



HOLY TRINITY

LUTHERAN CHURCH

650 240th St. North Liberty, IA 52317

Vol. 17, No. 1

January 2025

WINTER WARM-UP AND TAKING DECORATIONS DOWN INSIDE

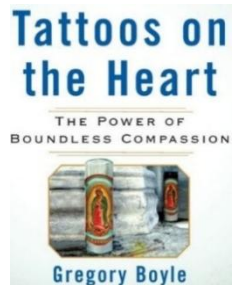


Despite the cold weather, we're celebrating the new year, looking forward to ways God will work in our midst. After worship on Sunday, January 5th, plan to join us for some family-friendly winter drinks and snacks while we work together to take the indoor Christmas decorations down.

TATTOOS ON THE HEART SMALL GROUP

Tuesdays from 6:30-8:00 at the church
January 28th-February 25th (5 weeks)

Want to know more about our faith and social justice? Ready to be inspired by true stories of compassion at work? Join Tim Stammeyer in a book study of *Tattoos on the Heart*, a national bestseller by theologian Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Ministries in Los Angeles. Through stories of current and former gang members and the ways their experience points to the radical love of Jesus, we will explore how these themes are relevant to us in the here and now. Email Tim at stammeyer@holytrinitynl.org to sign-up.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the adults and youth who shared their time and talents with us to make our Christmas program a success. We are lucky to have such amazing talent both onstage and backstage. If you missed it, check out our youtube recording from Sunday, December 15th.



CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING DESIGNATED FOR THE NORTH LIBERTY COMMUNITY PANTRY

The Visioning Council decided that we would use the entirety of our Christmas Eve offering to support the North Liberty Community Pantry, in light of their substantially increased use by citizens and their ongoing construction of a new more accessible and functional pantry site near the intersection Penn St. and Stewart St. We are excited to have shared \$3514.68 with them this year, as well as over 1,000 pounds of donated food and toiletries, as they remain vital partners in ministry!

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SET FOR FEBRUARY 5TH.



Confirmed members of the congregation are urged to be present at 10:15 Sunday Feb. 5th as we conduct our Annual Congregational Meeting. Together,

we'll review the past year of ministry, elect officers, Visioning Council members, and other leaders and representatives. We'll discuss and approve a proposed program budget for 2025 and discuss one additional resolution to pursue exploration of becoming a "Reconciled in Christ" congregation. This will require a months-long process and capable leadership beyond our staff in order to honor the process. Please review the Annual Meeting booklet published two weeks beforehand to learn more about all of this. Join in the upcoming Adult Forum conversations in order to learn more. Mark your calendar!

COUNCIL CRAFTS INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2025

Our Visioning Council met this month to consider ministry team needs, staffing updates, leadership longevity, ELCA mission support, and debt service. Recognizing a potential projected income of \$361,000, they were able to create a proposal to match, while addressing a number of new and existing priorities due to the generosity of those who have pledged to date. Included within those are:

- Continued paydown of our existing \$135,000 debt on our building purchase.
- Continued support of existing support staff at current levels, including modest COL raise for each.
- Building in adequate maintenance funding to plan for major capital expenses if needed
- A minor reduction in pastoral compensation to allow for increased presence of guest preachers, including many whom we hear from regularly.

Stay tuned for a finalized figure after the January 9th Council meeting. Meanwhile, THANK YOU for making all of this possible!

2025 OFFERING ENVELOPE BOOKLETS are now available for pickup. We've elected to cut down on paper waste and cost by simplifying our order because so many families now give regularly through electronic means. If you'd like a fresh booklet, pick one up in the lobby or fellowship table.

ADULT FORUM SERIES THIS MONTH



January 19th will mark the first of two planned forums to help explore and explain perspectives related to becoming a “Reconciled in Christ” congregation. We will

be discussing a related resolution at the Annual meeting and our forums are intended for dialog, questions, and comments to share beforehand. Join us in Room 4 at 10:15!

OUR FIFTH WATER WELL IS ALMOST COMPLETE!

Holy Trinity has been contributing a portion of our offerings toward creating new futures for women and for entire communities in northern Africa by providing clean water wells and the means to maintain them properly to rural villages in Ethiopia and Uganda.

In recent weeks, we received news that construction of our fifth well – this one in the West Dembia region of Ethiopia, is now complete, and will soon be operational following necessary testing and maintenance training! Serving a community of over 400 individuals within a kilometer of the well, it will now make it possible for better health, greater educational opportunities, and better futures for each of those it serves. Many thanks to our partners at “Water to Thrive” for making this construction a possibility! Let’s celebrate once again just how our compassion extends!

WINTER/SPRING MINISTRIES GUIDE

As we usher in 2025, we are excited to share numerous opportunities to participate at Holy Trinity in the new year. This month, look for our “Winter/Spring Ministries Guide,” a comprehensive resource of small groups, ministry groups, events, and leadership opportunities. To continue our focus on loving, living, and sharing Christ, we encourage everyone to find ways to get involved. Contact stammeyer@holtrinitynl.org with questions or to get connected into a small group.

NEED FOR EVENT PLANNERS

We are in need of more volunteers willing to help plan and lead events in 2025. These include, but aren’t limited to, men’s and women’s events, churchwide celebrations, volunteer events, and off-site activities in our community. The staff is happy to collaborate and support event planning, but we can’t do it alone! Contact stammeyer@holtrinitynl.org if you are able to help plan one or more events this year.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE COMPLETES THEIR PRAYERFUL SEARCH

Our 2024 Nominating Committee consisting of Judy Taylor and Clay Peterson have concluded their work of seeking nominees for a host of leadership positions, including those who are proposed to work with our Visioning Council after our Annual Meeting in February. Nominated to complete Lori Berry's term as Council President is Emily Lenhart, currently an at-large member of the Council. Nominated to a two-year At-large term is Kristen Stoll. Jack Fratzke is nominated to retain his role as Treasurer while Larry Kudej would continue into a two-year term as Vice President. Although their positions are not up for election this year, Steve Empey will continue as our Secretary and Ken Morse and Isaac Blackwell as At-large members. Thank you to all of these as we look to a new year of serving together!

“NEXT STEP SERIES” FOR NEW MEMBERS OFFERED STARTING, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9

If you are seeking a place to call your spiritual home, build healthy relationships with others seeking to grow in their faith, or simply want to know more about Holy Trinity and how best to get connected here, please consider being part of this winter's “Next Steps” series.

Pastor Tim will be facilitating discussion over topics mostly of your choosing on three consecutive Sunday eves 6:30-7:45 p.m. We'll plan on gathering in person with Zoom as a back-up plan, yet if all interested participants would rather gather in-person, we can make that happen as well!

At the conclusion of the series, those interested in officially joining the community will be officially received during a special worship opportunity in the weeks that follow. If you'd like to be a part in these conversations, please email Pastor Tim at tim@holytrinityNL.org.

2025 STEWARDSHIP RESPONSES RECEIVED TO DATE YIELD ENCOURAGING TRENDS; YET STILL AWAIT LATE SUBMISSIONS

With a more “low-key” approach than in most years and greater economic pressures, we once again weren’t sure what to anticipate in terms of responses to this year’s appeal for “Faith Promises” to our Ministry Fund for 2025. **Our results to date have been staggering**, however!

A total of 75 families have responded to date – including eight new pledge families – collectively committing a record \$300,000 to empowering next year’s ministry. That awesome generosity is what will empower roughly 85% of our tentative budget, which is why pledging is so vitally important!

In fact, 56% of repeat pledgers were bold to increase their support this year, yielding a comprehensive 18% increase over last year. Way to go!

However, we are still hoping to hear from another fifty active families – and if they follow suit, it will greatly help us to cover remaining mortgage payments (\$34,000 in 2025) and sustain our staffing model.

Council will be meeting on January 9th to finalize our initial budget proposal – and the more information they have, the more confidently and faithfully they can do their leadership work. If you haven’t yet responded with your own “Faith Promise,” please do so!

Faith Promise Cards are available on the usher table in the Fellowship area. You may securely file a Faith Promise on the church web site under the GIVE tab.

If you are having problems updating your VANCO giving to your 2025 pledge, please let the office know. We are working as a team to figure out why things are not presenting as they should. The new giving line should be Ministry Fund 2025.

THRIVENT GRANTS AND THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Thrivent Financial is an insurance company whose forerunners began in the early 1900s. As a fraternal organization, Thrivent returns earnings to its members in two forms: Thrivent Grants and Thrivent Choice dollars.

A Thrivent Grant is used to support Action Teams of individuals who band together to raise funds or supplies to fund a charitable cause. Thrivent Grants have accompanied our Mission Teams with gasoline and food for their work. It has helped Quilters afford some of their supplies. They can be used to help fundraise for individuals undergoing expensive medical procedures by buying meals and other supplies for the fundraiser. Individuals are limited to 2 Thrivent grants per year. Each grant is for up to \$250.

Thrivent Choice dollars are funds that the person holding a policy can direct to a charitable organization free and clear of any other strings. A list of approved organizations is available when the policy holder directs their Thrivent Choice dollars to be sent. Holy Trinity, EWALU, and other organizations in the area and around the nation like Habitat for Humanity, are already on the list for you to direct Thrivent Choice dollars.

MANY, MANY THANKS!

- **ALL** who helped make Christmas Eve a festive celebration.
- **Annika and Hannly Hauan, Lisa Stille, and Lisa Smith** for doing the tedious work of cleaning up and preparing our Christmas Eve candles and holders!
- **Lori Donahoe and Cindy VanderLinden** for completing our annual audit.
- **Steve Roland** for transporting all of our recently donated food donations to the North Liberty Community Food Bank – we've shared over 1,000 pounds year to date!
- **ALL** who plan ahead such that our new Winter/Spring Ministries catalog can be shared in a timely manner.
- **ALL** who donated toward our giving trees this year! We were blessed to be able to share a mountain of goods with Houses into Homes, the North Liberty Pantry, and area schools!

PRAYER PAGE UPDATES

- Pray for the people of **Ukraine and Russia**, that they have a swift and just conclusion to the conflict there.
- Pray for the people of **Gaza, Palestinian territories, and Israel** amid renewed conflict and for the safety of the remaining hostages.
- For the people of **Democratic Republic of Congo** as they endure more violent repression.
- For the people of **Madison, Wisconsin** as they grieve those lost in the recent school shooting there
- For **parents** who are grieving estrangement from their children.
- For **Matt Baumann** (son of Sue Baumann), **Bob Cronbaugh** (Sandy's husband), and **Dan Menter** (lifelong friend of Pastor Tim), each currently in hospice care.
- for **Melissa DuRoe** (friend of Mike and Sonda Uitermarkt) being treated for glioblastoma.
- For **Laurel Hibbard and Emy Charlebois**, sister of Clay Peterson both living with and seeking answers for metastatic breast cancer.
- For **Susan Palmer**, friend of Nancy Grove, seeking medical attention for neuro-endocrine cancer.
- For **Rachel Manthey**, recovering from recent brain surgery.
- For **Mark Rock** (brother of Lori Donahoe) who is recovering from two recent surgeries.
- For **Vada Ambler** (Kent's mother) rehabilitating at home after a recent fall and broken hip.
- For **Diane Gerdes** (Lois Ludvigson's sister) who suffered a recent stroke.
- For **JoAnn Robertson**, step-mother of Amanda Robertson, living with Parkinson's disease.
- For **Don Hellem**, father of Dan Hellem, living with several chronic health issues at present.
- For **Emily Seabaugh**, sister of Matt Seberger, recently diagnosed with a rare neuro-muscular disease.
- For **Harold Meyer** (husband of Twilla Meyer), at Crestview in West Branch.

STONE SOUP SUPPER

North Liberty Community Pantry's Stone Soup Supper is a warm community meal for all in need and those who wish to support the Pantry. Come and enjoy a variety of soups from area restaurants. While free to anyone, if you are able to contribute a donation, it is greatly appreciated. Why Stone Soup? There is an old German folk tale involving hungry travelers who persuade local townfolk to give them food by introducing them to "Stone" soup. Although they started out with a stone in a pot of water, villagers each added garnishes of vegetables and spices ending up with a wonderfully nutritious and delicious soup for all the community to enjoy. This folk tale reminds us that more is accomplished when we pool our resources and work together. Join us for 2025 Stone Soup Supper Event on Friday, January 24, 2025 from 5-7 p.m. in the North Liberty Community Center, Gerdin Conference Center (Lower Level). Tickets available on the [Pantry web site](#).

DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

... it costs about \$1,000/day to support our ministry, debt reduction, and benevolent giving at Holy Trinity?

... When religion and science are considered incompatible, the adversarial relationship between these two systems of meaning-making can have disastrous repercussions, especially when applied to issues like climate change and vaccine hesitancy. But scholars Dominic Johnson at Oxford and Michael Price at Brunel University have published a study that demonstrates that this is not a global problem. The divide exists specifically in Western societies. After surveying 55,230 participants from 54 countries, they discovered that globally, people are more likely to hold to both religion and science as meaning-making systems, without one canceling out the other. When they do, they enjoy increased rates of well-being (*Religion, Brain and Behavior*, 2024).

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