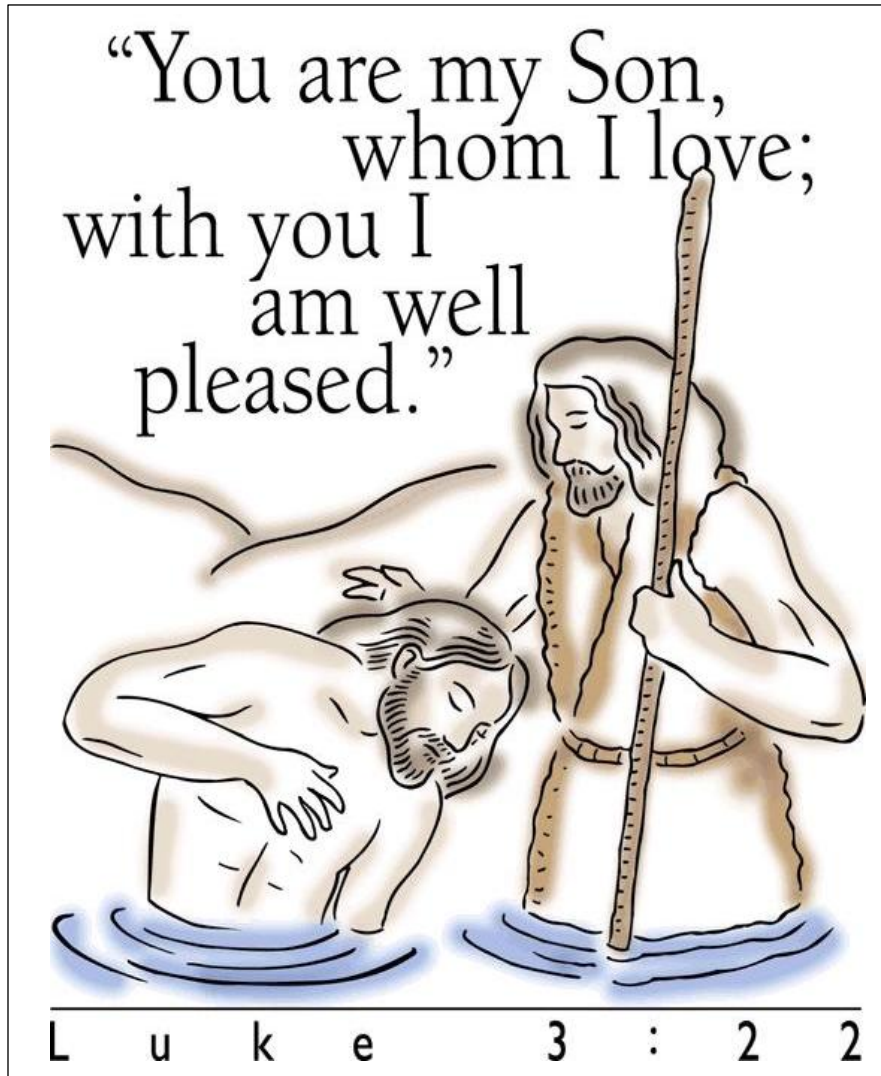


A Mission Congregation of the ELCA  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



Luke 3:1-22  
January 12, 2025



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page,  
our Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.

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## GATHERING

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- **Prelude** **Roxanne Groff**
- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**
- **Welcome** **Pr. Mel Musser**

\* **THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

*The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation.

**C: Amen.**

*The presiding minister addresses the assembly.*

P: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.*

P: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all. We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

\* **GATHERING HYMN “Songs of Thankfulness and Praise”** **LBW 90**



1 Songs of thank-ful - ness and praise, Je - sus, Lord, to thee we raise;  
 2 Man - i - fest at Jor - dan's stream, Proph-et, Priest, and King su - preme;  
 3 Man - i - fest in mak - ing whole pal - sied limbs and faint-ing soul;  
 4 Grant us grace to see thee, Lord, pres - ent in thy ho - ly word;



man - i - fest - ed by the star to the sa - ges from a - far,  
 and at Ca - na wed - ding guest in thy God-head man - i - fest;  
 man - i - fest in val - iant fight, quell-ing all the dev - il's might;  
 grace to im - i - tate thee now and be pure, as pure art thou;



branch of roy - al Da - vid's stem in thy birth at Beth - le - hem:  
 man - i - fest in pow'r di - vine, chang-ing wa - ter in - to wine;  
 man - i - fest in gra - cious will, ev - er bring-ing good from ill:  
 that we might be - come like thee at thy great e - piph - a - ny,



an - thems be to thee ad - dressed,  
 an - thems be to thee ad - dressed, God in flesh made man - i - fest.  
 an - thems be to thee ad - dressed,  
 and may praise thee, ev - er blest,

\* **APOSTOLIC GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

\* **PRAYER OF THE DAY.**

P: Let us pray... Gracious God, help us embrace the fullness of the truth that “all people shall see the salvation of God.” Your gifts of grace and love are overwhelming, and we thank you for your presence with us every day. In Jesus’ name we pray.

**C: Amen.**

• CHILDREN'S MESSAGE



**Theme:** New Year--New Beginning in Baptism  
**Materials:** Water for the Baptism Font  
**Scripture:** Luke 3:1-22

Hello girls and boys! I hope you had a great week... Today we're going to talk about new beginnings. Have you ever started an art project and messed it up really badly? When I mess up, sometimes I just rip up the paper and get a new one and start over. That's why I love the month of January. It's at the beginning of a brand new year and I can rip up and throw away all the bad things that I messed up last year and I get to start over from the beginning. I'll bet every one of us likes having a new fresh start!

Jesus also had times of new beginnings in his life too. One of those times was when he was baptized. There were a couple of very important things that happened when Jesus was baptized. First of all, the Bible tells us the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and landed upon him. The second thing was that God spoke and said, "You are my Son. I love you and I am well-pleased with you." This event marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry here on earth. Up until that time, he had not performed any miracles, but with God's stamp of approval and with the spirit of God upon him, Jesus began to perform great miracles. From this new beginning, many people began to understand that Jesus was truly the Son of God and they began to follow him.

Our own baptism represents a new beginning for us too. When we are baptized, it shows the world that just as Jesus rose from the dead through the glory of God the Father, we also live a new life in him. God may not always be well-pleased with us, but I think God looks down with an approving smile when he sees us trying to walk with Jesus. Every time we try to follow Jesus, but make mistakes and sin, God gives us another opportunity for a new beginning. I hope we can all make the most of the new beginnings God gives us as we live a new, Baptized life through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Dear Father, thank you for new beginnings. Help us to make the most of them, not through our own strength, but through the power of the Holy Spirit that lives within us. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

• **A READING OF SCRIPTURE: Luke 3:1-22**

R: Our scripture reading is from Luke, Chapter 2.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

**3** In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; <sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’” <sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” <sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” <sup>12</sup>Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” <sup>13</sup>He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. <sup>19</sup>But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias,

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\* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done,<sup>20</sup> added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

<sup>21</sup>Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened,<sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

R: This is the Word of the Lord!

**C: Praise to You, O Christ** (*Spoken*)

• **SERMON**

**Pr. Mel Musser**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who came to Baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire, Jesus Christ, The Messiah, amen.

Luke's version of the Baptism of Jesus is more than a little odd. I mean, we're told about the actual Baptism as a sort of after-thought. Listen again to what Luke says, "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove." (SLIDE) That's all we know from Luke's account, Jesus also had been baptized. Apparently, for Luke the actual Baptism, process was far less important than what happened next. Jesus was praying and the heaven was opened. I've seen enough TV shows and movies like Stargate to know what a portal to another world or dimension might look like. (SLIDE) It's like a hole where you can see all the way through to the other side and certain people and things are able to pass from this world to the other and vice versa. I'm not so certain that's what Luke is describing here.

Speaking of opening things, I remember a story about a travelling preacher who was making the rounds and attracting huge crowds all over the US and even in Europe. (SLIDE) This preacher always travelled with his friend and musician. At one of these revival meetings the preacher was handing out the music sheets and he came to this one young woman who refused to take the sheet music. The preacher was very persistent and continued to try to get her to accept the sing along sheets. After several attempts his musician friend tapped the preacher on the shoulder and informed him the girl was blind. The preacher was so embarrassed he instructed the musician to start up the music quickly so he could move past his embarrassment. Unfortunately his embarrassment turned to horror when the musician started to play “Open Our Eyes Lord, We Want To See Jesus”...

Luke tells us after Jesus was Baptized, heaven was opened... (SLIDE) The Greek word for opened is ἀνοίγω (anoigo). In the Greek, anoigo has 7 meanings related to this one word. Most of us immediately jump to the first definition which is to open, as a door or a window, from a shut or closed position, but the richness of the opening of heaven goes much deeper. Anoigo also means the thing that is opened is now readily accessible. Before Jesus, the people had to go through an intermediary or a priest. Now that God is incarnate and Baptized, the Kingdom of Heaven is now directly accessible to everyone who calls on the name of the Lord. When heaven was opened, that which had previously been hidden was now available to be seen and, at least somewhat better understood. Humanity could see

into the heart of God because heaven had been opened and revealed to us. The fourth definition for anoigo is that an obstacle, preventing us from having access to heaven has been removed. That obstacle is our Sin. In Baptism God removes our Sin as an obstacle between us and God. Anoigo also means something has been caused to function as it was intended to function. For example, mouths that were shut tight are now opened to speak the Word of God. Eyes that were blind are now opened to see God through faith. Ears that were shut up can now hear the Word of God. Best of all, our hearts are open to accept the forgiveness, grace, mercy, and love of God that our previously hardened hearts could never accept. The perfect tense of this verb means that heaven was opened once, but the effects are ongoing forever. Heaven wasn't just opened for a few minutes, long enough for God to tell us how much God loved Jesus and then shut back up again. Heaven was open and it remains open for us and for all people to see the wonders and the glory of the Kingdom of God. Finally, the openness of anoigo implies a candidness that God can tell us and show us the way things really are. God can now speak freely and openly to us, through Jesus because Jesus and God are one. I know that's a lot, but opening heaven is a lot.

What does it mean for us today that heaven is opened? Before Covid hit the big stores like Walmart and Meijer were open 24 hours a day. Now they close "for cleaning" and "restocking" from midnight until early morning. Heaven wasn't affected by the Covid virus. Heaven was opened in the incarnation of Jesus and



has remained open ever since. (SLIDE) When you walk through hard times, when the pain of grief knocks you to your knees, when the one you loved and invested so many years loving, turns their back on you, even as you face your own suffering and eventual death, heaven is still open. You have access to all of the riches of God's grace, God's love, and God's mercy. You can't say that about Walmart or Meijer, or any other human being or human institution. Only God in heaven and Jesus your Savior is with you through every mountaintop and in the deepest and darkest valley. Because heaven was opened not just once for Jesus, but opened once and for all times, you and I can finally see what God has had in store for us since the beginning. (SLIDE) The very first verse of the Bible says God created the heavens and the earth. That same God who created also opens the portal for you. All that remains is for you to look inside. Can you see the love pouring out? Can you see the Lamb who was slain for you sitting next to God? How does it feel to know the obstacle that separated you from this heaven, your Sin, has been completely and totally removed as far as the east is from the west?

When I think about heaven being opened so even the likes of me can enter through its pearly gates I admit, I'm overwhelmed. Some people say I'm overly sentimental, but I'm not ashamed to tell you that I still get a little weepy when I think about the great love God has for me. God was willing to become a stinky human being, susceptible to all our human emotions and frailties, including his inevitable death all for you and for me. (SLIDE) God loves you that much. Last

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- \* Please stand if able
  - Please be seated

week PJ and I were with Stephen, Lexie, Micah, and Jackson at the Youth Quake in Cincinnati. We heard over and over that the world is not enough and that we are not enough. We can't even make it through a day, I can't even make it through an hour sometimes without doing something or failing to do something and making our Father in Heaven grieve. I thank God for this story from Luke that allows me to peer into the heart of heaven and to know God's love is always not just enough, but much, much more than enough.

(SLIDE) When you find yourself in a funk or the middle of a pity party, remember to look into heaven to see the face of the God who loves you more than enough to give you the courage and the strength to make it another day. May the opened heavens reign in our lives and give you hope and courage in the face of all the junk this world can give. May you hear God's voice saying to you, (SLIDE) "You are my beloved. In you I am well pleased." Amen.

*Silence may be kept for meditation...*

\* **HYMN OF THE DAY** “On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry” **LBW 36**



1 On Jor - dan's banks the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es  
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the  
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge  
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us  
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and hear - ken,  
 way for God with - in, and let us all our  
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we  
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -  
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.  
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.  
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.  
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

\* **APOSTLES' CREED**

*The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.*

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

\* **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

L: Just as John the Baptist called people to repent and prepare for Jesus' arrival, help us to acknowledge where we have fallen short and to turn our hearts toward you. God, draw near,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Help us prepare the way for your goodness and mercy to reign throughout creation. Guide us to care faithfully for the earth and all its inhabitants. God, draw near,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Grant leaders the courage to uphold equity and equality, and bring forth the justice and righteousness proclaimed in our gospel today. God, draw near,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: We bring before you those in need of healing of all kinds, (*especially...*) Pour out your love upon them, and give them comfort and strength in their challenges. God, draw near,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Be with those who are caretakers for others. Grant them commitment and perseverance in all they do, and provide them with support that they may find rest and respite, too. God, draw near,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

L: Help us to learn from those who have gone before us, embracing their wisdom and resilience on our journey of faith. God, draw near,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: Trusting in your mercy and grace, we lift up all of our prayers to you.

**C: Amen.**

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**MEAL**

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• **OFFERING**

P: As we collect our offering here in person, those worshipping with us through the internet may go to our website located at [www.pitsburgtlc.org](http://www.pitsburgtlc.org) where you'll find a button labeled "Give to Trinity." You can make your offering to God through our secure website.

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\* Please stand if able

January 12, 2025

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**\* OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Let us pray for the offerings we receive this day ...Holy God, we acknowledge with humble hearts all that you have given us. Accept these gifts we bring before you in return, and use them to bless and sustain others in our community and around the world. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

**\* THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: United into one through Jesus Christ Our Lord, we pray as Jesus taught...

C: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**SENDING**

**• ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\* SENDING BLESSING**

P: The Spirit of the triune God bless you with joy, anoint you with compassion, and send you in love.

C: Amen.

**\* SENDING HYMN "As With Gladness Men of Old" LBW 82**



1 As with glad - ness men of old did the guid - ing star be - hold;  
2 As with joy - ful steps they sped, Sav - ior, to thy low - ly bed,  
3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at thy cra - dle, rude and bare,  
4 Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - 'ry day keep us in the nar - row way;  
5 In the heav'n - ly coun - try bright need they no cre - a - ted light;



as with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright;  
there to bend the knee be - fore thee, whom heav'n and earth a - dore;  
so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,  
and when earth - ly things are past, bring our ran - somed souls at last  
thou its light, its joy, its crown, thou its sun which goes not down;



so, most gra - cious Lord, may we ev - er - more be led by thee.  
so may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek thy mer - cy seat.  
all our cost - liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'n - ly king.  
where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glo - ry hide.  
there for - ev - er may we sing al - le - lu - ias to our king.

\* Please stand if able

January 12, 2025

• Please be seated

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**\* DISMISSAL**

**P:** Thank you all for joining us to worship our great and gracious God! Thanks also to our Facebook and other social media viewers for joining us as well. We're glad you're with us today. Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

**C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!**

**\* POSTLUDE**

**Roxanne Groff**

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Scripture readings for next Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup>  
Luke 4:14-30

**Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff**

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Larry Harter
Acolyte	Jackson Baker
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

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- \* Please stand if able
  - Please be seated

**This Week @ Trinity – January 12 thru January 19, 2025:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>EVENT</b>
<b>Sun, Jan. 12</b>	9:00 am	Confirmation Class
	9:30 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service
	11:30 am	Trinity Troops
	6:00 pm	Video/Book Club “The Chosen”
<b>Mon, Jan. 13</b>	7:30 pm	Dartball at St. John’s
<b>Wed, Jan. 15</b>	7:00 pm	Trinity Council Meeting
<b>Thurs, Jan. 16</b>	10:00 am	Ladies/Gents Luncheon @ Montage Café, Greenville
<b>Fri, Jan. 17</b>	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
<b>Sun, Jan. 19</b>	9:00 am	Confirmation Class
	9:30 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service w/Communion

**Save The Date!**

<b>Tuesday, January 21</b>	Newsletter Deadline
<b>Saturday, February 1 @ 6:00 pm</b>	Euchre Tournament at Trinity
<b>Sunday, February 9 @ 9:00 am</b>	Thrivent Guest Speaker with Breakfast!
<b>Sunday, February 16 @ 12 Noon</b>	Trinity Troops!

**Health Tips for the Week**  
**MIND:** Write a poem  
**BODY:** Check your immunization status  
**SPIRIT:** Start a gratitude journal.



**Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3**

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.

**Holy Communion Delivery Available to ALL:**

If you or anyone you know would like to have Holy Communion delivered to a home or place of business, please call Pastor Mel at 937-626-7100. He will bring a prefilled communion chalice including both sanctified wine and a morsel of bread all prepackaged from the Concordia True Vine company. This is a safe way to stay connected to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

- \* Please stand if able
- Please be seated

## Trinity Contact Info

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