



## Pastor's Ponderings

The story of Jesus interacting with Zacchaeus was a favorite of mine growing up, and there was a camp song called "Show Me the Way" that included Zacchaeus in it.

If you remember, Zacchaeus was a tax collector who was drawn to see Jesus, and though short in stature, he found a way by climbing a tree. It is from that tree that Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' house and changed his life. Before Zacchaeus encountered Jesus he defrauded people out of their money. But after he met Jesus, he "righted the ship," so to speak, and gave back four times what he defrauded. He also began to give to the poor. The story can be found in Luke 19:1-10.



Jesus motivates people to move from being self-serving to selfless. For Zacchaeus it meant using his wealth to share it with others. Sometimes it is difficult to not just wallow in our own problems, or to only think and do things that we enjoy, without thinking of others. This happens to all of us; it takes effort to be, and enjoying life is a gift of God. However, there is a need for Jesus' followers and tree climbers, people of God, to have a purpose and there is a calling for us to look beyond ourselves in order to serve and help other people and God's creation.

As we enter Autumn together as a church, we can have an impact on many, and together our reach can be great. I hope to get out of the tree and put more purpose into my service at church and I invite you to join me.

Jesus said to Zacchaeus: "The Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost." Luke 19:10

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Fred *he/him/his*

## ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2022

Zacchaeus' life changed forever when he came down from a tree and met Jesus face to face. Pray that our lives will be transformed and filled with joy because of our encounter with Jesus, who reveals God's gracious love for humanity.

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## Sermon Discussion/Input with Pastor Fred Wednesday, September 25, at Noon in the Fireside Room

Pastor Fred invites you to join him in a bag-lunch discussion of the texts for the next month of sermons. Please let him know if you plan to attend so he can prepare materials.



**BW'S BBQ Dinners, 12:00 Noon to 4:00 PM**  
Dine In or Take Out, \$15.00 (Pre-sale, \$14.00)

Dinner volunteers are needed! If you can help,  
please speak to Earlene.

**Basket Raffle, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM**  
Deadline for donations is Sunday, September 1.

**Vendor Craft Fair & Bake Sale, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM**  
Baked Goods Sale (no cakes or brownies, please).

[A big "thank you" to Matt for making and installing the  
BBQ event banner!]



## Property Overview

Our building is aging, and the upkeep is becoming more and more of an issue. These are the repairs that have been addressed in the past month or so.

1. After many ups and downs (mostly downs), the elevator is finally functioning as it should!
2. The roof over the entrance has been replaced. This will keep the ice buildup and leaks from happening in the winter.
3. A new light has been installed to illuminate the cross over the entrance doors that face Sheridan Drive.
4. The middle Sheridan Drive doors have been repaired.
5. The shrubs around the building have been given a much-needed manicure.

There are other property issues that will need to be addressed in the near future and beyond. If you can help, there are envelopes in the narthex for contributions to the Building Fund, in any amount. We also need volunteers to assist on the Property Team.

Thank you for your interest in keeping our building and property beautiful and functional!

Lanny  
Property Team

## Trinity Tidings, September 2024



We invite you to join us for worship with Holy Communion, Sundays at 11:00 AM. (in-church or on Zoom)

### Prayer for Trinity Old Lutheran and Augustana Lutheran Churches

Inspire us to be good stewards of the resources you have entrusted to us. Teach us to give freely of ourselves and to offer our lives in service. Show us your will for the ministries at Augustana and Trinity Old Lutheran. Strengthen our relationships in this community as we serve our neighbors in love.

### ELCA Prayer Ventures, September 2024

- † *Labor Day* Recognize and pray for the work people do to sustain their families and benefit their communities and society. Pray that all will receive fair wages, work in safe environments, be renewed through times of sabbath, and experience joy and fulfillment in their labor. Pray for those who seek employment and for the care, support and well-being of people unable to work.
- † Pray for communities and congregations vulnerable to the hurricanes, that they will be prepared, resilient and ready to serve their neighbors impacted by severe weather. Give thanks for the many ways – immediate and long term – that Lutheran Disaster Response gathers resources to relieve suffering, support recovery and healing, and stir hope.
- † Ask the Spirit to strengthen our faith in God's immeasurable power to heal, renew and create hope where there is tragedy, suffering and despair. Pray that God will equip us to respond to our neighbors in need and to bear hope, healing and love into the world.
- † Pray that we might honor our Creator by treating people with love and mercy, giving thanks for what we have, practicing generosity, managing natural resources responsibly and telling others of God's amazing power and grace.
- † Give thanks that God is our help and strength in every situation, and that our faith will be sustained through the work of the Spirit and the care we receive from our siblings in Christ.
- † "Could it be that we are called for such a time as this?" (*All Creation Sings* 1003). In this time of unrest and uncertainty we may feel that we have nothing of significance to offer. Pray that we will hear and respond to God's call to use our unique gifts, experiences and wisdom to be an active, compassionate and faithful presence in the world.

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### "Christian Cancer Support"

If you are on a cancer journey and are in need of support, please contact Linda Sokoley. She is on a journey as well and she can offer you support, hope and healing. Please contact Linda through Augustana LC's office at 716-832-5720 or by email at [augustchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:augustchurch@yahoo.com).



## Trinity Tidings

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### September Mission: Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service)

"With more than 1,000 partners and 50,000 volunteers, we are the largest faith-based national nonprofit exclusively dedicated to helping restore a sense of home to immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. Since 1939, we've built a legacy of compassion by walking alongside more than 750,000 new neighbors as they rebuild their lives in the United States."

"Everyone deserves a place to call home."

#### Mission:

- Refugee Resettlement
- Inclusion and Empowerment
- Asylum Services
- Supporting Children and Families
- Mental Health
- Combatting Disinformation
- Advocacy

[from: [www.globalrefuge.org](http://www.globalrefuge.org). © 2024 Global Refuge. All rights reserved.]

Please visit the website for more detailed information on the organization's history and its continuing mission.

Please use the marked envelopes located in the narthex, or mail your donations to the church office (please indicate on your check that it is designated for Global Refuge). Thank you for your support.

### August Mission

Thank you for your donations to Family Promise WNY (FPWNY). Your support helps FPWNY achieve its mission of keeping homeless families together during challenging times. FPWNY also provides many valuable services to these Buffalo families in need.

### ELCA Prayer Ventures, September 2024

Remember those who deliver food, goods and other resources by truck, merchant ship or train, across the country and around the world. Pray for their safety and well-being, especially when they are separated from family, friends and community. Pray that their loneliness might be eased by the knowledge that we are always connected, as children of God and siblings in Christ, through a faith that has no bounds.



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My Musings  
by Diane Schmidtke



Sailing, Sailing

When this appears in the Tidings  
On a cruise ship I will be  
Headed forth to sights unknown  
An adventure on the sea!

We'll share our time with two who are Dutch  
Friends of fifty-five years  
Across the Pond we've traveled  
Sharing laughter and sometimes tears.

The air will be chill or so we've been told  
As we sail and head to the 'Nord'  
Stopping at ports in Norway  
With snow and ice and fjord!

With any luck the Northern Lights  
Will delight us with color and flair  
Lighting the skies with majesty  
Taking away all of our care...

We'll pass through the Arctic Circle  
Then head where they like to dress  
In kilts and play on their bagpipes  
Finding the monster in Loch Ness!

No travels with us are without some excitement  
We're open to what's unexpected  
We'll take the path and go where life leads  
And trust God will keep us protected.

*Used with permission.*

Coming to TOL in September!

Chair Yoga and Exercises for Flexibility, Balance,  
Strength and Relaxation

Why chair yoga?

- You can sit in a chair instead of getting up and down from the floor.
- You can learn to relax, breathe in, and meditate in comfort while seated.
- You can use the chair for support in simple standing balance poses.
- You can enjoy the power of practicing with others.

For all of us who love to be active, foot pain, achy knees and hips and other issues can make it difficult. The good news is you can stay mobile and strong in a chair! A 2021 review of studies found that chair yoga and exercises can improve balance, gait and grip strength.

Join us on **Tuesdays from 5:45 PM until 6:45 PM beginning September 10, 2024** in a soothing, non-competitive studio atmosphere with music and soft lighting. Classes will feature relaxation, breathing techniques, classic yoga poses, targeted exercises, and time for guided meditation. All ages and fitness levels are welcome!

10 week session: \$10 per class  
Drop in for a class: \$12 per class

The class is taught by Leanne (Oasis Yoga and Wellness located at TOL). She is a Yoga Alliance Certified Yoga Teacher with 20 years of experience and Yoga for Healthy Aging training. [email: [crescmnyoga@yahoo.com](mailto:crescmnyoga@yahoo.com)]

The Adult Retreat—October 4, 5 and 6

Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center  
Retreat Coordinator: Charlie Schmidtke

This will be a time for us to gather once again in fellowship, laughter and prayer. The retreat is open to all who are 18+ years of age. Complete retreat information is posted on the main bulletin board, as well as the sign-up sheet. If you worship with us on Zoom, please call or email the church office and we can add your name to the list. **Deadlines:** Reservations, **September 22**; Payment, **October 4**. If you have any questions, please contact Trinity Old Lutheran at 716-836-4868 or Charlie at 716-694-1335 or through his email at [schmidkecharles@gmail.com](mailto:schmidkecharles@gmail.com). Information packets will be sent to everyone who registers.

Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke

Monday afternoons, 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM  
TOL Fireside Room or on Zoom

Please contact Charlie for a Zoom invitation.  
The schedule for 2024-2025 is listed below.



2024

September 23	Adam, Eve, and Lilith
October 7	Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar
October 21	Isaac and Rebekah
November 4	Jacob, Leah, and Rachel
November 18	David, Bathsheba, and Abigail
December 2	Elizabeth and Zachariah
December 16	Mary and Joseph

2025

January 20	Jesus and Mary Magdalene
January 27	Joseph and Asenath
February 17	Hannah and Elkanah
March 3	Hosea and Gomer
March 17	Samson and Delilah
March 31	Ester and King Xerxes
April 14	Priscilla and Aquila
April 28	Paul, Lydia, Thecla and Phoebe
May 12	Aquila and Priscilla

New! Theater and Dinner  
Coming this November!



Please join us for a live performance of *Holiday Inn* at 3:00 PM on **Sunday, November 10**, followed by dinner at Family Tree Restaurant. This is a Niagara Regional Theatre Guild presentation at the Ellicott Creek Playhouse (550 Ellicott Creek Road in Tonawanda). Tickets are \$18 each. Please use the sign-up sheet on the main bulletin board or reach out to us.

*Holiday Inn* is a new musical featuring the music of Irving Berlin. After Jim leaves the bright lights of show business behind to settle down on a farm in Connecticut, he quickly discovers that life isn't the same without a bit of song and dance. His luck takes a spectacular turn when Linda, a spirited schoolteacher with talent to spare, walks into his life.

*Stephanie and Pete*

Ways to Give to TOL

**Online:** [Tithe.ly](https://www.tithe.ly) is available. For instructions, please visit the church website at [www.trinityoldlutheran.com](http://www.trinityoldlutheran.com) or download the [Tithe.ly](https://www.tithe.ly) app to your smartphone. Please call the church office at (716) 836-4868 if you have any questions. **Giving by mail:** Please send your checks to the church and to the attention of the Financial Secretary.

**Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke**  
**Study Notes: "Temple or Mount of Olives"**

**Part IV: Jesus as a Hindu**

There is an alternative tradition to Luke's story of Jesus in the temple. Jesus either went to the temple, returned home and then went to India OR he didn't go to the temple at all, but instead went to the Mount of Olives with his cousin, John. This story line comes from the Syriac Church and from the followers of Thomas.

Thomas was the Apostle for Jesus in India. We'll examine Thomas' Gospel in another issue. First, we'll follow the story of Jesus in India. Jesus spent his "lost years" (age 12-30) in India and Tibet (one of the reasons the gospels tell us nothing of him during this time). His ideas meshed with Hinduism, especially Yoga. He lived in a center that worshipped Shiva. There are writings from Hindu historians who refer to Jesus in India (in next month's issue). Jesus was not an orthodox Jew; rather, he was like an Essene (we'll discuss this influence in a few months) who had studied some of the wisdom of India. He returned to the West where his ideas were misunderstood except by Thomas. He specifically spoke of the Dharma—the Eternal Way. Dharma means ethics: one's duties and rights; the laws of proper conduct; and one's virtues and moral behavior.

Jesus was not a god but was divine as we all are. Jesus was not the Creator God and he was not a blood sacrifice to satisfy an angry God. He was a great *siddha*—a liberated being who for all practical purposes can be called an *avatara*—an incarnation of God. The authentic teachings of Jesus can be found in the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Yoga Sutras*. The gospels were written after Jesus and his disciples had already departed this world and they omit a great deal of his teaching and life. Thomas and his disciples present Jesus' "authentic" teachings and life story.

Here's the "Real story" of Jesus (according to Thomas' followers) when Jesus was 12. He didn't go to the temple, rather, he really went to Mount Carmel with his cousin John to petition the Essenes for membership. This is when John became a member. Jesus, on the other hand, was being examined by elders since only adults were admitted. After answering the elders' questions, he began questioning them proving that they had nothing to teach him so no initiation was necessary. Since the Essenes could not provide any further education for him, he decided to head East. He returned with his family to Nazareth and prepared to leave for India to become a disciple of the Magi who had visited him when he was young. He ended up in the Himalayas with three masters who transformed Jesus of Nazareth into Isha the Lord, the Teacher of Dharma and the Messiah of Israel. The masters taught him yoga and the highest spiritual life. Isha is a spiritual name which means Lord, Master, Ruler and is often a descriptive title applied to God. The masters decided that Jesus should go back to Israel to teach the Dharma, the Eternal Way, and one of his apostles should be sent to India for the same spiritual instruction and empowerment. That would become Thomas who did go to India and became the apostle for Jesus' followers in Syria and India.

Before going back to Nazareth, Jesus went to Benares, the sacred city of Shiva. Shiva is the third God in the Hindu triumvirate (Brahma and Vishnu are the other two) and he is responsible for the creation, upkeep and destruction of the world. Shiva is the source of good and evil and combines many contradictory elements. Shiva's role is to destroy the

universe in order to recreate it. His powers of destruction are used to destroy the illusions and imperfections of this world, paving the way for beneficial change. His destruction is not arbitrary, rather it is constructive.

In Benares Jesus studied the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*. Then he went to Puri, another great center of worship of Shiva. There he perfected the synthesis of yoga, philosophy and renunciation and began teaching publicly about the Eternal Dharma. He was becoming popular and those who made profits out of religion began to plot his death. He left Puri and returned to the Himalayas and received his final instructions before heading west. He was told that a close disciple would pour oil upon his head to signal his imminent death.

He went to John first to be baptized. John saw Jesus' Christhood and proclaimed as such at Jesus' baptism. The Gospels clearly show that Jesus' disciples didn't understand his message. They didn't grasp his deeply spiritual and yoga side. It is possible to interpret the gospel stories of Jesus' preaching and curing people as being consistent with yoga practices and Hindu philosophy.

Jesus did not ascend into heaven after his resurrection; instead, he returned to India. (Even apostles and theologians in the West accept that Jesus stayed longer than 40 days. Saint Irenaeus, for example, claims he stayed 20 years longer.) He did so because the people of India understood his teachings better than the people of Israel. There is also a tradition that claims that Abraham was originally a Hindu follower of Krishna. Jesus had spent more time in India (ages 13-30) than in Israel, so he returned to his spiritual home and became the Christ of India. This is the Original Christianity. And his work was continued by Thomas. Next month we'll conclude this alternative story of Jesus.

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**September Community Collection**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Harvest House Diaper Drive/Baby Shower**

We are once again joining with local Lutheran churches in collecting donations that will benefit Harvest House (a local agency that has a Babies and Children's Ministry that provides clothing, baby furniture and other necessities) and Response to Love (an agency that also provides assistance to individuals, children and families in need). Both of these agencies are located on Buffalo's East Side. Please place your donations of diapers and other children's health supplies in the marked container in the main hallway near the bulletin board. The most-needed items are listed below.

- New or lightly used baby clothes (newborn to toddler)
- Baby diapers (all sizes, but especially sizes 2, 3, 4 and 5)
- Baby bottles/feeding supplies
- Baby hygiene products (wipes, diaper ointment, lotions)



**Operation Christmas Child...** It is almost time to pack our boxes. So for September and October, suggested donations continue to be school supplies (pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, colored pencils, soft pencil cases, markers, small notebooks, safety scissors, glue sticks, crayons) and also add coloring books, watercolor paint sets, small books, puzzles, travel size games and flash cards. Your items can be placed in the bin located in the hallway by the bulletin board. Thank you so much for helping us fulfill such an important mission!

*Kelly and Debbie*