



Some words by Upstate NY Synod Bishop Lee Miller II written to colleagues after our national election.

Some are hurting today. Feeling shocked, sadness, anger, anxiety, depression, numbness, and so much more. For some today may be a day of reckoning. Of lament. Of sorrow. We do not need to move on right away. For those who see and hear the grief, it is important that we not move on too quickly. Christ is with you.

I want to invite us, collectively, to breathe, rest, care for ourselves, and connect with those who love and affirm you. Moving forward we will continue to be the church, the embodiment of Christ Jesus who, though he was Divine, took on our mortal nature, crossing boundaries and barriers, bringing the grace of God to all people. Moving forward we will continue to be a Reconciling in Christ church, affirming the personhood, dignity, and humanity of our beloved community, especially our siblings who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color and Culture, and LGBTQIA+.

For those today who may not be feeling the pain I have described, I invite you to listen to the experiences and witness of those around you who do. I encourage you to share kindness and love with your neighbors. I hope that each of our congregations are places where every person is welcomed and affirmed for who they are, a child of God, created in God's image of lovingkindness. **Bishop Lee**

Pastor's Words

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all." Ephesians 4:4-6

*"We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our Love, by our Love,
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our Love."*

There are a lot of "one's" in these two quotes from Ephesians Chapter 4 and from Peter Scholtes' song, "We are one in the Spirit" written in 1968. After the divisive election I am looking for unity, for oneness. I am looking for a God of Love shining through. This unity I seek is hopeful, focused on Jesus and his actions for us.

Jesus said, "whoever hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock." Jesus' words bring unity, hopefulness, love, and grace to all, and all those in need. By being unified in doing what we hear from Jesus we are impelled to serve. A wise person once said to me, "It doesn't matter who is serving with me at a soup kitchen for the poor. Who is to my right or who is to my left. It only matters that the poor are fed and we are doing it together."

We are coming into the season of Hope and Love. May it be a season in which we serve as one together!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Fred he/him/his

Decorating the Church for Advent and Christmas

Please join us on **Saturday, December 7 at 10:00 AM** to help decorate the church for the upcoming seasons of Advent and Christmas. "Many hands make light work!"



Annual Budget Meeting...The Congregational Budget Meeting will be held following the worship service on **Sunday, December 8**. Also on the agenda is the election of council members for 2025. Please plan on attending, either in person or on Zoom! Thank you. -- *TOL Church Council*

Coffee Hour...All are invited to a coffee hour on **Sunday, December 15**. We will meet downstairs in the Fellowship Hall following the 11:00 AM Worship service. Hope you can join us!



Sermon Discussion/Input with Pastor Fred Wednesday, December 18, 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.

Grief Support Group

The group will meet in TOL's Fireside Room on the first and third Tuesdays each month (10:00 AM to 11:30 AM). For more information, please contact Diane Schmidtke.

A Successful Chowder Fundraiser -- Matt

I'm pleased to report that our Chicken Chowder Fundraiser was a success! Much of the chowder was sold on Saturday, November 2, and the remainder of the (frozen) chowder was sold alongside the November 5 Election Day Bake Sale. A giant "thank you" to all the volunteers and to those who donated supplies--and an extra giant "thank you" to Velma who oversaw everything!

It was decided that a portion of the proceeds from our chowder sale will be given to the family of Arlen Jenkins to help pay Arlen's medical expenses. As many at TOL are aware, Arlen is battling a rare genetic disease that is attacking her immune system and they must make regular trips to New York for specialized treatment.

We continue to pray for Arlen, her family, and the medical professionals who are overseeing her care.

You are invited to join us on Christmas Eve!
(in-church and on Zoom)

Augustana LC
Candlelight &
Communion Service,
4:30 PM



TOL Candlelight
Service of Lessons &
Carols,
7:00 PM

Trinity Tidings, December 2024

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



Seasons of Advent and Christmas

First Sunday of Advent, December 1
Second Sunday of Advent, December 8
Third Sunday of Advent, December 15
Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at TOL

December 24 at 7:00 PM
(in-church and on Zoom)

*Come, share the Christmas spirit with others—
invite a friend or relative to in-church or Zoom worship!*

ELCA Prayer Ventures, December 2024*

- † Pray that our faith and anticipation will be stirred by Advent candles, songs, art and Scripture that draw our attention to God's abundant love for humanity and amazing gift of Jesus Christ.
- † Pray that, day after day, we will grow more generous in responding to our neighbors in need, strengthening our communities, supporting our global companions and expanding the ministries and outreach of our congregations.
- † "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul" (Psalm 25:1). Lift up everything to God – your joys, concerns, questions, lamentations, confessions and praise.
- † *Christmas Day* God's glorious light breaks through sin, death and despair to illuminate the gifts we receive through the birth of Jesus Christ – love, mercy, hope and new life. Praise God!

Prayer for Trinity Old Lutheran, Augustana and Good Shepherd 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 Trinity Old Lutheran, Augustana and Good Shepherd. Strengthen our relationships in this community as we serve our neighbors in love.

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. 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!



Christmas Poinsettias...If you wish to purchase a plant for the sanctuary, please use the sign-up sheet on the main bulletin board. If you have any questions, please speak to Barb.

Trinity Tidings

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December Mission: National Alliance on Mental Illness Buffalo & Erie County (NAMI)

NAMI is a non-profit organization that has been serving Western New York families since 1984. More details can be found on the NAMI website: www.namibuffalony.org.

"We are families compassionately helping families and their loved ones challenged by mental illness. NAMI builds better lives for Western New York families through support, education and advocacy.

Programs

NAMI signature programs are offered at no cost to the public. Some programs, such as Family-to-Family classes and Family Support Group, are offered exclusively to caregiving adult family members and close friends of a person living with mental illness. Our signature programs are taught and led by trained, certified volunteer leaders who have lived family experience of the challenges of a loved one living with mental illness."

[from: www.namibuffalony.org. Copyright©2022 NAMI Buffalo & Erie County.]

Please place your donations in the marked envelopes in the narthex; mail donations to the church office (indicate on your check that it is designated for NAMI Buffalo & WNY).

Mission for November: Veterans One-stop Center (VOSC)

Thank you for your donations to this important organization in Buffalo. The Veterans One-stop Center of WNY (VOSC) brings people, resources and organizations together to improve the quality of life for those who have served or are serving in the Armed Forces of the United States and their families.

A big "thank you" to Kelly for speaking about VOSC at worship on Sunday, November 17. She and her husband, Al, volunteer at the organization and she shared her thoughts about the services VOSC has to offer veterans and their families.



Community Advent Meals & Worship Wednesdays: 6:00 PM Dinner; Worship to follow

- † December 4 at Good Shepherd Lutheran (2669 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda)
- † December 11 at Augustana Lutheran (3143 Eggert Road, Tonawanda)
- † December 18 at St. Martin Lutheran (322 Old Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda)

All are welcome!

Election Day Bake Sale—A Success!

We are so grateful to everyone who brought in goodies for the Election Day bake goods sale—and a special “thank you” to all who came on Monday evening to help with packaging and pricing. We had a full crew of helpers and it sure made a difference—within an hour, everything was priced and ready to go for Tuesday morning! On Tuesday, we had several shifts of our volunteers to staff the sale, which was also greatly appreciated.

We must have had a lot of hungry voters—we sold every single goodie that was brought in, as well as all the quarts of chicken chowder that remained from the Chowder Sale—we even had two voters who donated \$20 each to help with our ministries! This was a very successful fundraiser for TOL! --Nancy



Pizza Party... Thank you to all who helped bring our pizza party together on Sunday, November 17, and to those who took time out of their day to join us! Delicious pizza, sweets, and conversation were enjoyed by all! -- Kelly

My Musings, by Diane Schmidtke

Autumn, 2018

We recently returned from a mini-getaway to Pennsylvania. Day 1 was spent in Shanksville viewing the breathtaking tribute to those who died when their plane was crashed on 9/11. On Day 2 we drove to Mill Run to see “Fallingwater,” designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for the department store magnate, Edgar J. Kaufman...

...from devastation to creation...

Fallingwater is a magnificent display of genius. My head is still in a swirl of positive space, negative space, cantilevers, open terraces, low ceilings, balance, and, of course, falling water. We spent a couple hours on the very informative tour, and then the gift shop, the museum and walking the grounds. The grounds are immaculate with a “carry-in, carry-out” policy: no trash cans anywhere but the cafe. What you bring in, you take out, which makes for a spotless environment with no litter to be seen, anywhere. We witnessed many workers keeping the foliage, greenery, gardens looking pristine. Fallen leaves of many colors were all around. Nature at its best, beautiful, but even these are pretty much kept off the gravel pathways leading to and from the house. So, it happened that we were walking nonchalantly from the house, down a path to a spot proclaimed as “the place” to stand and look back at the house for the best view. Surprisingly, we were alone, and it was quiet as we strolled down this long path. We chatted as we looked at each other or behind us; our glances upward up at the house and the trees around us. All of a sudden my gaze was drawn to the ground where I spied a penny... certainly out of place. How had it come to be here? As I picked it up, I looked at Charlie with amazement and joy. He quietly said, “Hi, Buv” (his pet name for Heidi). That’s when I checked the date as I always do on ‘pennies from Heaven.’ “This can’t be!” It was 1981, the year she was born. How likely? Indeed!

The ways of the universe, of God, are mysterious and mostly unknown, but when serendipity makes us stop and take notice, it becomes clear to me that it is better to keep eyes and ears and heart open to the energy that surrounds us. Blessings abound.

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Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke... You’re invited to join the class on Monday afternoons in the Fireside Room (or on Zoom) from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. Please contact Charlie for a Zoom link.

- December 2: Elizabeth and Zachariah
- December 16: Mary and Joseph



ELCA Prayer Ventures, December 2024*

- † Remember those who serve our communities during the holidays, including church staff, first responders, retail and restaurant workers, health care providers, members of the military and those who maintain the infrastructure of our communities.
- † December is a time of anticipation and joyful celebration, expressed through shared meals, gatherings of friends and family, community events and special opportunities for worship. Promise to invite and welcome others, especially those in our communities who feel alone, ignored or forgotten.

Operation Christmas Child... Our 56 Operation Christmas Child boxes were blessed in Church on Sunday, November 17. That is our new record—two more than last year!! I will be taking them to Amherst Baptist Church to be sent on their way. Stay tuned for their final destination! -- Debbie



Ways to Give to TOL

Online: [Tithe.ly](https://tithe.ly) is available. For instructions, please visit the church website at www.trinityoldlutheran.com or download the [Tithe.ly](https://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.

On-going Collections! Look for the marked containers in the donations area in the main hallway. Thank you!

- **Can Tabs**
- **Recycle Cans and Bottles**
- **Friends of Night People**
 - Collection of new men’s socks, and small-size hygiene products (soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste) or create care packages.
 - Men’s seasonal clothing collection—look for the Big Blue barrel.



Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke
Study Notes: Jesus the Galilean

Part II: What did it mean to be a Galilean?

Galilee had 204 cities and villages. There were two major “Highways”: west along the Sea and east of the Jordan River (it went north through Syria and south into the Sinai region). Mary and Joseph probably followed the eastern highway on their way to Bethlehem and the western highway on their escape to Egypt. Fishing in the Sea of Galilee was a major industry. Capernaum (on the northwest area of the sea) was the home of Peter’s mother-in-law and principal area of Jesus’ ministry. Magdala (on the west) was home of Mary, who may have been involved in the fishing industry too. Tiberius (central west) was a Roman city built during Jesus’ lifetime and became a major city of “corruption” according to the Jews. In addition, Sepphoris was another city west of Nazareth (circa five miles) that was rebuilt by the Romans. Jews believed that corruption, sexual abominations, inequality and poverty were hallmarks of these cities. There were two primary routes that people would use to go from Galilee to Jerusalem: (1) through Samaria, which was problematic because of the hostility of the people, and (2) head east and catch the north to south highway east of the Jordan River. This route was easier but much longer. In order to get from the highway into Jerusalem people would go through Bethany. There were two towns called Bethany which has led to many confusions. There was one in Judaea, which was on the east side of the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem was on the west side of the Mount. This Bethany was on the way from the eastern highway into Jerusalem and was where Lazarus, Mary and Martha lived. Jesus often stayed with them when he went to Jerusalem. We have no idea when they met and when he started staying there. (Although the Coptic Church claims that Lazarus met Jesus in Egypt when he was a child. There is no biblical reference to this meeting and there is no evidence of the age difference this story would require.) The gospels tell us that he stayed there before heading to Jerusalem before his crucifixion.

Galilee was surrounded by “hostile” forces and was governed by Herod Antipas who may have been Jewish but was a Roman puppet. Galilean taxes went to Antipas, while the Judaeans’ taxes went to Rome. The controlling body of the Jews was the Sanhedrin located in Jerusalem and populated by Sadducees and Pharisees. This body was initiated by Ezra when he returned to Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin governed all the Jewish laws and provided the justice system for the Jews of Galilee and Judea. Galilee was self-sufficient economically and was populous. Fishing and fertile lands were the basis for the economy. Galilee was known for its rebels and rebellions; many of these “leaders” proclaimed themselves Messiahs. Jesus was not unique in being a “Messiah” from Galilee. Jesus was seen as another Galilean threat to the Judeans’ control of the Jews and to Roman authority.

Here are some of the Judeans’ prejudices toward the Galileans:

1. Their Aramaic dialect led to imprecise ritual wordings.
2. There were few Pharisees in Galilee, so the people did not receive what the Judeans considered to be proper teaching of the Torah.
3. They did not sacrifice at the Temple often enough.
4. The Sabbath was a sacred day of rest but the Galileans did not observe as strictly as the Judeans, especially the fishermen and shepherds. This was a major bone of

contention. Recall there are a few examples of Jesus curing or doing “work” on the Sabbath. This was a real problem for Judeans and the Jewish authorities.

5. The Galileans did not follow the practice of racial purity strictly enough that was commanded by Ezra.
6. Samaria separated Galilee from Judea, thus isolating it. Its economic self-sufficiency created wealth and corruption that was problematic for Jewish authorities in Jerusalem.
7. Galileans were considered to be backward and unsophisticated.
8. Religiously they were too lax in practice of Judaism: they had improper observance of ritual; lacked the three annual pilgrimages to the temple; and had poor food preparation.
9. Too much uncleanness to maintain necessary purity. Jesus seemed to disregard the strict observance of purity, including eating and talking to people who should have been shunned.

Note: Judas was the only apostle who was Judean; the other apostles and Jesus were Galilean. I believe he would have felt out of place as he traveled around Galilee with Jesus. His position was exacerbated because he was in charge of the purse and making arrangements for places to stay along the way. His position would inevitably lead to complaints, mistrust, and disagreements.

What were some of Jesus’ Galilean Prejudices

1. Ezra’s proclamation of no intermarriage led to prejudices toward non-Jews, including Samaritans. The gospels indicate that Jesus feels he was sent to Jews alone and tells the apostles to preach only to Jews, not to Gentiles or Samaritans.
2. He condemns the wealthy: the rich have little chance of reaching heaven.
3. Jesus and his disciples did not trust the Sanhedrin and its judgments and rules, especially those involving the Pharisees.
4. Jesus demonstrated his harsh judgment of the Temple guardians and money-changers.

Gentiles: When he cured a Gentile and was being thanked, he tells the man to go back to his own kind (Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:2-8, Luke 5:28). His preaching and curing were basically restricted for Jews. Did he ever envision Paul and his ministry to the Gentiles? Was Paul’s conversion a way for Jesus to make up for his prejudices and not giving his message to Gentiles?

5. His Good Samaritan story and talking to the Samaritan woman are examples of him trying to change the prejudices of the Galileans toward the Samaritans and seems to reveal an understanding of his own biases growing up. His change of heart can also be seen in the story of not being welcomed in a Samaritan town on their way to Jerusalem. James and John wanted to send divine retribution on the town, but Jesus said no, that is not his way.
6. The Romans. Jesus grew up with a distain for Roman control and the corruption he would have seen, especially in Sepphoris and later in his life in Tiberius. I believe that his sermon on the Mount is a rebuke of Roman control and judgment. Jesus is trying to call for an alternative attitude and set of beliefs based on a rejection of Roman ways.

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