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Trinity Lutheran Church & School

CONNECTED

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619 Main Street • St. Joseph, MI 49085
Church Office: 269-983-5000 • School Office: 269-983-3056
www.trinitystjoe.org

Do Not be Afraid, He is Risen ~Michael J. Roth

Easter is the highlight of the Christian year. After 40 days of Lent, we are ready to sing Hallelujah's and hear the trumpets sound. The worship services on Easter morning are lively and people are filled with joy at the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Given this Easter mood throughout Christendom, it is surprising that the dominant emotion on the day of the resurrection is fear. In Matthew's Gospel we are told that the guards trembled and became like dead men out of fear. The women at the tomb were told by the angel, "don't be afraid." The women then departed from the tomb with fear and great joy. Then when they encountered Jesus, He said to them, "Do not be afraid." The first ending of Mark's Gospel account of the resurrection says that trembling and astonishment seized the women, and they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid. Likewise, Luke reports that the women were afraid when they saw angels at Jesus' empty tomb.

Why does fear dominate the emotions of those who went to the tomb that Lord's Day following the crucifixion of Jesus. They were filled with sorrow and sadness following His arrest and crucifixion. But now He is risen, and they are afraid. Was it the angels, or the surprise, or something else that caused the fear? Was it that they did not believe Jesus' word that He would rise, and now they are convicted for their unwillingness to believe? Did the resurrection somehow convict them? The Scriptures do not say specifically. We do know that throughout the Scriptures when people encounter the Lord or an angel they often react in fear. To stand in the presence of the Almighty God would be a frightening thing.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead, however, is why we no longer need to fear. All our enemies have been vanquished. We do not need to fear our sin and guilt because it has all been forgiven by Jesus on the cross and forever buried when He rose from the dead. We need not fear Satan who stands to accuse us because Jesus has squared off against the devil and overcome. We need not fear death because Jesus is risen from the dead, conquering death, and declaring life for us eternally.

Maybe it isn't sin, Satan, or death that we fear. Maybe it is living with the unknown in this world that causes us to be afraid. We need not fear this life either because Jesus, who is risen says, "I will be with you always to the end of the age." In Jesus we see perfect love for us and love casts out all fear. One day when we see Jesus, risen and victorious, face to face, we will not fear because He will overwhelm us with His love and mercy. He will embrace us and welcome us home, because He passed through the tomb to open for us the door to everlasting life.

Do not be afraid, He is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

TRINITY'S WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

8:00am & 11:00am Traditional
Worship (Sanctuary)

9:30am Contemporary Worship
(Sanctuary)

11:00am Live Stream
(Facebook & YouTube)

Wednesday

11:00am & 6:30pm Worship
(Sanctuary)
(Mid-week Advent Services)

SOCIAL MEDIA

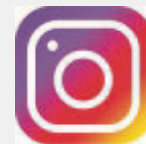


Facebook

Trinity Lutheran Church
St. Joseph

Trinity Lutheran School
St. Joseph

Trinity Lutheran Youth
St. Joseph MI



Instagram

@trinity_lutheran_school_sj

@trinity_lutheran_church_sj

@trinity_lutheran_youth_sj

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

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Early Childhood Center: 269-983-0040

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natalie.liss@discovertrinity.org

Homebound Members

James and Patricia Albright;
Betty Bailey; Bridgman
Bill Bluschke;
Steve Cayo; LT
Leah Duryee; WTN
Dianne Fernan;
Gladys Grieger; CT
Joan Jasper;
Elsie Jasper;
Barb Karstens; CT
David Karsten; WL
Janice Lange;
Deb Pratt;
Betty Rigoni;
Sherrie Strzykowski; PR
Shirley Wholer, CT
Joan Zonka

Please encourage our homebound members and others you may know to watch *Worship Anew*, Saturday mornings, 8:30am, through your local FOX station, WSBT-TV (Channel 22.2) out of South Bend

If you or someone you know has become homebound & would like a Pastoral visit, please call the Church Office at (269) 983-5000.

BG-Berrien General, CM-Country Manor Bridgman,
CP-Crown Point, CT-Caretel,
GA-Golden Age, Lakeview Terrace, SJ - LT,
J-Jordan's, OG-Orchard Grove,
PR-Pine Ridge; PL -Provision Living, SJ;
RM-Royalton Manor,
WL-Willows, WRR-Wild River Rest Buchanan,
WT-Whitcomb Towers,
WTB-Woodland Terrace Bridgman,
WTSJ-Woodland Terrace St Joseph,
WW-West Woods Niles,
WWB-West Woods Bridgman



April Anniversaries

Rick & Jamie Hodder	4/4/1992	
Donald & Donna Necas	4/7/1956	69th
Dennis & Christy Taylor	4/15/1989	
Mike & Jessica Engel	4/21/2012	
James & Karen Fisher	4/27/2002	
Jerry & Karen Schlaack	4/27/1963	62nd
Mike & Christine Carmichael	4/28/1984	
David & Mary Schmidke	4/29/1978	

If you do not see your anniversary listed, please call the Church Office at 983-5000 to update your records.



Praise Team

Join us in worship with the Trinity Lutheran Contemporary Worship band!

The Praise Team loves when you sing along, but we know it can be challenging if you do not know the songs. A playlist will be updated monthly to feature the music we will be singing at the Sunday 9:30am worship service. You do not need to have a Spotify account to enjoy this music. Play it at home, in your car, or wherever you enjoy music. We pray that this music will be a blessing to you during the week and then again in worship when we make a joyful noise together.

If you need help accessing this playlist, please let me help.

~Lisa Dove



Use this QR code to access the playlist on Spotify.

Art Fun 101 "Beaded Suncatchers"



Project: Beaded Suncatchers

Date: Saturday, April 12

Time: 9:00 am – noon

Place: Solid Rock Cafe

Available spots: 24

RSVP Deadline: April 9th

Host: Peri Hansen

Sign up through the MinistryOne App or use the QR Code on the right



Honest Chat Series 4 Spring 2025

Have you ever wanted to have a real conversation with your fellow Christians to discuss the difficult issues we are confronted with in today's world?

Honest Chats provide an opportunity to discuss touchy or hot topic issues in a safe, informative setting. Led by Pastor Michael Roth, Honest Chats are thought provoking, informative and interesting. Resources for discussion are provided. Come and join us for meaningful conversation that provide insight and answers for inquiring minds.

REVISED SCHEDULE - Scheduled Topics:

Thursday, April 24, 2025(SR) – Navigating Social Media Today

Time: 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Location: SR = Solid Rock

Note: Some topics may elicit the need for more conversation and additional opportunities to meet may be added.

Light refreshments. | Childcare not available at this time.



Trinity Lutheran Church & School Life Development Classes for Spring 2025

SUNDAY

GOSPEL READINGS OF THE CHURCH YEAR – ZOOM ON-LINE BIBLE STUDY (On-going and in progress)

In this study we will discuss the Gospel reading for the day. The Gospel text carries the theme for the Sundays of the Church Year. As we gather, online via Zoom, we are ensconced in the safety of our own home, yet able to see fellow participants and engage in edifying discussion. A weekly discussion handout will be emailed each week the participants. (SIGN IN TO LINK JUST BEFORE 9:30AM ON SUNDAYS)

LEADER: Deb Pratt

ONLINE:

<https://zoom.us/j/99496446874?pwd=MDNmWkhRWfHeG9PdVlXTGNkaFZBZz09>

TIME: Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

"WHAT IS WORSHIP?" BIBLE STUDY

"The Son of Man [Jesus] did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26). These words of Jesus define The Divine. These words define the Divine Worship Service. The Divine Service of the Gospel is to receive gifts from God. This Bible Study will take up the extraordinary task of answering the questions of who, what, when, where, why and how we have worship. This class will be team taught by Pastor David Rutter, our very own specialist in worship and music, and Tom Bird, our specialist in pursuing questions. Not very long ago our worship was challenged by the devastating onslaught of Covid. Every one of us was personally affected, maybe not by the disease but by the foreboding, forestalling, and the forbidding of worship in our church. Even years after we are still reeling from the problem of plummeted church attendance. It still has its effects. It raises the question: Is God worth worshipping? "Do we dare come to church today?" It is a question we often ask. Let's have a conversation about What is Worship? At 9:30 on Sunday mornings downstairs. Join us if you dare!

Day: Sunday

Leader: Tom Bird and Pastor David Rutter

Location: Church Fellowship Hall

Time: Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

MONDAY

LifeLight Bible Study – "Miracles"

This study is part of the LifeLight Bible study series of in-depth studies of Bible books. The goal of LifeLight is that through a regular program of in-depth personal and group study of Scripture, more and more Christian adults may grow in their faith in Jesus Christ. Miracles explores the miracles Jesus performed during His ministry on earth and studies His miraculous power over sickness, Satan, creation, and more. In addition, Miracles covers miracles from the Old Testament and questions about miracles today.

Day: Mondays

Time: 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Place: Lighthouse Café

Leader: Pastor Roth

TUESDAY

The Mighty & The Mysterious, author Heidi Goehmann

This encore of the Fall 2024 G.R.A.C.E. Women's Group study, centers around God's Word to the Colossians. One reviewer summarized the study as "a walk through the nitty-gritty reality of life, the suffering and discomfort we suffer every day, and the simultaneous incredible wonder that our God and Savior walks beside us and before us through it all." Come join us for a morning of fellowship, in-depth discussion and prayer. Small Group limited to 14. Please contact church office or Jeanne Strine (jeanne.strine@gmail.com) to sign up.

Begins Tuesday, April 22, 2025 (7 weeks)

Location: Solid Rock Café

Time: 9:30 to 11:30

Book Cost: \$16

Facilitated by: Jeanne Strine

Adult Instruction Class (Membership Class or Review of Christian Doctrine)

This is a class that is designed for those who would like to learn about the Christian faith from a Lutheran perspective. It prepares people for membership in the Lutheran Church and Trinity. It is a great way to get your questions answered in an informal and non-threatening atmosphere. Childcare and all the necessary materials are provided. The following topic will be covered. God's Word | God's Grace | The Triune God | Jesus Christ | The Holy Spirit | The Sacrament of Holy Baptism | The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper | Living the New Life of Faith | Fulfilling the Great Commission and Living the Great Commandment | Rejoicing in God's Gift of Community | Integrating into the Life of the Church

Day: Tuesdays

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Ministry Center

Leader: Pastor Roth

ANGELS AND DEMONS - The Lutheran Difference Cherubim. Angel of the Lord. Satan. Seraphim.

So many opinions. What do you believe?

As Lutherans interact with other Christians, they often struggle to explain their beliefs and practices. Although many Lutherans have learned the "what" of Lutheran doctrines, they do not always understand the "why." Based on God's Word as faithfully reflected in the Lutheran Confessions, this study will help you to state clearly what you believe. Contents: About This Series | Student Introduction | An Overview of Christian Denominations | Lutheran Facts | Angels and Their Beginning | Who and What Are Angels? | Ranks and Number of Angels | Good and Evil Angels (Demons) | What Do Evil Angels Do? | What Do Good Angels Do?

Day: Tuesdays,

Time: 6:30-8pm

Location: Lighthouse Café, Ministry Center

Leader: Pastor Benjamin Micheel

WEDNESDAY

Science and the Savior - Son-Risers Bible Study

Off the Edge: Faith, Science, and the Future.

Off the Edge looks at the creation of the universe, the end of the universe, and the possibility of life on other planets. Topics include: The relationship between faith and science | Scientific cosmologies | The origin of life | Extraterrestrial life | Contact with aliens | The Gospel and the end times

Time: 6:45 – 7:45 a.m.

Place: Ministry Center

Leader: Pastor Roth

THURSDAY

ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Join with a host of other adults for a time of fellowship and study of God's Word. Plenty of breakfast treats abound in this group.

Day: Mondays

Location: Lighthouse Café, Ministry Center

Time: 9:30am – Coffee and breakfast treats

10:00-11:00 a.m. – Bible Study

Leader: Pastor Tom Batsky

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL (Preschool through 4th Grade)

Children's Sunday school at 9:30am, in the Children's Ministry Room on the lower level (next to the Fellowship Hall). Join us in learning from the Bible about God's love for us. If you would like to get involved in Children's Sunday School, contact the church office. We're excited to dive into God's Word together!

Coordinator: Natalie Liss

5th – 12th Grade Bible Study

This class meets in Room 205, 2nd floor of the school on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30am. The class is led by Pastor Benjamin Micheel or Pastor Joseph Liss.

For more information, contact Pastor Micheel at

benjamin.micheel@discovertrinity.org

YOUTH MINISTRY

5TH / 6TH GRADE CONFIRMATION (public school)

Class for 5th and 6th grade will meet in the room #204, located upstairs of the school, at 9:30 am on Sundays with Deacon Scott Kizer or Mike Brow. They will be going through the Bible and the Catechism together and getting prepared for Confirmation instruction. If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

7th / 8th GRADE CONFIRMATION (public school)

Confirmation class will meet at from 9:30-10:30am, in the Solid Rock Café, with Sarah Roth. If you were not able to be at the Confirmation Orientation, please contact Rev. Benjamin Micheel for more information at benjamin.micheel@discovertrinity.org

Trinity Lutheran Church & School Life Development Classes for Spring 2025

YOUTH GROUPS

Contact Harrison Folk with any questions at
Harrison.folk@discovertrinity.org

Ignite Sr High Youth Group – Sundays at 6:30 p.m. @ the
Solid Rock Café.

412 Jr High Youth Group – 2nd Sunday of the month at
4:00 p.m. @ the Solid Rock Café

MUSIC MINISTRY

- Want to do something but not sure what? If you sing or play an instrument, contact Rev. David Rutter to get connected to serve the church with your musical talent.
- Contemporary Praise Team Practice will be held weekly. If you are interested in joining, please contact Lisa Dove for more information.
- Adult Choir meets on Wednesday evenings, from 6:30-8:30pm, in the Music Room. Rev. David Rutter is serving as our Director.
- Handbells began meeting in February. Please contact Rev. Rutter for more information.

CARING MINISTRIES

STEPHEN MINISTRIES

Stephen Ministries Mission: Christ caring for people through people.

Stephen Ministers are lay members of our congregation who receive extensive training to be able to provide one-to-one, confidential, Christian care to people experiencing challenges in life-- such as grief, loneliness, divorce, job loss, anxiety, health issues; this is only a few of the many life difficulties they can be there to help you through. We believe that *"God is the Cure Giver, Stephen Ministers are the Caregivers"*. Be sure to visit our website to learn more about Stephen Ministry- www.trinitystjoe.org; church tab; Stephen ministry tab. **To receive care from a Stephen Minister, contact Pastor Roth or Betty Perrone in the church office.**

STEPHEN LEADERS: Pastor Michael J. Roth, John Kroonblawd, Sheila Kroonblawd, Betty Perrone, and Jean Christensen.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS and VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB | DINNER FOR EIGHT | S.A.G.E.S.
HONEST CHATS | GRIEF SHARE (on-line) | 3 C'S GROUP
LWML / LADIES AID | MEN'S NETWORK | ART FUN 101 |
PRAYER MINISTERS | FUNERAL MEAL MINISTRY | CARING
MEAL MINISTRY | ELDER CARE | FOOD TRUCK | SOUP
KITCHEN | CHURCH SERVERS (ushers, etc) | ALTAR GUILD
BOTANICAL BRIGADE

And so many more ways to get involved... watch the TLW & Connected, and listen to the pastor's verbal announcements on Sunday morning.

Please don't hesitate to contact the Church Office at 269-983-5000, if you have any questions.



Holy Week

O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?

Palm Sunday
8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday
(Holy Communion)
11:00 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday
Cross Walk - 12:15 p.m.
Tenebrae 6:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday
(Holy Communion)
Sunrise Service 6:30 a.m.
Traditional Worship 8:00 a.m.
Contemporary Worship 9:30 a.m.
Traditional Worship 11:00 a.m.
Easter Breakfast 7:30-11:30 a.m.

Trinity Lutheran School & Early Childhood Center News

SCHOOL - Amy Roth, Principal

Hi Trinity families,

Spring has arrived! As I write this, the sun is streaming through the windows, and I can hear the excitement of students eager to head outside and enjoy the warmer weather. It's hard to believe we're already in the fourth quarter of the school year!

Before we look ahead, I want to take a moment to reflect on a special event from the end of February. We wrapped up our archery unit with our annual tournament, where our 5th-8th graders showcased the skills they had been honing for two months. The top 10 archers competed, and we're thrilled to congratulate Elliott Ashton as this year's champion! A huge thank you to Tim Ernst and Joe Liss for leading this fun unit.

March was an exciting month filled with a love for reading! We celebrated Reading Month with a variety of themed days, including:

- Beachy Books Bash – Students lounged with books in warm-weather attire on beach towels in the gym.
- Cozy Up and Read Day – Pajama day is always a favorite!
- Disney Day – We explored fairy tales and fantasy stories.
- Blackout Day – A break from screens encouraged even more time with books.

We also had numerous guest readers. Fostering a love of reading is essential for academic success, and we hope the students continue to be life-long readers!

Another exciting highlight was our participation in the Science Olympiad! After several years away from this event, we were excited to send 14 students from 6th-8th grade to compete in various STEM challenges. This hands-on experience allowed them to explore science in a dynamic and fun way, and we look forward to returning next year.

Lastly, open enrollment is happening now, and we're excited to welcome many new families for the upcoming school year! Please continue to help us spread the word about our wonderful school as we seek to share the Gospel throughout the community.

Blessings on your Easter celebration! He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

ECC - Jennifer Reynnells, Director

April Showers Bring May Flowers! We are enjoying more daylight and more time outside on the playground. The classes are all going for walks and looking for signs that Spring is here! We are learning more about Holy Week as we talk about Palm Sunday, Jesus in the garden, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. We will explore more about how much Jesus loves us and how He forgives all the bad things that we do.

We hope you can join us on Palm Sunday, April 13th, for our preschool classrooms' singing at the 11 AM church service.

We are currently enrolling for the 2025/2026 school year. Please contact Jennifer at jennifer.reynnells@discovertrinity.org for more information or to enroll. We currently have three-year-old and four-year-old childcare and traditional preschool openings!

OFFICIAL ACTS

Membership Gains

Baptisms

Copeland Szykiel – born 8/6/2017, baptized 2/23/2025 – daughter of Kyle & Tara (Whitesides) Szykiel

Lenna Szykiel - born 10/26/2019, baptized 2/23/2025 – daughter of Kyle & Tara (Whitesides) Szykiel

Maris Szykiel - born 9/3/2021, baptized 2/23/2025 – daughter of Kyle & Tara (Whitesides) Szykiel

Transfers

Matthew & Julianne Mast and Hazel (b) & Silas (b) – from Christ Lutheran Church, Stevensville MI

Rev. David Rutter – from Trinity Lutheran Church, Utica, MI

Sarah Rutter - from Trinity Lutheran Church, Utica, MI

Eliana Rutter - from Trinity Lutheran Church, Utica, MI

Membership Losses

Deaths

Norman Stemm – died 2/12/25, buried 2/18/25

Susan Batsky – died 2/16/25, buried 2/22/25



Youth and Family Life Ministries

My Dear Friends in Christ,

It's nearly here. Easter is just around the corner. Sure, we're still in the midst of the season of Lent and I pray that you have had the opportunity over the past several weeks to spend extra time in prayer and reflection on your life and what Jesus has done for you through his perfect work in your place.

But Easter is nearly here. And along with it we will yet again experience the promises of our own resurrection from the dead as we look on with the women at the tomb and find, as the angel says, that Jesus is no longer there but has risen, just as he said that he would.

In the midst of all these things, I encourage you to join us for all of the worship opportunities that are being put forth, including Lent services, Holy Week services, and of course, Easter services.

As we have been for the past several months, the senior high youth group is continuing to raise funds for our trip to New Orleans for the LCMS Youth Gathering in July. We give thanks to God and to all of you for your generous support so far. We do have several other opportunities for you to help out in the weeks and months ahead.

The youth will be hosting the annual Easter breakfast on Easter Sunday again this year. The breakfast takes place in the fellowship hall and the proceeds will go to support our youth who are attending the youth gathering this summer. Harrison and I are happy to share more information with you, but we do appreciate everyone who is willing to donate the various food items that we need.

If you have any questions or would just like more information, please let me know or talk to Harrison Folk, our youth director, and we will be happy to keep you up to date. Thanks again and may the Lord bless you as you prepare to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ once again.

*God's Blessings,
Pastor Micheel*

Youth Schedule for April – times and dates are subject to change. Please see Harrison's weekly email for the most up to date information.

4/6/25 – Ignite Youth Group – 6:30 p.m. @ the Solid Rock Café

4/11/25 – Easter Egg Hunt – 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the school gym and church fellowship hall

4/13/25 – Ignite and 412 joint Youth Group – 4:30 p.m. @ the Solid Rock Café

4/19/25 – Easter Breakfast Setup – 9:00-noon in the Church Fellowship Hall

4/20/25 – Easter Breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. in the Church Fellowship Hall

4/20/25 – No Youth Group

4/27/25 – Ignite and 412 joint Youth Group – 4:30 p.m. @ the Solid Rock Café

Events to put on your calendar now

4/30/25 – Confirmation Rehearsal

5/4/25 – Confirmation Sunday

5/10/25 – Blossomtime Parade Fundraiser

6/16/25-6/20/25 – Vacation Bible School

7/18/25-7/24/25 – LCMS Youth Gathering



Bring your Peeps

Easter

EGG HUNT

Friday, April 11th 5:00-7:00 p.m.

5:00 pm Pizza Dinner will be served in the Fellowship Hall

After Dinner: Easter Egg Hunt. Bounce Houses. Fellowship and FUN!

Scan to register TODAY!

The poster features three colorful Peeps (yellow, pink, and blue) and a row of colorful Easter eggs at the bottom. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.

NOTES FROM THE ELDERS

Acts 16:13-14 – “On the Sabbath we went outside the city (Philippi) gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lidia, who was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.”

In the missions recorded in Acts, Paul adapted his approach, but never his message. There was no Synagogue in Philippi, so he met by a live stream. Now we have worship by “life stream”. Back then they took offerings for missions in other cities. Now, it still blows my mind, we can make our offering by taking a picture of the QR Code on the “Big Screen”. We have adapted our approach but never our message. IT is the same eternal Gospel.

We are studying “Worship” in the 9:30 am Bible Study, led by Pastor Rutter each Sunday. A member of the class shared a story with me about the meaningful cycle of worship at Trinity. He was baptized some 50 years ago. It was right there at the foot of the altar, where his Godmother, we adapted and call them sponsors now, held him as he was baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. His Godmother supported his Christian growth for years, school, confirmation and on.

Then came the time that his Godmother was taken to heaven to be with the Lord. My friend in class said that it meant a tremendous significance to him that he was honored to be one of her pallbearers there at the foot of the altar. The same places she held him in baptism, he years later accompanied her casket. This is a beautiful example of the cycle of the life of the Communion of Saint.

Tom Bird, Elder



Those Serving in the Armed Forces

U.S. Marines

SGT Paul Jersey, stationed at Marine Corps Recruiting station in Saginaw Michigan; son of Tim & Jill Jersey

U.S. Army

PFC Riley Engel, stationed in North Carolina, grandson of Gus & Judy Hinkelman

SPC Benjamin Johnson, current assignment Caisson Platoon, U.S. Army Horseman, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA, grandson of Natalie Johnson

U.S. Navy

Lt Eric Gledhill, Chaplain, US Navy, 29 Palms Base, California, brother of Stephanie McLaughlin

Lt. Adam Roth, Naval Aviator Reserves, son of Rev. Michael and Amy Roth

LTJG Mark Williams, Navy Pilot Reserves, VAQ-136 Squadron, Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island, Oak Harbor, WA, nephew of Linda Williams

Ensign Madeline Williams, Expeditionary Strike Group 3, Great Niece of Linda Williams

LTJG Philip Marquardt, Navy Reserves, son of Mike & Dawn Marquardt

LTJG 02 Mallorie Miller, stationed in California, great niece of Jan Dasse

U.S. Air Force

Capt. Haleigh Wendzel, US Air Force, stationed in the UK, daughter of Brad & Joyce Wendzel, granddaughter of Alton & Millie Wendzel; and Haleigh's husband, Major Will Piepenbring, stationed in the UK.

SrA, Kaden Stock, stationed at Hickam Air Force Base, Honolulu, Hawaii, Grandson of Mark & Sally Matzke

Senior Airman, Stacy M. Streeter, stationed at Jacksonville Air Force Base, Little Rock, AR, Granddaughter of Charles & Carol Poll

U.S. Coast Guard

LTJG 02 Camille Crabtree stationed in Florida, great niece of Jan Dasse

Please keep these loved ones in your prayers!

If your family members status has changed, please call the church office.

Blue Star Mothers support our veterans and active-duty military personnel, stateside and overseas. If you would like your loved one to receive a periodic Care Package, please contact Marie: 269-519-8974; Jane: 269-469-5182; or email: CharlesBaldwinBSM@yahoo.com

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

LADIES AID/Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) News

Tuesday, April 1 at 6:30 PM will start our 2025 Ladies Aid meetings gathering at the Ministry Center. We are planning a fun afternoon! A few things to fool you but nothing to embarrass you. We will tell you how April Fool's Day started, also play some games with real cool prizes. We'll enjoy some yummy desserts and just have fun, fun, fun!!



We will also be seeking nominations for Treasurer and Vice-President.

Please let us know if you plan on coming by calling Katherine at 429-7424.

On Tuesday, May 6th our monthly meeting is at 6:30pm in the Lighthouse Cafe'. As Christian women, we will learn more about Stephen Ministry at Trinity and how to guide a friend or family member with a personal concern toward Stephen Ministry. Join us as we celebrate Mother's Day, too! Our service project will be finishing Mother's Day cards for members.

The Ladies Aid would also like to thank everyone who helped with the LWML Prayer Day held on March 20th at Trinity. It was wonderful seeing our sisters in Christ from other congregations.

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

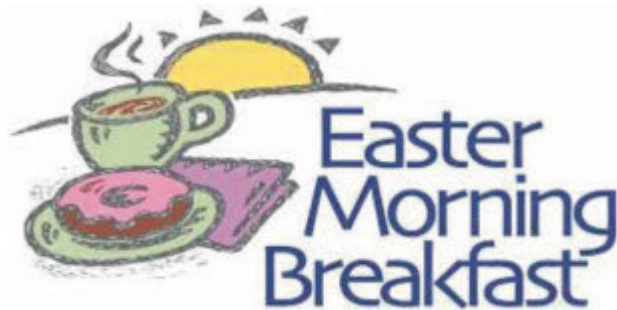
The Wednesday Sisters by Meg Waite Clayton

Friendship, loyalty, and love lie at the heart of this beautifully written, poignant, and sweeping novel of five women who, over the course of four decades, come to redefine what it means to be family. "This generous and inventive book is a delight to read, an evocation of the power of friendship to sustain, encourage, and embolden us. Join the sisterhood!"—Karen Joy Fowler, author of *The Jane Austen Book Club* For thirty-five years, Frankie, Linda, Kath, Brett, and Ally have met every Wednesday at the park near their homes in Palo Alto, California. Defined when they first meet by what their husbands do, the young homemakers and mothers are far removed from the Summer of Love that has enveloped most of the Bay Area in 1967. These "Wednesday Sisters" seem to have little in common: Frankie is a timid transplant from Chicago, brutally blunt Linda is a remarkable athlete, Kath is a Kentucky debutante, quiet Ally has a secret, and quirky, ultra-intelligent Brett wears little white gloves with her miniskirts. But they are bonded by a shared love of both literature—Fitzgerald, Eliot, Austen, du Maurier, Plath, and Dickens—and the Miss America Pageant, which they watch together every year. As the years roll on and their children grow, the quintet forms a writers circle to express their hopes and dreams through poems, stories, and, eventually, books. Along the way, they experience history in the Vietnam, the race for the moon, and a women's movement that challenges everything they have ever thought about themselves, while at the same time supporting one another through changes in their personal lives brought on by infidelity, longing, illness, failure, and success. Humorous and moving, *The Wednesday Sisters* is a literary feast for book lovers that earns a place among those popular works that honor the joyful, mysterious, unbreakable bonds between friends.

When: Saturday, April 19, 10:30 am
Where: Stevensville Martins, Upper Level
Facilitator: Nancy Pedde

2025 READING LIST (subject to change)

May 17	From Sand and Ash	Amy Harmon
June 21	The Incredible Winston Browne	Sean Dietrich
July 19	Miss Benson's Beetle	Rachel Joyce
August 16	The All American	Susie Finkbeiner
September 20	The Extraordinary Deaths of Mrs. Kip	Sara Brunsvold
October 18	The Measure	Nikki Erlick
December 6	Bright Lights, Big Christmas	Mary Kay Andrews



Egg bakes, fruit, baked goods, juice, and coffee

Easter Sunday is April 20th

The Easter Breakfast will be sponsored by the Youth Group this year. Breakfast will be served from 7:30-11:30 am in the Church Fellowship Hall.

Donations given will support the Youth
Attending the National Youth Gathering this summer!

We are asking for donations of the baked goods, juice, fruit, and egg bakes. If you are willing to help in this way, please contact the Church office at (269) 983-5000 or speak to Harrison Folk.

FROM THE ARCHIVES By Janet Frazier

The Fall of 1917 was a rare festive occasion for Trinity congregation, when with gratitude to God, Trinity celebrated the golden jubilee of its founding with festivities extending over a five-day period. The celebration began on Sunday, November 25, with services conducted in the German and the English languages.

Through the entire five-day celebration, the keynote was praise to God for His goodness and manifold blessings during the past fifty years. From 1867 to 1917 the following ministerial acts were performed: Baptisms — 2255, confirmations — 1000, marriages — 571, burials — 663. The congregation had a communion membership of 900 and a voting membership of 261. The school had an enrollment of about 200.

A song, "My Dear Old Trinity," written by Pastor Nuechterlein and set to music by the late Teacher Theodore Breihan, is a great favorite and is often sung by the children's chorus and the congregation.

Sons of Trinity Church answered the call to serve their country, on land and on sea, during World War I, and under the protecting hand of God most all returned safely to their families and their Church. Our records show that about 80 members enlisted or were called for service.

But the greatest undertaking of Trinity was the building of the present church edifice. It was in the month of May, 1922, that the first steps were taken to make plans for a new and larger house of worship in order to better serve the growing membership of Trinity. In November of that year, the congregation purchased the remainder of the property on the block of Court Street. (this is the part of the block the church is built on.)

The cornerstone of Trinity Church was laid with appropriate services.

A day of special joy and thanksgiving for Trinity was March 29, 1925, the day of dedication of our beautiful house of God.

"Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide,
For 'round us falls the eventide,
Nor let Thy Word, that heavenly light,
For us be ever veiled in night. Amen."

Memorials

The following have made a gift to
Trinity Lutheran Church or School.

In memory of Susan Batsky:

Rev. Thomas Batsky
Gerald and Janet Berkholz
Brian Berndt
Tom and Terry Bird
William and Adele Bluschke
John Bock
Fred and Janet Brecht
Rev. James and Donna Cotter
Gerald and Jean Christensen
Gus Damaske
Marcia Dinges
Eleanor Dorow
Fred Dorow
Pete and Linda Fellows
Judy Fowler
Karen Gresens
Bill and Connie Haase
Rich Hackbarth
Martin and Deanna Heminger
John and Paula Jakubs
Tim and Jill Jersey
Shirley Johnson
Kenneth and Elise Koenemann
Gerald and Wilma Malinasky
Louise Mueller
Kathleen Nichols
Michael Peirce and Amy Porritt
Peirce
Betty Perrone
Nancy Perry
Wayne and Bonnie Petzke
Lee Sadler
Ruby Schaffer
Gary and Jeannie Scharnowske
Dean and Marilyn Schmaltz
Ann Schroeder
Herbert and Joyce Schumm
David and Gail Spencer
Bill and Janice Stouffer
Jeanne Strine
Lori Tucker
Jerry and Trish Vigansky
Bryan and Kathy Virgil
Fred and Beth Wassilak
Irma Wedde
David and Catherine Whalen
Linda Williams

In memory of Richard Smith:
Barbara Butler

In memory of Norman Stemm:

Tom and Terry Bird
William and Adele Bluschke
Jim and Sharon Dewey
Eleanor Dorow
Richard and Shelle Dragomer
Lorraine Eckert
Bill and Connie Haase
Rich Hackbarth
Erika Mauerman
George and Janice Merrill
Louise Mueller
Lee Sadler
Dean and Marilyn Schmaltz
Ross and Deborah Skibbe
Bill and Janice Stouffer
Norman and Joyce Strunk
Fred and Beth Wassilak
Linda Williams

In memory of Rolland Yeske:
James and Patricia Albright



An update --- which Service[s] will we use?

The November's edition of "Connected" included an article stating that the Board of Elders was reviewing the frequencies of which Services we have been using for our Sunday Services. The article indicated that our congregation had been using six Orders of Services during the course of a year. The congregation members were requested to provide insights and opinions to the Elders and myself, based on the overriding concern of allowing one's memory to function. In other words, the repeated use of a particular Service allows the participants to memorize the words of that Service, many of the words which will bring comfort to the individual member in his time of need. It is inspiring and gratifying, as a pastor, to be able to visit a member with the Sacrament of Holy Communion and hear the member confess his sins and sing the Agnus Dei and Offertory, sometimes even [sing] the Nunc Dimittis, as these words have remained in the member's heart and mind as the result of the repeated use of the same Service. Such retention and use also allows the member to still feel that he is part of the congregation, even though he may not be able to attend.

After receiving numerous responses and considering the matter for a few months, I have drafted a proposed schedule indicating which Services will be used during the various Sundays of the Church Year. The Elders are considering my proposal, some already having responded favorably. Soon we hope to share the proposal, once modified --- if modified, with the congregation during a Voters' Assembly meeting, receiving additional responses. If you haven't yet responded to the November "Connected" article, please feel free to do so, either to a member of the Board of Elders or to myself. Thank you.

In Christ, Pastor David Rutter+

STEPHEN MINISTRY

STEPHEN MINISTRY IS HOSTING AN EVENT, ALL ADULTS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!

**Cognitive Impairments | Presented by Criag Kuhn & Michelle Wrubble
In The Solid Rock Café, Tuesday, April 8 at 6:30pm**



Craig Kuhn, Principal of Blossomland Learning Center, and Michelle Wrubble, Supervisor of Autism Spectrum Disorder Programs at the Berrien County Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) will speak about Cognitive Impairments on April 8 at 6:30pm in The Solid Rock Café. Everyone is invited to join this Stephen Ministry's Continuing Education presentation.

These educators will speak about common themes and needs for individuals with complex needs such as cognitive impairments. Together they will illustrate tools that can help with communication and successful interactions and discuss simple strategies that can be useful when individuals are frustrated or showing anxiety in situations.

Blossomland Learning Center provides positive learning environments and experiences that advance the well-being, academic success, and lifelong achievement of our students. Located in Berrien Springs, Blossomland Learning Center provides comprehensive programs and therapeutic services for students with severe multiple impairments and students with moderate to severe cognitive impairments, ages 3 to 26.

Berrien RESA's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) program enables students ages 5-26 to achieve communication, social engagement, academic and functional goals, and personal growth according to their Individualized Educational Program and Transitional Service Plan. The ASD program is located in St. Joseph, Michigan, at Lighthouse Education Center. Offsite classrooms are located within local school districts throughout Berrien County.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL
CONGREGATIONAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT—2024/2025 FISCAL YEAR
July 1, 2024 through February 28, 2025

GENERAL FUND	2023-2024			2024-2025			
	ANNUAL BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	% OF ANNUAL BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET	YTD BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	% OF ANNUAL BUDGET
TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,805,932.00	\$1,478,665.05	52.70%	\$2,971,595.00	\$1,647,966.36	\$1,613,971.84	54.31%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,780,304.00	\$1,485,861.72	53.44%	\$2,971,595.00	\$1,752,563.54	\$1,664,464.04	56.01%
REVENUE OVER/(UNDER) EXPENSES	\$25,628.00	-\$7,196.67	-28.08%	\$0.00	-\$104,597.18	-\$50,492.20	#DIV/0!

A more detailed Treasurer's Report is available for viewing in the Church Office.
Respectfully submitted,
Gus Damaske, Treasurer

WEEKLY ENVELOPE & PLATE	Contributions	Over/(Under) to Meet Budget	YTD Over/(Under) Budget
February 2, 2025	\$28,417.68	\$11,546.53	(\$38,892.79)
February 9, 2025	\$12,528.05	(\$4,343.10)	(\$43,235.89)
February 16, 2025	\$11,951.00	(\$4,920.15)	(\$48,156.04)
February 23, 2025	\$13,944.27	(\$2,926.88)	(\$51,082.92)
Totals	\$66,841.00	(\$643.60)	
Weekly Envelope & Plate Budget Needed:		\$16,864.42	

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CASH REPORT--JANUARY, 2025

DAILY LOW BALANCE	\$551,276.33
DAILY HIGH BALANCE	\$699,381.02
DAILY AVERAGE FOR THE MONTH	\$637,240.82

COMMUNITY STATS

Mobile Food Pantry(Food Truck) on February 27th

A sincere thank you to the 20 volunteers who make it possible. In February we served 95 households, which consisted of 302 individuals, 71 children, 94 seniors, and 18 veterans. We distributed approximately 2800 lbs. of food.

Benton Harbor Soup Kitchens on February 24th.

Again with the help of our volunteers with Tom Barnes at the helm, 102 meals were served! Again, we could not do this without the dedication of these volunteers!!!

Blessings, Deacon Scott Kizer

SAGES



Join SAGES on **April 15th** for a presentation from
Region 4 Area Agency on Aging

From 11 am to 1 pm in the Lighthouse
Café, Ministry Center

Learn how seniors can have assistance in independent living, support on long term services, and much more.

Meet Alexandria who will answer your questions.

Be prepared to walk away knowing what is available for you and how to get it.

A luncheon will be served after the presentation.

Contact Betty at church office, 983-5000, to sign up by April 11th.

A \$5.00 fee per person is asked to offset the costs.



We Are Celebrating...

The following Trinity Members are celebrating birthdays this month:

- 4/1 Deatrick Moore
- 4/2
- 4/3 Jack Barnes, Janet Brecht*, Shannon Wiederwax
- 4/4 Richard Gietler, Jeannine Pallas*
- 4/5 Audrey Conrad, William Jeffers, Kevin Lambrecht
- 4/6 Emma Boughner, Andrew Eaton, Janet Frazier*, Esther Nesbitt, Michael Pallas*, Emma Schaffer, Daniel Tilly
- 4/7 Anne Hendrix, Brian Schmidt, Leeroy Stelter, Linda Williams
- 4/8
- 4/9 Megan Wendzel
- 4/10 Kathleen Hasse
- 4/11
- 4/12 Matthew Hendrix, Mandy Lepenoitis
- 4/13 Adelyn Richardson
- 4/14
- 4/15 Eleanor Dorow, Chloe Weiffenbach
- 4/16 Kimberly Berry, Bridget Grow, Kerry Muhlhauser, Michael Peden, David Scheffler
- 4/17 Sue Engler, Heidi Lockman
- 4/18
- 4/19 Judy Hinkelman*
- 4/20 Nathan Davis, Kristin DeVore
- 4/21
- 4/22 Mike Hettig*, David Kelly, Kristi Luckritz, Kaylene Stygar, Christy Taylor
- 4/23 Dawn Marquardt, Carol Poll*
- 4/24 David Bischoff, Christopher Lenz, Leah Moore, Anita Wandel
- 4/25 Kevin Block, Anne Silvey, Ben Ward
- 4/26 Shelly Chaffee, Leann Chapman, Mary Patzer, Matthew Schulz
- 4/27 Cody Fisher, Emma Koch
- 4/28
- 4/29 Nathan Chaffee, Scott Radde, Darlene Smith*
- 4/30 Abram Koch, Anngela Lewellen, Christopher Mangold, Wyatt Petzke, Jennifer Reynnells, Jeanne Strine

*=Special Birthday

If you do not see your birthday listed, please call the Church Office @ 983-5000 to update your records. We indicate the age of members 80 years & over. If you do not want your age listed, please contact the Church Office.



This Month at Trinity

April 2025

WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAY

Worship, 8a & 9:30a (Contemporary), 11a, S
(11 am is Live Streamed on YouTube & Website)
Gospel Readings of the Year, 9:30 am,
Zoom Study 63.414112
Children's Sunday School, 9:30a, Children's Ministry Room
Adult Bible Study "What Is Worship?", 9:30 a, CFH
Ignite Sr. Youth Group, 6:30-8p, SRC
4:12 Jr Youth Group, 4-5:30p, SRC (2nd Sunday of month)

MONDAY

Lifelight "Miracles" Bible Study, 9:30-11a, LHC
Handbells Practice, 6:30-7:30p, Music Room

TUESDAY

Care Team Mtg, 10-11a, MC-2nd floor
AIC — New Members Class, 6:30-8p, MC
The Lutheran Difference Bible Study, 6:30-8p, LHC

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Tuesday, 4/1

Ladies Aid/LWML Mtg, 6:30p, LHC

Wednesday, 4/2

Lenten Mid-week Worship, 11a & 6:30p, S
Soup & Bread Supper, 5-6:15p, CFH

Thursday, 4/3

Friday, 4/4

Saturday, 4/5

Sunday, 4/6

Mission Door Offering, after each service
Ignite Sr Youth Group, 6:30-8p, SRC

Monday, 4/7

Executive Committee, 5:30p, MC-1st fl
Bd of Education, 6:30p, School
Tuesday, 4/8
Pastor's Winkle, 8a-1p
ECC Staff Meeting, 6-8:30p, CFH
Cognitive Impairments Speakers, 6-8:30p, SRC

Wednesday, 4/9

Lenten Mid-week Worship, 11a & 6:30p, S
Soup & Bread Supper, 5-6:15p, CFH

Thursday, 4/10

Friday, 4/11

May Connected articles due
Easter Egg Hunt, 5-7p, CFH & Gym

Saturday, 4/12

ArtFun 101, 9a-Noon, SRC

Sunday, 4/13 Palm Sunday

Jr. Youth Group, 4-5:30p, SRC
Ignite Senior Youth, 6:30-8p, SRC

Monday, 4/14

The 3 C's Group, 1-3p, LHC
Church Council, 6:30p, MC-2nd fl

Tuesday, 4/15

SAGES, 11a-1p, LHC

Wednesday, 4/16

NO WORSHIP

Thursday, 4/17 Maundy Thursday

Worship, 11a & 630p, S

WEDNESDAY

Son-Risers Bible Study — "Science and the
Savior", 6:45-7:45a, MC
School Chapel, 8:05-8:45a,
Morning Worship, 11am (coincides w/ Wed. Evening
Service)

Jr High Drop-Ins, 3:15-5p, SRC

Soup & Bread Supper, 5-6:15p, CFH (sponsored by
different groups)

Midweek Lenten Worship Service, 6:30p, S

Adult Choir Practice, 7:30-8:30p, Music Room

THURSDAY

ECC Chapel, 9-9:30a, S

Adult Bible Study, 9:30-11a, LHC

Friday, 4/18

ECC Closing at Noon
Crosswalk, 12:15p, S & Bluff

Tenebrae Service, 6:30p, S

Saturday, 4/19

Men's Network, 8-10:30a, LHC

Set up Easter Flowers, 8:30-11:30a, S

Set-up for Easter Breakfast, 9a-noon, CFH

Women's Book Club, 10:30a, Martins Stevensville

Sunday, 4/20 Easter Sunday

Sunrise Worship, 6:30a, S

Easter Breakfast, 7:30-11:30a, CFH

Traditional Worship, 8 & 11a, S

Contemporary Worship, 9:30a, S

Monday, 4/21

Memorial Trust Mtg, 1-2:30p, MCB
Bd of Prop & Finance, 6:30-8:30p, MCB

Tuesday, 4/22

Women's Small Grp Bible Study, 9:30-11:30a, SRC

Soup Kitchen, 10a, BH

St Minister Peer Supervision, 6:30-8p, MCB

Wednesday, 4/23

Thursday, 4/24

Mobile Food Pantry, 12:30p, MC Parking Lot

Honest Chats, 6:30-8pm, SRC

Friday, 4/25

1/2 day of School (Fine Arts Festival)

Saturday, 4/26

Sunday, 4/27

Ignite Youth Group, 6:30-8p, SRC

Monday, 4/28

Three C's Group, 1-3p, LHC

Bd of Elders, 6:30-9p, MC- 2nd floor

Tuesday, 4/29

Women's Small Grp Bible Study, 9:30-11:30a, SRC

Wednesday, 4/30

Confirmation Rehearsal, 6:30p, S

Please Note...

School Spring Break, March 31st — April 4th

Ladies Aid/LWML Mtg, Tuesday, April 1st, 6:30p, LHC

Mission Door Offering, Sunday, April 6th, following each service

Cognitive Impairment Speakers (St Min Presentation), April 8th, 6:30p, SRC

May Connected Articles Due by Friday, April 11th

Easter Egg Hunt, Friday, April 11th, 5-7pm, Gym & CFH

Art Fun 101, Saturday, April 12th, 9a-noon, SRC

Palm Sunday, April 13th, worship — 8a, 9:30a, & 11a

The 3 C's Group, Monday, April 14th & 28th, 1-3pm, LHC

SAGES, Tuesday, April 15th, 11a-1p, LHC

Men's Network, Sat. April 19th, 8-10:30a, LHC

Women's Book Club, Saturday, April. 19th, 10:30a, Martin's Stevensville

Easter Sunday, April 20th, worship — 6:30a, 8a, 9:30a, & 11a

Easter Breakfast, April 20th, 7:30-11:30a, CFH

Soup Kitchen, Tuesday, April 22nd, 10a-2p, Benton Harbor

Mobile Food Pantry, Thursday, April 24th, 12:30p, MC parking lot

Honest Chats, Thursday, April 24th, 6:30pm, SRC

Confirmation Rehearsal, Wed. April 30th, 6:30p, S

Communion Schedule

1st & 3rd Sundays in each
Worship Service
(5th Sunday when applicable)



CFH-Christian Fellowship Hall; CMR-Children's Ministry Room; LHC-Lighthouse
Café; LHL-Lighthouse Lounge; MC-Ministry Center; MCB-Ministry Center
Boardroom; S-Sanctuary; SRC-Solid Rock Café; SCH-School;
WC-Welcome Center

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Newsletter Submissions

To meet publication deadlines, all articles must be received by the **2nd Friday of each month.**

Please don't forget to include your phone contact information!

Turn information into the Church Office in person or e-mail to:
betty.perrone@discovertrinity.org

Questions? Suggestions?
Contact Betty Perrone at Church office.

Faith in Verse -

by Robert Lawrence

Dayspring From On High (O Come, O Come, Emmanuel LSB 357verse 6)

This marks the third letter in the Latin acrostic ERO CRAS (I WILL, SOON) which forms the response to the plea of God's people found in the title of the hymn. In the original Latin the word for Dayspring is "Oriens" which is the root of our word "orient, or East, the direction from which the sun rises in the morning bringing both light and a new day.



O come, Thou Dayspring on high

Once again there is a sense of urgency in the plea for Christ to return. We learned in the first verse that God's people were in the darkness of exile, not necessarily in the hands of an earthly power but also in the hands of man's mortal enemies – sin, death, and the devil's power. This exile is so broad that it does not just extend over just the poor and the powerless but also the rich and the powerful. The world may not feel it, but God's people, no matter what their situation in life may be, certainly feel the urge to be with God in a perfect state. This need for a perfect union with God in heaven is compared to the need man has for the rising sun here on earth. Without the light of the sun there is no chance for life to flourish on earth. The same can be said for God's Son.

And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh

In all the darkness that seems to hover around this world, there is really only one truly dependable source of light. The world may have a wide of variety of remedies for mankind, but many of them just suck man deeper into the abyss or provide a temporary relief that soon dissipates and its cravings become a piece of the darkness themselves. The light God offers through our Savior offers a hope that lifts the fog in the midst of adversity and which extends beyond the boundaries of this lifetime into eternity. Nothing on earth can come even close to that kind of divine cheer.

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night

When you stroll out on a clear winter's night with a full moon in high beam, you enter a world of sparkling beauty where the stars, the moon, and the snow crystals enter in a close competition for your attention. When the clouds cover the same sky, however, they act like a shroud covering the same landscape with a dull gray gloom. Flashlights or car lights can't disperse them. Life all too often takes on such a dismal view. Artificial philosophies can't cut through all our many problems, troubles, and woe. It's only when God's light rises in a lifetime that beauty and joy begin to filter through the muck and real hope shines through the night.

And death's dark shadows put to flight

For many in the world "all things must pass" is the only creed that seems real. When you die, they say, darkness surrounds you and vaporizes your spirit. The most you can hope for after death is to be recycled as fodder for future generations. No wonder people spend so much money on spectacular surgeries, expensive wonder drugs, and wrinkle creams. Opposing this "dark shadows" philosophy is the redemption and deliverance God offers through our Savior. In the presence of God's light, it's the shadows that get vaporized, leaving God's love its hope to existence both in this life and the one to follow.