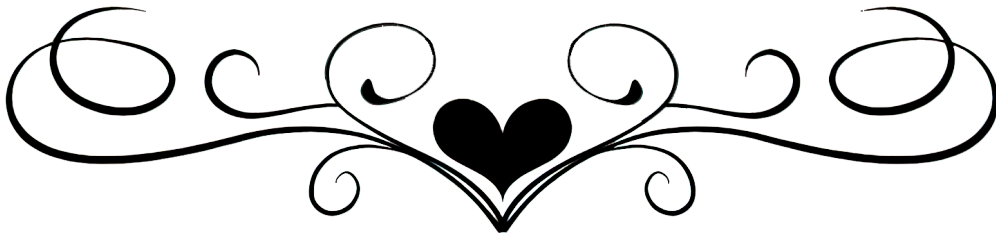
Now for Trinity Old Lutheran, Augustana, Anne and me, we are on a journey too. Our journey has two or possibly three different directions into the darkness of the unknown. I don't think we can travel it without a little fear, but we do not go it alone. As our reassuring Jesus said to his disciples, he says to us, "I am with you till the end of the age." In John 14, Jesus also says to his disciples "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.... And the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send will teach you

everything and remind you of all that I have said to you” We are not alone, and together we don’t have to be afraid, yet we have a shared goal to land safely where we are going and maintain the values we started out with; peace, kindness, love, and faith. When we travel with this mindset into the unknown, we are bound to find a new place to land safely and full of hope.

I thank God that Patrick’s journey has led him back with us, and I pray for him and his family’s continued quest “Safely to arrive home.” I pray for Trinity Old Lutheran, Augustana, with Good Shepherd as you head into the unknown, the darkness of the future, and that you do it with hope and know you are not alone. And I thank you all for keeping Anne and me in your thoughts and prayers as we travel and look to “safely arrive home” in our next adventure in Montana.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Fred



Dear Family in Christ,

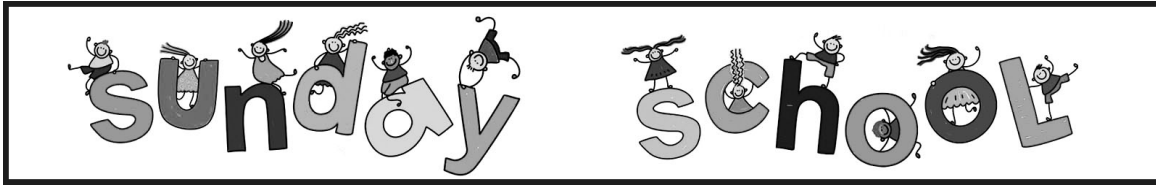
Thank you first of all for all your prayers. My procedure on the 4th was a success. (Now all I have to do is keep myself from raising my hands high and singing “halleluiah,” and “praise ye the Lord” until I am healed!)

There are many words to describe how Anne and I are feeling a week after the celebration worship service and picnic. We are overwhelmed by the love you have shown us. We are blessed by all of you; by the people who planned, worked at, and brought food for this special day, and all who attended. It was a joy to share this day with each of you and to have you meet our family, whose stories have been in many sermons. We are grateful for the ministry we have shared during our years with Trinity Old Lutheran and Augustana. We are emotional as we read and reflect on your kind words, thoughtful cards, gifts and generosity.

Thank you for your support and good wishes. We keep everyone in our prayers as we move towards the next part of our life. Our journey together continues as family in Christ where borders do not separate us from God’s love through Jesus Christ.

In Love and appreciation,
Fred and Anne





Looking ahead to September, SUNDAY SCHOOL WILL BEGIN SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH! HOORAY!

All children about Grades 1 and 6 are invited to join us after the children have communed (at the beginning of communion time). We meet downstairs in the Sunday School room next to Luther Hall where we have coffee hour and end about 11:00am. Snacks are served.

PLEASE spread the news that Sunday School is coming!!!
See you in September!!!.

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### **AUGUSTANA FUNDRAISER**

Any donations to our  
"lawyer fee appeal"  
can be placed in the offering.

Please label it: "fundraiser" or  
"lawyer fee appeal" ...  
Envelopes are on the table in

Please make checks payable to  
Augustana Lutheran Church.  
Thank you.



# Refugee Immigrant Driver Education



## Drive to Thrive

*"Serve one another humbly in faith." Galatians 5:13*

We have set a date for our next learner permit class. The classes will be held at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church across the street from the Anchor Bar. (Maybe one of our snacks could be chicken wings! 😊) The dates are Saturday, September 12 and Saturday, September 19 from 9:00 am – Noon. At the completion of the two day classes, the participants will receive a gift card to purchase their learner permit. (The cost of a learner permit is about \$75.00) We are hoping all seven applicants are able to attend. Thank you for the money we have received through church sales. It is a blessing.!



### Augustana Prayer Chain



If you have a prayer that you would like  
to be shared on the Prayer Chain,  
contact Devie Ellis:  
RevDevie@aol.com / (716) 909-9583

### HOPE and HEALING

Christian Cancer Support

For anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis,  
Linda Sokoly can give support, through  
phone calls, e-mail, 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 at (716) 832-5720  
or ... [augustchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:augustchurch@yahoo.com)

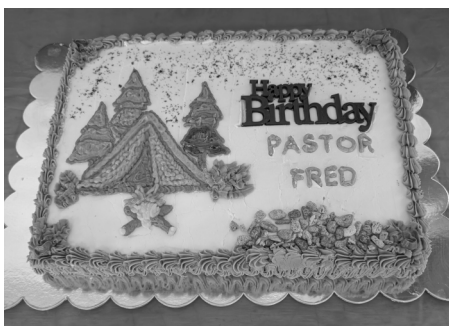
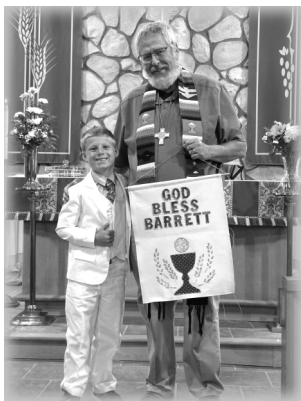
## Odds“N”Ends *from the Council President*

- Our Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, following worship. The Annual Meeting helps us to celebrate what God is doing in this place through each of you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thanks be to God for all we are able to do. Looking forward what's next!
- Thank you to Linda Sokoley, council secretary, and Nate Lockhart, Reconciling in Christ for serving on council for two terms. (6 years)
- May 2<sup>nd</sup> a large group from each congregation attended a meaningful day-long workshop. May 3<sup>rd</sup> we worshiped together at Good Shepherd.
- Sunday, June 7 all three churches worshipped together at TOL.
- Our Tri-church worship and picnic will be August 30 at Veteran's Memorial Park in Tonawanda, beginning at 10:00am.
- September 20: Tri-church worship will be at Good Shepherd at 11:00 am
- October 25: Tri-church worship Reformation Sunday will be at Augustana at 9:30am
- November 15: Tri-church worship Veteran's Day worship will be at TOL at 11:00am
- December 6: Tri-church worship Christmas program at Good Shepherd
- On July 11<sup>th</sup>, we had our first (in a long time) flea market. Hot

dogs and drinks we served. It was good to see some purchasers from Good Shepherd and TOL! Thank you for your help, your donations and your purchases! Thank you to Judy Thomas, Kathy Maishak and the entire team who set up, closing and helped in between! Thankfully, the weather was perfect! Proceed went to the RIDE program, Patrick's fund, and our church! Thank you!

- The Tonawanda's Garden Walk came to Augustana July 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>! The gardens were beautiful! Thank you, Donna Bartkowski, Gary Kerr, Judy Thomas and the greeters... for always making our yards look lovely!
- Barrett Kratochvil made his First Communion on July 19<sup>th</sup>.
- What a moving worship service, meal, and presentation we had at Emery Park to celebrate Pastor Fred and Anne. The setting was beautiful.
  - There were bubbles, streamers, dancing, playing instruments, four or more tables of food, special "Camp Fred" decorations and more.
  - Pastor Fred presided at the service.
  - Ed Kramer played the keyboard.
  - The Rev. Sohail Akhtar was Assistant Minister and Synod Representative, and
  - Pastor Fred's brother-in-law The Rev. Dr. Bruce Davis, gave the sermon.
  - Earlene Crocker, from TOL, lead a team of about six members of both TOL and Augustana who organized lunch, decorations, purchasing and collecting for gifts

- Pastor Fred and Anne loved our cards and gifts.
- Thank you to all of you! Well done!
- Pastor Adam Arends begins serving Augustana, Trinity Old Lutheran and Good Shepherd in September. We have a six-month contract together. At six months, we will see how things are going.
- For the first four months, Pastor Dave Ellis, Pastor Devie Ellis, Seminarian Jake James (Jake is the husband of Meghan James, Pastor of St. Martin's North Tonawanda), Pastor Adam Arends and I (Johanna Andritz) will be presiding at worship
- **How can you help to lessen the deficit?:** Please use the **monthly yellow envelopes** in your offering envelope box to make donations. Thank you!



# TRI - CONGREGATIONAL TASK FORCE

It's been a busy year.

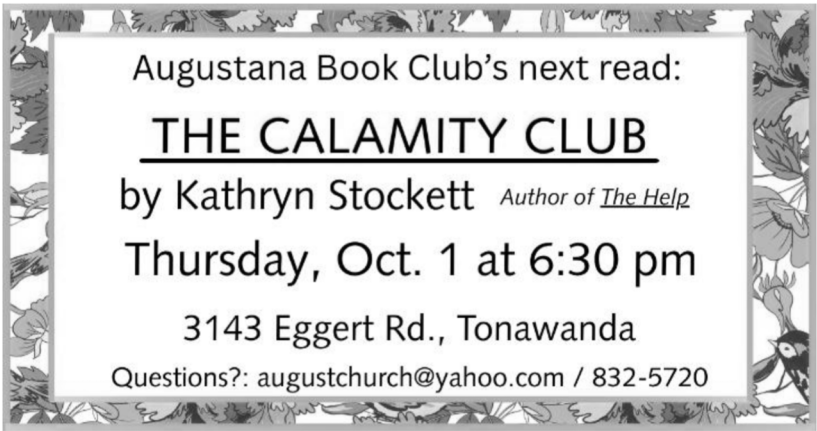
- Since our annual meeting last year, Augustana, Trinity Old Lutheran, and Good Shepherd have worshiped together seven times, with attendance always about 90.
- The Tri-Congregational Task Force met at least 4 times.
- Each congregation had their building inspected and appraised.
- Each congregation put \$500 into it's 2026 budget for Tri-congregational activities and mission.
- Each Congregation passed a motion that stated: We as a congregation are willing to be part of this process of combining/merger moving forward and that as a congregation we will be willing to sell our church building.
- At the last meeting of the task force we divided up into three teams.
  1. **Mission and ministry team**: This team will look into what ministries the congregations have, how they use their building, and what might the mission and ministry look like together.
  2. **Legal and Finance Team**: will look at present and future legal matters, and looking at all budgets and what a combined church might look like.
  3. **Liturgy and Communication team**: will look at what worship

we have and what it might look like if we combined. It will also seek to improve the communication among the churches.

- Outcomes from our last Tri-congregational task force meeting;
  - Supply backpacks for children In the Ken-ton school District
  - Collect stuff for “Operation Christmas Child” boxes.
  - Possible Tri-congregational photo directory produced by people at TOL
  - All three churches already collect for Good Shepherd food and clothing pantry and do a Thanksgiving meal collection.
- The date for the first meeting of the Tri-congregational task force teams is Tuesday, September 15, 7 pm at Good Shepherd, People are welcome to join us, please see Johanna Andritz.
- Combined worship is schedule is as follows:
  - August 30 - picnic at Veteran’s Park, Tonawanda 10:00 am
  - September 20 - Worship at Good Shepherd 11:00 am
  - October 25 - Reformation at Augustana 9:30 am
  - November 15 - Veteran’s Day Worship at TOL 11:00 am
  - December 6 - Christmas program at Good Shepherd

## **WNY Church Unleashed**

If you are unable to join us for in-person or ZOOM worship, you can watch Lutheran worship on Cable TV Chanel 5 MeTV, Sundays at 10:00 am. “Church Unleashed” is run by Lutheran Pastors, Beigner, Griffiths and Smith. For previous weeks, go to YouTube and search for “WNY Church Unleashed.”



Augustana Book Club's next read:

**THE CALAMITY CLUB**

by Kathryn Stockett *Author of The Help*

Thursday, Oct. 1 at 6:30 pm

3143 Eggert Rd., Tonawanda

Questions?: [augustchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:augustchurch@yahoo.com) / 832-5720

**"Wash Me Clean" Collection:** Augustana will be collecting personal & household hygiene products for people and families in need. This is being run through Social Ministry at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Williamsville. A bin will be in the Narthex for your donations. If you have any questions, see Paulette Hotchkiss.



**"God's work. Our hands." is Sept. 13, 2026**

Community Baby Shower to benefit  
Response to Love and Harvest House,  
in conjunction with St. Paul's, Williamsville  
Cake & Games

There will be a bin in the Narthex.

# Around the Area



## Trinity Old Lutheran Church

3445 Sheridan Drive

Amherst, New York 14226

Phone: 716-836-4868 or 716-836-4990

Email: [trinityoldlutheranchurch@gmail.com](mailto:trinityoldlutheranchurch@gmail.com)

### TOL's Fall Chicken Chowder Sale Saturday, October 24

We're bringing out the new soup kettles for the second Chicken Chowder Sale this year! There are a number of ways you can help: volunteer (veggie prep day is Friday, October 23); donate ingredients – and spread the word! Matt will have a sign-up board in the narthex. Watch for more details in the Tidings and in the Sunday bulletins. If you have any questions, please speak to Matt Grabau.



### Fall Schedule, Adult Ed. With Charlie Schmidtke

You're invited to join the group on Monday afternoons in the Fireside Room (or on Zoom) from **1:00 PM to 2:30 PM**. Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link. The topic will be "Religious Leaders."

|           |                                 |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| Sept. 14: | Moses - The Law                 |
| Sept. 28: | Maimonides - Andalusia          |
| Oct. 19:  | Apostles and Deacons            |
| Oct. 26:  | Early Christian Women           |
| Nov. 9:   | Mohammad                        |
| Nov. 23:  | Ali (Shia) and Abu Bakr (Sunni) |
| Dec. 7:   | Mani - Manichaeism              |

**Calling all Crafters and Bakers — We need you!**  
**TOL's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Craft Show, Basket Raffle and**  
**Baked Goods Sale**

**Saturday, September 19**

The **Craft Show and Bake Sale** will run from **10:00 AM to 4:00 PM** and the **Basket Raffle** from **10:00 AM to 2:30 PM** (with winners being pulled shortly thereafter). A volunteer sign-up sheet is posted on the main bulletin board listing the various tasks. We will again have our own TOL Community Craft Show table. If you would like to donate your completed items, all proceeds will go to TOL. We will keep you posted if we have a craft night to work on items for our table.

**Basket Donations:** We appreciate everyone who has helped us in past years to fill our picture frames full of instant lottery tickets. We would like to continue this fun endeavor by having everyone donate just one instant lottery ticket. This is such a successful group effort; we hope you will all want to participate.

Also, if you have a basket (or items for one), or a gift card donation, please see Debbie or Kelly. **All donations of time and resources are greatly appreciated! Deadline for basket donations is Sunday, September 13.**

**Baked Goods:** We welcome your donations of cookies, breads, pie slices, and brownies for the sale (no cakes, please—they are difficult to cut and plate). They should be delivered to the church **by Friday, September 18 or by 9:00 AM on Saturday**. If possible, please pre-plate or bag your donations. If you have any questions, please speak to Earlene. Thank you!



### **On-going Collections!**

Look for the marked containers in the donations area in the main hallway.  
Thank you!

**Can Tabs** for Buffalo's Ronald McDonald House.

**Recycle Cans and Bottles...** Your donations can be placed in the marked container or you may also redeem them at Bottle and Can Redemption Center (2790 Sheridan Drive in Tonawanda). TOL has an account there.

### **Friends of Night People**

- Collection of new men's socks, and small-size hygiene products (soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste) or create care packages.
- Men's seasonal clothing collection.

### **Miles of Pennies**

**Dash's Register Tapes** for Niagara Health System



### **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, ELCA**

2669 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda NY 14150

**Rev. Adam Arends, Transitional Pastor**

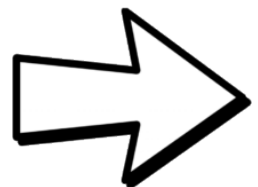
Email: [pastor.gslc.tona@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.gslc.tona@gmail.com)

**Church Office**

Email: [office.gslc.tona@gmail.com](mailto:office.gslc.tona@gmail.com)

Phone: (716) 832-5390

**[WWW.GSLCTONA.ORG](http://WWW.GSLCTONA.ORG)**





## **GSLC Food Pantry** Items of the Month

Please consider buying a few items  
when doing your regular food shopping.

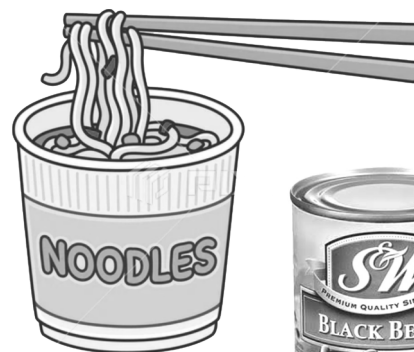
### **For August**

**Black Beans ♦ Ramen**

**Canned Soup**

**White Socks for Men & Women**

**THANK YOU** for your continued support.



**Join Us**  
**Wednesday**  
**June 17th**  
**6:30 PM**  
**@ The Dome**

Questions? See Kevin Cronyn (832-6650)

**Your Bottles & Cans Support the  
Food Pantry and the General Fund!**



Take your donations directly to the  
return center at 2790 Sheridan  
Drive or bring them to church and  
we'll return them for you!

## **Seasonal Clothing Is Needed!**



The GSLC Clothing Closet  
(open Food Pantry days) \*  
is in need of seasonal items:  
think warm to cool  
weather and layering!

**Child ♦ Teen ♦ Adult / All Sizes**

Donations can be brought to church on Sundays,  
or during Office Hours.



***Food Pantry Days: 3rd & 4th Saturday each Month***



**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
Weidner's Chicken Dinner**  
2669 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda, NY 14150

**Saturday, July 18, 2026  
12 pm – sold out**

**Tickets - \$15 – Drive Thru Only**

**Includes: ½ chicken, coleslaw, potatoes, roll  
& butter and dessert**

**Tickets available online at [www.gslctona.org](http://www.gslctona.org)  
or day of event (until sold out)**

**HELP IS NEEDED**

**With Set-Up, Packaging, Clean-Up and BAKING BROWNIES!**

Please CALL Krit Marohn (716-598-2273) if you can bring brownies.

(3x3 squares, individually wrapped.)

Deliver them to Church Friday July 17<sup>th</sup> by Noon.



**Please Remember to Support  
our Ongoing Collections:**

(items can be put on the bookcase in  
the Narthex)

- Pop/Beer and Fruit/Soup **metal tabs** for the Ken-Ton Closet
- Greeting **card fronts** for Schofield Nursing Home
- **Dash's tapes** for the Lutheran Home Guild

In His service,  
Carolyn Swanson and Sue Murphy

## **Ken-Ton Closet - School Backpacks**

Here is a list of school supplies that we are collecting to fill backpacks for Ken-Ton Closet distribution.

Please have donations by 8-23-2026 at the latest.  
Donations will be delivered to Ken-Ton Closet on 8-25-2026.

Backpack  
Crayola Crayons  
Crayola Markers  
Dry Erase Markers  
Mechanical Pencils  
Kleenex

Pink Erasers  
Pencils  
Pencil Sharpeners  
Loose Leaf Paper  
Colored Folders

# **Operation Christmas Child**

One of TOL's outreach programs is packing shoeboxes for children around the world who don't receive Christmas gifts.

It is an expression of God's love for children.

If you would like to join us on this mission, contact Debbie (716-946-2683) or the TOL church office (726-836-4868).

You can use your own plastic shoebox or we can provide one for you.

The boxes may be filled with a variety of items that are appropriate for boys or girls, ages 2-4, 5-9, 10-14.

The biggest need is for boys age 10-14.

Some ideas are dolls, soccer balls with pump, small stuffed animals, crayons, pencils, markers, note pads, glue sticks, combs, brushes, hair bands, toothbrushes, wash cloths, and card games. Also, books, play dough, jewelry, hats, gloves, sunglasses, puzzles, jump ropes, and yoyos.

Unacceptable items are: candy, toothpaste, food, war-related toys, liquids, glass items, and soap.

If you are able to include \$10 for shipping, that would be appreciated.

Boxes can be brought to TOL on Sunday, November 15th which is a joint Veterans service for all three congregations.

# Bishop Curry Statement on SCOTUS Immigration Decisions

July 8, 2026

Beloved in Christ,

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today, I write with a heavy heart.

Recently, the Supreme Court issued a decision that will allow this administration to proceed with terminating Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for more than 330,000 people from Haiti and 3,800 from Syria, many of whom have lived in this country for decades. They are not strangers. They are part of the fabric of our whole society. The termination of TPS threatens to [separate families](#), destabilize [local economies](#) and [force people to return](#) to countries where they may face severe humanitarian crises, violence and threats to their very lives.

This ruling comes amid a series of changes in U.S. policy that have increasingly restricted legal pathways for immigrants and those seeking protection. Last week the Supreme Court upheld a policy allowing individuals to be blocked from applying for asylum at the U.S. border. At the same time, we are witnessing the deportation of people with pending asylum claims after perfunctory mass hearings — often without access to legal representation. The refugee resettlement program, once a sign of this nation's commitment to welcome, remains largely closed to most nationalities and races, with a narrow exception for white South Africans

We are a people shaped by the Word of God, called by the apostle Paul to “welcome one another ... just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Romans 15:7). As Lutherans, we confess a faith that compels us to welcome and protect the vulnerable, to honor the dignity God gives every human being, and to uphold laws and policies that provide refuge to those fleeing violence, persecution and profound hardship.

In this moment, I invite this church to prayer, lament and action.

As a church, we pray for protection and justice for all TPS holders — from Haiti and Syria, and for the more than 1.3 million people who may be affected by this decision, including those from Venezuela, El Salvador, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and many other nations. May God’s mercy surround them and sustain them in the days ahead.

As a church, we pray for the churches, ministries and leaders of the ELCA who walk alongside immigrant communities through accompaniment, advocacy and immigration services. May they be granted wisdom, strength and courage for the work to which God has called them.

As a church, we lament the dehumanization of immigrants through rhetoric rooted in racism, white supremacy, xenophobia and fear — particularly against Black and Brown immigrants. We reject the spread of lies and conspiracy theories that falsely accuse these communities of harm. And we recommit ourselves to speaking truth, honoring dignity and recognizing every person as made in the image of God.

As a church, we call on the administration to do what is just — to extend TPS protections where conditions remain dangerous and unstable, and to support comprehensive immigration reform that reflects both justice and mercy, offering welcome to those who seek safety within our borders.

And I ask each of you, faithful people of God, to continue the work of love: through prayer, through advocacy, through accompaniment and through faithful witness in your communities.

Beloved, in times like these, it is easy to grow weary. But we are not alone. The God who calls us is faithful. The risen Christ invites us forward. The presence of the Spirit fills us with the power and courage to act.

Together, we walk the way of Jesus — with courage, with compassion and with hope.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yehiel Curry', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



**Join the BuffaLutheran Herd!**

**Buffalo Bisons**

**VS**

**Lehigh Valley IronPigs**

**Friday, August 21st**

**@ Sahlen Field / Game Time 6:35 PM**

**"Shea's Theater Night" & Post-Game Fireworks**

**BUY TICKETS ONLINE @**

**[www.WNYLutheranCharities.org](http://www.WNYLutheranCharities.org)**

**or Email: [info@wnylutherancharities.org](mailto:info@wnylutherancharities.org)**

**DEADLINE: 10 AM, August 18th**

**Lutheran Charities**  
*of Western New York*  
**Baseball**  
**Night**



**WORSHIP**  
**& PICNIC**  
**IN THE**  
**PARK**

***Join Us***

*Augustana  
Trinity Old Lutheran  
Good Shepherd*

**Sunday**

**August 30, 2026**

**Worship Time: 10:00 am**

**Veteran's Memorial Park**

**777 Niagara St., Tonawanda**

**Pavilion #2**