



Pastor's Ponderings

Go into the world with no debt but love,
for love will not harm, will do no wrong
to your neighbour.

Go into the world with no law but love,
and you will keep God's commandments
of love and honour.

Go into the world with no prayer but love,
and God will be with you, Christ
will be in you, Spirit will be around you. Amen.

Source: Sarah Agnew, *Pray the Story*
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Yours in Christ,
Pastor Fred he/him/his



New! Bible Study of 1st Corinthians



Join Pastor Fred at Augustana Lutheran Church for a four-week Bible Study of 1st Corinthians. The study **begins on Friday, June 9** (from 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM). Everyone is welcome to attend. It will be hybrid, so if you would like the Zoom invite, please contact Pastor Fred.

ELCA Prayer Ventures, June 2023

LGBTQ+ Pride Month Give thanks and praise to God for the rich diversity of humankind, especially for our LGBTQIA+ neighbors and siblings in Christ. Pray for our church and society to exercise total inclusion, hospitality without bias or fear, and respect and advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Juneteenth People of faith have long known the importance of recalling and learning from history. Pray for the courage to hear and tell the tragic and discomfoting history of American slavery and to call out the continuing threat of racism and injustice; ask the Spirit to help us learn from the past and present and to strive for humility, understanding, respect, justice and unity.

What people in your neighborhood and community are most often overlooked? Ask the Spirit to help us recognize and attend to the needs of our neighbors and the diversity of gifts and insights they bring to the community and our congregations.

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Table Talk

Wednesday, June 14, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM
(in-church and on Zoom)



Join us in the Fireside Room as we continue our discussions of spiritual beliefs and practices found throughout the world. Please contact the church office if you'd like the Zoom link.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Food Pantry

This past February after delivering the food donations to Good Shepherd, Jessica, the church secretary, gave us a tour of the pantry. Our impression when we saw the pantry was Wow! This is impressive! The pantry is immaculate and very well organized. Food is neatly arranged on shelves and labeled as to the number of each item a family could have. The pantry has a refrigerator and a freezer for perishable items that are purchased for the pantry.

Adjacent to the pantry is a free clothes closet for those who are in need. A table holds toiletries and personal care items. The pantry serves about 40-50 families and/or individuals each month on the third and fourth Saturday from 10:00 AM to 12 Noon.

TOL's generous donations to the pantry are GREATLY appreciated and very welcomed! Pantry items or clothes can be dropped off at Good Shepherd (2669 Sheridan Drive) when Jessica is in the office on Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Call her first at 716-832-5390 to let her know you'd like to stop by.

The donations are a wonderful blessing to those who are in need. Thank you!

Frank and Karen

Note: If you aren't able to take items directly to Good Shepherd, the TOL shopping cart in the narthex is there for your donations.

BW's BBQ CHICKEN DINNER AT TOL
COMING FRIDAY, JUNE 16 — 3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM
DRIVE-THRU ONLY

All dinners are \$15.00
(includes two salads, roll and butter)

A portion of the dinner proceeds will benefit the "11 Day Power Play" event, which is a local hockey marathon supporting Roswell Park, Roswell Park/Oishei Children's Program, Make-a-Wish and Camp Good Days. Tom, Charlie and Gary (members of Augustana) will be participating.



Volunteers are Needed for the BBQ! If you are interested in helping with the dinner—filling in where needed—please contact or speak to Earlene.

Trinity Tidings, June 2023

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



ELCA Prayer Ventures, June 2023

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.” (2 Corinthians 13:13). Pray that we will be quick to share with others the blessings and certainty of God’s love and forgiveness.

“Call on me in the day of trouble” (Psalm 50:15). Call on God if you’re encountering difficulties, and express your gratitude and joy to God if things are going well.

Pray for communities recovering from severe weather and disasters here and around the world. Ask God to surround them with hope, strength and caring neighbors throughout their recovery, and give thanks for the generous support and volunteer assistance offered through Lutheran Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger in partnership with companion churches and other relief organizations and ministries, which provide relief and build resiliency.

Remember in prayer those displaced from their communities and countries by sudden- and slow-onset climate disasters, including drought, flooding, pollution, severe weather, rising oceans and diminishing food resources.

Give thanks for the wonders of creation, especially for the beauty that stirs awe, the immensity that humbles us and the complexity and mystery that spark our curiosity and inspire us to explore, broaden our knowledge and praise God.

Pray for adult children who are caregivers for their parents, that they will have resources and support that help inform, guide and sustain their work of love.

Ask God to help us bear compassion, joy and hope into a world yearning for peace, stability and meaningful connection.

Pray for those traveling this summer on vacation and sabbatical, that they will be safe, experience renewal and discover opportunities to serve others.

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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.



June 18

Trinity Tidings

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May Mission

Thank you for your continued support of the local ministries receiving grant funding from Lutheran Charities of Western New York (LCWNY). Your donations will have a positive impact on the lives of those served by LCWNY.

June Mission: ELCA World Hunger

“Creatively and courageously working toward a just world where all are fed.”

“More than 820 million people - that’s about 11 percent of people in our world today - are hungry.

As members of the ELCA, we are called to respond. We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work.

Working with and through our congregations, in the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Lutheran churches overseas and other partners, ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. From health clinics to microloans, water wells to animal husbandry, community meals to advocacy, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make it possible for the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty.”

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Please place your donations in the marked envelopes located on the table in the narthex, online through Tithe.ly, or donate by mail (enter ELCA World Hunger on the check memo).

Support for Local Food Pantries

Your donations in support of the Community of Good Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo and Good Shepherd Lutheran’s pantry in Tonawanda are greatly appreciated. Suggested items needed are listed below.

Please place your donations in the narthex shopping cart or leave them in the elevator entrance during the week (Tuesday to Friday, 9:00 AM to Noon). Thank you!

- Canned fruits, vegetables, beans, soup, tuna and chicken
- Pasta, Mac-and-Cheese
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Spaghetti and pasta sauces
- Cereal and other breakfast items (oatmeal, grits)
- Instant potatoes
- Paper products, feminine hygiene products

Gift cards (Tops or Wegmans) (mail to church office)



Women's Luncheon Group

After changing the April plans, the group will now get together for lunch at Danny's Restaurant (3715 Genesee Street in Cheektowaga), on **Thursday, June 8, at 12:30 PM**. If you need a ride from TOL, or have any questions, please contact Judy or Barb. Everyone is invited!



Adult Retreat—September 29, 30, and October 1

Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center
Retreat Coordinator: Charlie Schmidtke

What's Next: Here and Now / There and Then

So what does the next ten years bring? What happens when we die? We'll take the time and find the space to explore what's next in our lives.

Retreat Schedule	
Friday, September 29	Gathering begins at 6:00 PM. Program begins at 6:30 PM, followed by socializing and fellowship; bring your own beverages and snacks.
Saturday, September 30	Breakfast at 8:30 AM. Programming throughout the day. Evening for socializing and fellowship.
Sunday, October 1	Breakfast at 8:30 AM, followed by program and worship. Depart by Noon.
Cost and Packages	
Option 1: Friday through Sunday (room for 2 nights and 4 meals):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person in a single room: \$183 • One person in double room: \$119 	
Option 2: Friday through Saturday night or Saturday through Sunday (room for 1 night and 4 meals):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person in a single room: \$109 • One person in double room: \$77 	
Option 3: Meals only: \$35	

Reservations Deadline: September 17

Contact Trinity Old Lutheran at 716-836-4868 or Charlie Schmidtke at 716-694-1335 or his email at schmidtkecharles@gmail.com.

Payment due by September 29. Make checks payable to Charles Schmidtke, please. Information packets will be sent to everyone who registers.

A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board.

Photos and memories taken at last year's retreat are displayed in the narthex. Stop by and take a look!

"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.

Community Mid-Week Lenten Collection Results (Excerpts from *DeaNotes*, May 2023)



"He has told you, O Mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"

Micah 6:8

"Time and time again I am amazed by what God is doing through our communities of faith. The final counts are in and together we helped to forgive over ONE POINT ONE MILLION dollars of medical debt. This was done by thirteen churches working together with RIPMedicalDebt.org. Amazing!

I give thanks to God for all the amazing ministry that is happening right here in WNY. I give thanks to God for your partnership. I hope our paths cross soon."

God Bless.

Pastor Jeremiah P. Smith
Dean of the Niagara Frontier Conference

Ongoing Collection: Friends of Night People

Collection of new men's socks, and small-size hygiene products (soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste) or create care packages. See the marked container on the table in the narthex. Men's seasonal clothing collection—look for the Big Blue Barrel near the main bulletin board.

Operation Christmas Child

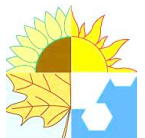
The suggested donations for June are stuffed toys 10" or smaller, dolls, reusable cups/water bottles. Any items that you donate for our shoeboxes are greatly appreciated. It's hard to believe we have reached the half-way mark in our monthly collections. We are so grateful and thankful for all of your support thus far.



Kelly and Debbie

Summer: Seasons' Readings!

Browse the TOL Book Sale in the Resource Room for your Summer reading! Fiction and non-fiction—paperbacks and hard covers! There are many books (and puzzles) to choose from.



Joy from "Job"

If you take a look among the pews
You might see something to amuse
Definitely no need for any fears
Concerning the jewelry known as Job's Tears!

Necklaces made from these amazing seeds
Grown in my garden among a few weeds
Easily strung with needle and floss
The finished look is semi-gloss!



No need for sewing expertise
Just like a child with string and with beads
And after an hour a delightful end
To keep and to wear or to give to a friend!

Diane S

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Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke Study Notes: "Who was the Real Jesus?"

Part III: Who were the Magi

Who were the Magi? They were priests of Zoroaster, a prophet, in the 6-7th century BCE. He reformed the religion of Babylon and Persia. Under Cyrus, Zoroaster's religion became the official religion of Persia. For him life was influenced by forces of Good (the Ahuras—lords and upper class) and Bad (the daevas - the lower class). Ahura Mazda, the wise Lord and sole creator, decreed that good would triumph over evil. The old world would be destroyed by fire and a new creation would be instituted. Persia and all Magi were heavily influenced by Greek philosophy and culture. In like manner, Jewish rabbis and leaders were influenced by the Magi during their Babylonian Captivity (6th century BCE). Magi were teachers, sometimes tutors to the wealthy, dream interpreters, and performed rituals at religious ceremonies. Some were rich, some despised, some trusted, some famous, some popular, some were fortune tellers, some visionaries, most interpreted dreams and some were magicians. The Magi were NOT kings; so, our hymn is actually not accurate! Some of the Magi believed there would be three Saviors arriving every 1,000 years. Their Savior did not need to be Persian. Did these Magi visit Jesus because they thought the Jewish Messiah could be their first savior? Is this why some Magi came to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem? Or was it the Star? Or both? Was the Star a comet, a supernova, an eclipse or a conjunction? Magi were trained in signs found through astrology and astronomy. They studied mathematics and applied their studies to the heavens.

Some actual events that occurred between 4-7 BCE are:

1. A conjunction of Saturn (planet protector of Jews) and Jupiter (planet of kings and Messiahs) occurred three times over a nine-month period somewhere between 4-7 BCE. (A conjunction occurs when two or more planets align in the sky and appear to form one super star or planet). On the third conjunction the planet Mars became a part of the group (Mars indicated danger). Fire is wisdom and knowledge; thus, the stars helped them find wisdom and truth. Such an event would be considered eternal and supernatural—the arrival of a Savior. They sought eternal truths (like the Greeks). The story of the Magi visiting Jesus tells us that Jesus was for all humanity, not just the Jews, and his life would bring Eternal Truth.
2. A supernova exploded in 5 BCE within the constellation of Capricorn, which represented the God of Zoroaster. It lasted 70 days.
3. There was a lunar eclipse of Jupiter, the King's planet, in the constellation of Aries—a symbol for Judea in Greek astrology.
4. There was a comet sometime between 3-7 BCE.

Matthew does not indicate that the Magi visited within 12 days after Jesus was born. It probably took them at least three weeks to prepare for their trip and nearly two months to make the journey. In Jerusalem they would have studied with the Rabbis and teachers to compare notes about the Jewish Messiah to see if he could be their Savior. It is possible the Magi did not travel together but came from different areas of the Persian empire and met in Jerusalem. Thus, their travel times would have varied significantly. How many Magi actually visited? We assume three because that's the number of gifts given; scholars, however, believe there were probably about 7-12 from different parts of the empire, truly making Jesus a Savior for all peoples.

What did their gifts mean? Myrrh was for embalming (transforming the physical to the supernatural world). Myrrh probably came in small vials and would link Jesus to divinity. Gold was considered to be regal but also represented the virtue of faith, which all believers should possess. Frankincense was a perfume and related to purity concerns. The Frankincense

represented the prayers that humans should lift to God. The Magi probably studied with Jewish scholars in Jerusalem and would have learned that the Messiah would suffer and die. Thus, the Myrrh would have been very symbolic—transforming the natural human into a divine being.

The Magi were from another country, practiced a different religion, and represent gift giving to honor Jesus. The Epiphany in the West today usually means the day the Magi visited Jesus. The word epiphany means manifestation and thus, the Epiphany in the West means the physical manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles. An interesting question is why would Matthew include this story about Gentiles. The gospel was written decades after Paul had revolutionized the followers of Jesus by bringing in Gentiles without requiring circumcision. Was Matthew connecting these Gentile followers to Jesus' nativity? The writers of Matthew, themselves, may have been Gentile followers. It is possible that Matthew accepted Paul's ministry before some of the other more conservative apostles (John, James and Peter).

Epiphany was first celebrated in the Greek speaking eastern half of the Roman Empire. For the Eastern church the Epiphany stood for Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River as the time that the Son of God became manifested to the world. Before then Jesus was not known "publicly." The traditional date for Epiphany is January 6, which has been called 12th night. In 361 CE a Roman historian connected the double feasts of Epiphany: Jesus' birth and his baptism. Later in that century Epiphanius, a bishop in the Greek Eastern church, proclaimed that January 6 was Jesus' birthday. Over time in the Eastern Orthodox churches Epiphany began to include Jesus' birth, the visit of the Magi and in some areas extended through Jesus' childhood, his baptism and even his first miracle at Cana. In the Latin areas of the empire, Epiphany emphasized the coming of the Magi. Traditional customs included: singing, chalking the door, having one's house blessed, consuming Three Kings Cake, winter swimming and going to church services.

An important part of the Magi story was that they visited Herod. This would be customary for foreigners to find out information about the birth of a new King. It was a dream that warned them not to return to Herod and disclose Jesus' location. Again, another dream warns Joseph about Herod's plans and that they should flee to Egypt. Dreams and angels were important messengers in the bible. In their day, dreams were considered real connections to life. They were not readily dismissed and were usually taken seriously, especially the dreams that were clearly remembered.

This story line is important for Jewish followers because it connects Jesus with Moses who led his people to freedom. Moses came out of Egypt and so did Jesus. The family's stay in Egypt is an important part of Coptic Church beliefs. We'll cover that later. Matthew says the consequence of the Magi visit was the slaughter of the innocents. Since Jesus was 18 months to two years old, all male babies under the age of two were slaughtered. This slaughter seems to have been prophesied with the entry of Mars into the conjunction of stars that may have guided the Magi. Mars stood for danger and when the Magi learned of the slaughter, I believe they clearly understood the danger the baby had been in.

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Ways to Give to TOL

Online: Tithe.ly is available. For instructions, please visit www.trinityoldlutheran.com or download the 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.

