



## Pastor's Ponderings

Our Revelation study has been opening my eyes to the hope we can find in Jesus. In this study we are reminded that the Biblical message is that God comes to earth to live on it with us through Jesus, despite the occurrences of earthquakes, darkness, and plagues. In every age, God comes! God loves us and the world God made. God saw that it was good. This understanding comes in conflict with the theology of the Rapture that was developed within the last 200 years, in which accepting Jesus provides escape of an escalating end of the world mentality.

I believe that this understanding is dangerous because it takes the human race away from being accountable for their actions and away from the stewardship of the earth that God intended humans to have.

Being God's children is an act of God and not one that we can decide who is in and who is out. Therefore our call is to treat all people like brothers and sisters in Christ. Our call is also to allow God's healing presence to be our motivation to care for God's earth.

I believe God's coming will be a kingdom on earth in which "all nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord and they will bring glory to your name" (Psalm 86:9).

John writes in Revelation, "Behold I make all things new." I have hope for our world and the desire that we work towards a community that has at its core caring for, not judging, God's creations.

So, empowered to serve and enjoy God's earth and its people, I remain,

*Pastor Fred*      he/him/his



## Bible Study—The Book of Revelation

Pastor Fred continues leading this study on **Friday mornings, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM** in Augustana's Luther Hall. It is on Zoom and in person. All are welcome to one or all of the study dates. We look forward to seeing you!

## Sermon Discussion/Input with Pastor Fred Wednesday, October 25 at Noon TOL Fireside Room

Pastor Fred is asking for participants to join him in a two-hour bag lunch discussion of the sermon texts for the next month. It is known as a "Pericope Study."

Please let Pastor Fred know if you are interested in attending the discussion (held on the fourth Wednesday of the month). There will be some preparation in order to have a discussion about the text/world events/church challenges.

## Monday Afternoon Adult Ed. Classes, led by Charlie Schmidtke



Classes meet on Monday afternoons from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM in the Fireside Room or on Zoom. The schedule for the remainder of 2023 is listed below. Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link.

October 9:	Sodom and Gomorrah
October 23:	Abraham's Sacrifice
November 6:	Exodus – Deliverance
November 20	Exodus – Mount Sinai
December 4:	Deborah's Victory

## Monday Evening Tai Chi at TOL! 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Tai Chi

*Instructor - Charlie Schmidtke*  
**\$20 per 10-week session**

Balance, Tranquility,  
Strength

If you are looking for a form of exercise that consists of slow gentle movements, meditation and breathing, consider learning Tai Chi. The schedule is listed below.

*If you aren't familiar with Tai Chi—please speak to Charlie!*

<b>Session 1:</b>	<b>Session 2:</b>
October 2, 9, 16, 23	January 22, 29
November 6, 20, 27	February 5, 19, 26
December 4	March 4, 11, 18, 25
	April 8

## Serving Dinner at Friends of Night People

Our congregation will have an opportunity to serve dinner at Friends of Night People (FNP) on **Friday, October 20**. Friends of Night People is a local charitable organization that helps the poor, homeless and destitute by providing food, clothing, medical care, counseling and hope. TOL regularly supports Friends of Night People through our Sandwich Ministry. If you feel called to serve on the 20<sup>th</sup>, please use the sign-up sheet on the main bulletin board.



We will meet at TOL that Friday at 4:00 PM and carpool to Friends of Night People located at 394 Hudson Street in Buffalo. Volunteers are expected to be at FNP by 4:45 PM.

If you have any questions, please contact Matt.

## Trinity Tidings, October 2023



### **Reformation Sunday at TOL, October 29**

We invite you to join us for combined worship with Augustana Lutheran Church.

**11:00 AM**, with Holy Communion  
(in-church or on Zoom)

### **ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2023**

- † Remember in prayer those who have suffered tragedy, displacement and loss as a result of the wildfires in Maui. Ask God to stir their hope and strength for the long recovery ahead and inspire our generosity in supporting relief and rebuilding efforts, including the work of Lutheran Disaster Response and the Pacifica Synod.
- † Jesus, the Son of God, was humble yet strong, and endured suffering and death to be resurrected for our sake. This is the cornerstone of our faith and salvation. Praise God and sing with thanksgiving and joy for all to hear.
- † Pray for a peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine, and be mindful of how it impacts every nation and our daily lives.
- † Give thanks for writers, editors and photographers who serve the church by sharing the gospel, telling stories of faith and service, inspiring us and revealing how God works through our church, congregations and siblings in Christ.
- † Pray for those whose lives and communities have been forever changed by severe weather and wildfires, and who are immersed in the long, demanding work of rebuilding their lives and communities, here and around the world.
- † Pray for the work of ELCA World Hunger in feeding the hungry and connecting people with education, health care, clean water and sustaining sources of income. Give thanks for our partners in this work, including global companion churches, the Lutheran World Federation, Bread for the World, Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief.

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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.

## Trinity Tidings

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### **September Mission: Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)**

Thank you for your donations in support of this organization that for over 80 years “has offered welcome and hope to more than half a million refugees.”

Core Values: Welcome

“When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.” Rooted in faith, LIRS believes that we are called to welcome those fleeing persecution and seeking refuge in the United States.

[From the LIRS website: [www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org)]

### **October Mission: Operation Christmas Child**

This month, the focus is on shipping the shoeboxes assembled as part of the Sunday School’s Operation Christmas Child project. The cost is \$10/box. Your monetary donations will help offset the cost of completing and shipping the shoeboxes. (An updated article by Debbie and Kelly appears elsewhere in this issue.)

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 Operation Christmas Child).

### **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
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Cereal and other breakfast items (oatmeal, grits)
- Pasta, Mac-and-Cheese
- Spaghetti and pasta sauces
- Instant potatoes
- Paper products, feminine hygiene products

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

## Thank You!

### BW's Chicken BBQ Dinner & Theme Basket Raffle

On Sunday, September 10, we hosted our annual chicken barbecue and basket raffle. As always, it was fun to greet our guests and offer them some yummy food and desserts. Thank you so much to all of our wonderful volunteers, from start to finish! Special thanks to Nancy and Lanny!

*Earlene*

Every year we think WOW—this is the most raffle items we have ever had. It happened again this year with a total of 66 baskets/gift cards/gift certificates.

We are so blessed to have the support and giving hearts of our Church family! We could not have done it without you! Thank you - thank you -thank you!!

This year the basket raffle proceeds will not only help with Operation Christmas Child and work within our Church, but a portion will also go to the Arlen Jenkins Family in support of her bone marrow transplant expenses. Thank you again for your help in making this all possible!

*Kelly and Debbie*

### Seasons' Readings—Fall!

**Have you seen** Fern in the Resource Room at the TOL Book/Puzzle Sale? She's checking out the books on gardening and even a few issues of *GreenPrints* magazine. Stop by and see what's available at great prices!



If you have items to donate, please leave them in the box located in front of the desk.

### Operation Christmas Child

This month (the last month before we pack our boxes) donation suggestions are children's books, puzzles, travel size games, and flash cards.

We are so grateful for all your donations throughout this year!!! Hopefully the monthly information has made it a little easier for you to be part of this wonderful Sunday School mission project.

If you would like to make up a box of your own, boxes and labels will still be available in the narthex in the upcoming weeks.

If you have any questions please see Debbie or Kelly.

### Ways to Give to TOL

Online: Tithe.ly is available. For instructions, please visit the church website at [www.trinityoldlutheran.com](http://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.

### ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2023

- † *Feast of St. Francis of Assisi* Pray for the Spirit to stir within us humility, generosity and respect for our neighbors in need and for all living creatures. Give thanks for pets that provide joy and companionship and for service animals that benefit people with physical and cognitive disabilities.
- † *Indigenous Peoples' Day* Remember in prayer and give thanks for Indigenous communities that have lived in the Americas and other parts of the world for thousands of years. Pray that we will not waver in our commitment to repentance, reconciliation, healing and unity as neighbors and children of God.
- † *Reformation Day* "Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures" (Martin Luther). Lift up prayers of thanksgiving and praise for God's grace, which comes to us as a gift and sets us free, lifting our spirits and restoring our relationships with God.

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### ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2018

Pray for situations and people who are on your mind today, be they cause for celebration and joy or concern and healing.

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### "Christ in Our Home" Devotionals

Booklets for October through December are available in the narthex. Please take a copy! If you would like a copy mailed to you, please call the church office at 716-836-4868.

### "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).



**Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke**  
**Study Notes: “Mary/Elizabeth and Jesus/John”**

**Part III: Mary and Elizabeth**

Read Luke 1:57-80

John’s birth: Zechariah regains his speech because he believed and followed the will of God. The crowd is frightened by the “miracle” happening to an unimportant priest who was just lucky enough to be selected when he was. Why are they frightened? The Old Testament talks of faith based on a Fear of the Lord—fear of doing anything wrong or acting against the laws. This belief will contrast with Jesus’ followers who believe that faith is based on love. Zechariah praises the Lord with a beautiful poetic prayer. Luke ends the passage by saying that God gave John great power as he grew up and that he lived in the desert. In fact, he became an Essene and lived in Qumran (a desert area on the Dead Sea). When John turned 30, he began his ministry by baptizing people and challenging them to repent and turn to God. He knew he was preparing the way for his cousin, Jesus.

Jesus’ birth: Luke’s version is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem; was visited by shepherds; was circumcised eight days after birth; and returned to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph.

Here are some important connections between Mary and Elizabeth and Jesus and John.

1. Mary was a young child and became the ward of the temple. Elizabeth and Mary would have known each other well and certainly trusted each other with profound secrets and joys as Mary grew up.
2. Mary and Elizabeth shared their pregnancies. Both of them were miraculous, because Elizabeth was considered barren and Mary was a virgin.
3. Mary and Elizabeth are relatives, although it is unclear what the nature of this kinship was. Is it possible that Elizabeth was the daughter of one of Mary’s aunts? The idea of being a relative is ambiguous and has a wide variety of possible story lines.
4. I believe that Mary and Joseph would have attended the Passover on an annual basis. Jewish law required the faithful to go to the temple three times each year. This was unrealistic for those living in Galilee because the round trip itself would take a week. So, typically, Jews from Galilee would make one annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem to go to the temple. The Passover festival (seven days) was very popular and it seems very likely that that is when they would visit. This belief is consistent with Luke’s story when Jesus was 12. Luke says that Jesus’ parents went to Passover every year (Luke 2:41). Although there is no biblical reference, I do believe that Mary and Joseph would have stayed with Elizabeth and Zechariah while Jesus and John were growing up. The population in Jerusalem swelled during Passover and there was a real problem of lodging at that time. People typically stayed with families in the area. John and Jesus, thus, may have spent a lot of time together while they were growing up.

5. Jesus and John most notably connected at his baptism when they are 30. They did not meet as strangers.
6. Jesus was influenced by the Essenes (talk about this in a later section) which probably was because of his relationship with John.
7. The first apostles called by Jesus (James and John, Andrew and Peter) were followers of John the Baptist who told them to follow Jesus instead of him (John 1: 35-42).
8. When John was beheaded, his followers turned to Jesus as their leader.

Elizabeth and Zechariah are only mentioned in the passages of Luke we’ve just examined. Joseph is only mentioned in Matthew and Luke during Jesus’ birth and at the Temple visit when Jesus was 12. Mary is mentioned in the bible only briefly after the nativity stories of Luke and Matthew. She is a part of Luke’s story of Jesus in the temple and in John’s story of the wedding in Cana. Matthew, Mark and Luke all have a passage about Jesus dismissing his siblings and mother when they tried to see him. In John, Mary is present at the crucifixion. (Note: there is no biblical reference to Mary holding Jesus at the foot of the cross. The famous statue of the Pieta is an artistic rendering, not a biblical story.)

Mary’s assumption into heaven is not biblically based but is a holy day for many Christians. There is a great deal of debate about where she died or where she was buried (for those who do not believe in the Assumption). Because of Jesus’ and John’s exchange at the cross, the belief is that John cared for Mary the rest of her life. There is no doubt that she was present at Pentecost (even though she is not listed by name). She may have even lived with the early commune established outside of Jerusalem. Many believe that she moved with John to Ephesus years after the Pentecost and she died there.

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