

December 2016

Dear Friends of Trinity,

It was just the right time for the Shepherd to be born.

The children of Israel had a rough history. They really tried to get their act together. They wanted to get it right this time. They did everything they could to obey the commandments of God: codified their laws, built their temple, attended to the traditions of ancient rabbis, and so forth. But the hole they had dug for themselves just got deeper and deeper. It was like quicksand—the more you struggle and flail about, the faster you sink.

The very people God chose to shepherd other nations now needed shepherding themselves. The valiant attempts to make themselves a people set apart only accomplished making them just like everyone else. They feared Rome and were feared by Rome. Both feared each other more than God and became power hungry.

Everyone in the entire world was lost. No one knew of God. Everybody had wandered off and gone astray and were enslaved to themselves. Shepherds can't do their work if they only care about themselves. They become no different than the sheep.

And then THE Shepherd came along. His birth would be heralded by shepherds of actual sheep. Shepherds were telling the lost sheep of Israel where to find the Shepherd. And they came. From near and far they gathered to see the infant Shepherd. Even in infancy he was already gathering his flock!

He is still gathering his flock today, calling all to faith in him instead of themselves. We will gather once again this Christmas and rejoice that we were once lost, but now we've been found. We are summoned out of the workaday world to behold our Infant Shepherd, Jesus. Listen to the account of his birth in Bethlehem and rejoice. Sing the anthems of the angelic host and rejoice. Receive the forgiveness of your sins and rejoice. Eat the Shepherd's feast, for he is both the host and the meal, and rejoice. Go on your way rejoicing.

At just the right time...Jesus was born for you! Merry Christmas!!

Pastor Hoag



December Newsletter 2016



Update from our Church Council President, Jeff McDonald

As we approach the holidays, I wanted to elaborate on one of our current causes - Morningstar Mission - and encourage you all to get involved with this cause this year. It is well known that congregations with an internal focus do not thrive nearly as well as congregations with an external focus. One of the easiest ways for a congregation to turn its focus to the external is to find a good cause and support it, and our group has done that year after year when it comes to Morningstar Mission. But to remind us all of the importance of this support, I wanted to document a few things about this mission as a reminder of why we find them so worthy of our support. Please consider the following points:

- Morningstar lost all state and federal funding when they refused to abandon their faith-based message to the people they serve. While it would be very lucrative for them to stop using the Bible as the main source of help for those they serve, they refused to compromise their integrity and chose to stay true to their message. As a faith-based organization ourselves, we have long found it important to help support this local mission, particularly since they no longer receive any governmental funding.
- The number of people who need the services Morningstar provides is regrettably on the rise, and the recent ushering in of cold weather will only push that number up even higher in the coming months. One of the reasons we support this charity at Christmas-time is because that is when their need is the greatest, but they have seen a steady rise year over year in the number of people needing help.
- With generous support from individuals and businesses in the area, Morningstar has been able to provide basic needs (clothing, a hot meal, a hot cup of coffee (which is ALWAYS served in a mug...remember we helped with hundreds of mug donations several years ago) and more) to thousands of women, children & men in our community who need their help. They also provide housing to a select few, with women & children in one area and a men's home in another. They require sobriety from all those they serve and they do what they can to help them regain their independence. Notably, they do all of this without charge to any of those they serve.

Now, one of the ways we choose to help this organization each year is through their Stars of Hope.

Children from the mission are given the opportunity to list some wants and needs on a sheet of paper and members of the community get to play "secret Santa" by going out and getting some of those things for these kids. These are generally kids who are not likely to get presents at Christmas time, and they are very pleasantly surprised to see a community come together and generously provide them with things they both want and need. There are three ways you can help with this as follows:

1. Sign up to buy for one of the Stars of Hope. Jen DePolo and Kim Standard are in charge of our 10 stars this year and they are looking for members to adopt a star. That commonly involves a purchase of at least \$40 from the needs list and \$40 from the wants list. I can tell you first hand,

these are likely to be some of your most rewarding purchases of the year, knowing you are buying for people in need.

2. Sign up to shop for one of the Stars of Hope. If you'd like to go buy gifts and turn in your receipts, we will use the proceeds from our Giving Tree envelopes to cover those purchases. This ensures that the kids are getting things from their list and if you'd like reimbursement for that shopping, please feel free to turn in your receipts.
3. DONATE to this cause by putting a donation in one of the envelopes on the tree in our hallway. If you're writing a check, you can make it out to Trinity and just put "Morningstar Mission" in the subject line. 100% of the funds we raise, after covering any receipts we receive from our shoppers, will be donated to Morningstar Mission to help them continue to do what they do. There is no limit on what we can donate here, and if many of us came together and all gave something to this, we could really make a difference for this mission.

Thanks for reading and hopefully the above has helped to explain why we feel our support of this mission is important, and why we choose to support them year after year. Thanks in advance for helping to make this effort worthwhile.

Member Updates

New Member: Zachary Horn (November 13, 2016)

Marriages:

Samantha Paulsen and Austin Cox (September 3, 2016)

Tracy Doerrer and Scott Longmire (November 12, 2016)



CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES

Members, who have not received offering envelopes in the past and would like to request them for the year 2017, please, fill out a request with your name, address, and telephone number and give it to Doris, the church secretary, or place in Janice Prospero's, Financial Secretary, church mailbox. Request forms are on the table in the hallway.

Also, members who desire to discontinue use of envelopes, please contact Doris or Janice.

"On behalf of the family of Edward J. Tatro, I want to thank all the members and friends of Trinity for your condolences at his passing. It is a blessing to have the support of our church family. May the Lord continue to bless His church and His followers, especially here at Trinity Lutheran.

Sincerely, Edward A. Tatro and family."

SOCIAL MINISTRY



MorningStar

MorningStar Christmas Activities. The MorningStar Giving Tree on the hall table, complete with envelopes for monetary donations, to be forwarded for this most charitable mission's works. Thank you, in advance, for your gifts in any amount.



“Stars of Hope” **This is in conjunction with the MorningStar Giving Tree. We have ten “stars” this year. Names and ages are printed beside the star. If you are interested in helping with this project, please select a name and contact Jen Depolo at 708.267.1776 or Kim Standard at 815.909.0705 and they will furnish you with the information for each “star”. Stars of Hope explanation and guideline papers are in the envelope attached to the display stand.** Members are encouraged to select a star and either purchase, or fund the purchase (by donating to the Giving Tree) of Christmas presents for needy families who are served by this local mission. ***If you'd like to go buy gifts and turn in your receipts, we will use the proceeds from our Giving Tree envelopes to cover those purchases. This ensures that the kids are getting things from their list and if you'd like reimbursement for that shopping, please feel free to turn in your receipts. All purchased, wrapped, and tagged gifts must be returned to Trinity by Sunday, December 4th, so they can be delivered to MorningStar on Friday morning, December 9th.***



Annual Congregational Christmas Celebration, hosted by Social Ministry, will be held on Sunday, December 4th from 5:00 – 7:00. “This is for all members, not just the children.” While the children are busy in the gym, the adults are invited to join us in the church to sing some Christmas Carols. Pizza, desserts, salads and drinks will be served at 5:00 p.m. Games, supplied & supervised by the Youth Group, will begin shortly thereafter. A sign-up sheet is on the hallway table. Please check the sheet for requested donated items.

Youth (high school and junior high) will be leading the games at the church Christmas party on Sunday, December 4. Please come at 4:30 p.m. to set up. We will finish by 7:30 p.m. Let Michelle Hoag know if you can attend so we get enough pizza for you!



Women's League "Annual Cookie Walk" will be held Saturday, December 3rd from 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. Baked goods from the congregation are needed, and very much appreciated. We can use cookies, breads, coffee cakes or candy. All profits go to the church and community needs. Styrofoam trays will be available on November 13th for you to transport your cookies for the sale. Baked good can be dropped off Friday, December 2nd from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m, or early Saturday morning.



Women's League is also collecting stocking stuffers for Salem. A list is posted by the designated boxes which are under the hallway table. Last date for donations is Sunday, December 11th.



Women's League Christmas Luncheon will be held on Tuesday, December 6th at 12:30 p.m. in the church basement. Guests do not need to be a member to attend. Hostesses are Cheryl Mork and Karen Dickson. This will be a catered luncheon with a cost of \$10.00 per person. Make your reservations by calling Ginny DeCarlo at 815.485.2001, Pat Fuerst at 815.485.6441, or Judy Wilmsen at 815.462.1473.



SCRIP GIFT CARDS – An easy way to shop and earn money for our church. Scrip cards are the same gift cards that you can purchase from retailers, including grocery & department stores, restaurants, gas stations, hotels, home improvement stores, etc. In addition to giving them as gifts, they can be used for daily or holiday shopping. We order the gift cards at a discount and you pay face value so there is no additional cost. The proceeds from this fundraiser are currently being put towards church improvement projects such the gym windows. **The deadlines for turning in your next order, along with payment, will be Monday, December 12th at noon.** Your order will be available for pick-up the weekend after the order is placed. Order forms are on the hallway table below the Youth bulletin board. You may place your order/payment in the gold envelope which is hanging on the end of the desk credenza in the church office. If interested in placing orders online, you will need to ask for an enrollment code. Direct any questions you may have to Angie Minett (minett411@yahoo.com or 815.467.2537) or Gary Purnell (815.485.9017). You can also learn more online at shopwithscrip.com.



Altar Flowers. The 2017 Flower Chart is posted in the wall case outside the church office. Order forms are attached. Flowers are placed on our altar every Sunday to enhance and beautify our altar area in memory of a loved one, to commemorate a birthday, wedding anniversary or in celebration of God's blessings. ***If you would like to give altar flowers, complete the form and place it in the Chancel Guild mailbox in the church office.*** If you select a date already chosen, it may be possible to share flowers that week. Please call Kay Purnell at 815.485.9017 or email her at purnellk51@hotmail.com. Flowers are \$8.50 per vase or \$17.00 for both vases. The flowers may be picked up after the Sunday service.



CHANCEL GUILD Our next meeting is Monday, **December 5th** at 6:30 p.m. Hostesses will be Debbie Nick and Sharon MacFarlane. We will be decorating the church for the Christmas season. All ladies of the congregation are invited to join us.



Chancel members, if at all possible please help the Women's League with their Cookie Walk by making some cookies. These ladies helped us with our luncheon, now it is our turn to help them.



POINSETTIAS FOR THE ALTAR

What a sight with the altar covered in poinsettias! Would you like to place a poinsettia or two in the Chancel for Christmas? Each plant is \$11.75 and can be picked up after the Christmas Day Service. You can order by completing the pink form on the table outside the church office, calling Kay Purnell (815.485.9017) or by calling the church office (815.485.6973). **Your order must be turned in by Sunday, December 18th. Please place your completed form inside the green folder on the desk in the church office.**

Stocking Stuffers

Fannie May Candy Bars: We have a new supply of Fannie May Candy bars. They are on the counter in the church office. Cost is \$1.00 for each. Please leave your payment in the gold envelope. The proceeds of the sales will go to the Chancel Guild. Thanks to Rita Larson for chairing this project.



The Sunday School Christmas Program will be Sunday, December 11th at the 10:30 a.m. church service. Refreshments will follow. Children should come at the regular 9:15 am time to prepare. The practice will be Saturday, **December 10th from 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 Noon.** A pizza lunch will be served after the rehearsal.



St. Matthew's.

We are continuing to support St. Matthew's Lutheran church in Chicago by collecting donations of non-perishable food items, as well as household goods. Please place the food items in the collection box by the parking lot door. The household items should be placed in the storage closet area at the far North end of the church basement. Please place items carefully so they do not block the aisle to the boiler room. **Thanks to Sandy Peters for recently hauling food, clothing and household items to St. Matthew's. Thanks to Virgil Switzer for helping her load up her car.**



If anyone is interested in helping with the hauling of these items to St. Matthew's, please contact the church office. **Extra help is always appreciated.**



Thanks to Sharon Buell for the fall cornucopia centerpiece which was placed on the coffee table in the seating area outside the church office.



MorningStar Mission Serving. Trinity has been helping with serving meals at MorningStar twice a month for a number of years. We help with serving on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month, and need 3-4 volunteers each time. **If you are interested in volunteering, please sign the sheet on the hallway table, or call the church office.** You must be at MorningStar by 3:45 pm. If you are interested in volunteering in another way, please call MorningStar at 815.722.5780. More information may be obtained by visiting their web at www.morningstarmission.org other volunteer positions.



Readers & Greeters Sign-Up sheets for December are on the hall table. Please stop and sign up.

Confirmation Class is held each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Hoag or call the church office at 815.485.6973.

Wednesday Morning Bible Class is held at 8:30 a.m. Please join this very interesting rroup.

Choir Practice – each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. New voices are always welcome. If you have questions, please call the church office at 815.485.6973.



Coffee Hour A new yellow sign-up sheet is on the hallway table for volunteers for the 4th Sunday of each month in 2017. **Please take a turn.** If you have any questions, please call the church office at 815.485.6973.



TRINITY PRAYER CHAIN

Trinity Lutheran has a Prayer Chain that is available to anyone for prayer support by fellow members. These prayers may be for personal, congregational, community, governmental, and all other needs. All requests are kept confidential. Please call Ginny DeCarlo (815) 485-2001 to request a prayer. The Bible says, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." James 5:16b.

If you are interested in being part of the Prayer Chain, or would like more information please give Ginny a call. You can also call the office at (815) 485-6973. We would be happy to provide you with all the information. Please consider being part of this worthwhile endeavor. You can make a difference.



Thanks to Pastor and Michelle Hoag and 3 of the Youth group, Cam Hoag, Ryan McDonald, and Alex Wheeler, for giving us such a "lift" on Sunday, November 20th. You helped carry up many crates, boxes and miscellaneous objects in our quest to clean out our house that is for sale. Your spirit and muscles really made the basement job easier. We are so grateful!

Bob and Ann Romadka



"A Christmas Carol" hosted by the New Lenox Rotary Club – at Lincoln-Way Central Rosenquist Auditorium. Friday, December 2, 8:00 p.m., Saturday, December 3, 8:00 p.m., and Sunday, 4:30. Tickets are on sale now \$15.00 adults; \$12.00 Seniors & Students. For details visit www.newlenoxrotary.org or call 708.339.1883.



The Will County Children's Advocacy Center is looking for men to compete in their annual Men Who Cook fundraiser. If you are male and love to cook, this is a great opportunity to show off your skills while helping to raise money for a very worthy cause. The Will County Children's Advocacy Center is a 501c3 organization that works with law enforcement on cases regarding physical and sexual abuse of children. The cook off is their major annual fundraiser and community event and will be held in March 2017. If you are interested in participating, please talk to Wade or Jessica Brokmeyer, or email Wade at w.brokmeyer90@gmail.com. Wade or Jessica will refer you to the committee chair for selection as space is limited.



Journey to Bethlehem – A Live Nativity! Christ Lutheran Church, 14700 S. 94th Ave., Orland Park. Friday, December 9 from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, December 10, 6:00 p.m. For info call 708.349.0431 or visit www.christlutheranorland.com



Home Instead Senior Care. If you are looking for Senior Care help, or for a job that is rewarding and nurtures your soul, apply with Home Instead Senior Care. For more information visit www.homeinstead.com or call 1.815.725.2088. Brochures are on the hallway table.

Church office hours: Monday and Thursday, 9-3; Tuesday and Friday, 9-12.



Christmas Services



Sunday, December 11th

10:30 am Sunday School Christmas Program

Christmas Eve – December 24th

5:00 p.m. Contemporary Worship Service

7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship Service with communion

Christmas Day Worship Service – December 25th

Christmas Carol Singing – 9:45 a.m.

Worship Service – 10:00 a.m.

Christmas is Joy! Christmas is Peace! May the peace and joy of this holiday season remain in your heart throughout the New Year. Remember to keep Christ in your CHRISTmas!