



THE HOLY TRINITY TIMES

DECEMBER 2020

The Holy Trinity Times is the official monthly publication of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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How Shall We Pray?

Nine months. The time from Mary's Annunciation on March 25 until Jesus was born on December 25. The average gestation time for new human life. A time of anticipation, high expectation, hope.

But not these past nine months. For many people this period has been one of taking away instead of welcoming in. Losing many of the things we most love to do:

Gatherings. Christmas services inside our sanctuary. Our most cherished holiday traditions. Loss of employment. Loss of health. And for 3,257 Wisconsin families as of this writing, loss of life.

How shall we pray, when many of us are facing the reality of spending "the most wonderful time of the year" alone or in vastly different circumstances than those to which we are accustomed?

More than ever before, this is a time to rediscover the true meaning and purpose of prayer. After all, when did you ever stop in your tracks and pray when things were going smoothly? When life was business as usual? Complacency is the enemy of prayer.

Now, everywhere we turn we fall on our knees: Friends, co-workers, relatives falling ill. Missing our children or grandchildren terribly. Record numbers of infections daily. Record positivity rates. Record numbers of deaths due to the virus in a single day. A scary shortage of hospital beds. These are not numbers; they are human lives. These are bodies wracked by illness and families shattered by loss. One wonders when we will ever emerge from this dark time.



But rejoice! For here is the good news: The landscape of prayer is most alive in the midst of such struggle. In the urgent refrain that runs through Psalm 80 (the psalm for the first Sunday of Advent), we cry: “Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.”

How shall we pray? The psalm gives us the clue: We pray turned toward the future. Perhaps you think this is self-evident: We pray for what we want to happen. But Christian prayer is not about what we want. Rather, it’s about knowing the outcome of all things -- life is victorious! love wins! death loses its power over us! it’s the end of the road for the devil! -- and asking the Spirit to lead us into participating in that great victory. We don’t want to sit on the sidelines. We want to be part of it. This is our calling as followers of Jesus.

All through Autumn in the Gospel readings we’ve been hearing, Jesus has been telling us what the kingdom of heaven is like, the kingdom that is already among us. It is like this:

I. God extravagantly welcomes all who show up:

- Workers all received the same daily wage no matter when they began work
- The son was blessed when he first said he would *not* obey his father—but then did
- Random “bad” people from the streets found themselves feasting at the king’s banquet when the invited guests didn’t turn up

II. But those who fail to receive the gift of the kingdom suffer the consequences:

- The tenants who tried to steal the vineyard from the landowner met a sordid demise
- The servant who failed to invest what was entrusted to him was thrown into the outer darkness
- The five “foolish” bridesmaids who forgot to bring extra oil were shut out of the party

God’s extravagant invitation is always before us. God is always lighting anew the candle of hope within our hearts. How does your faith become manifest in the world? What is your work on behalf of the kingdom? How can you participate in the great triumph of the King of Love? Let us pray!

In an ancient version of the Lord’s Prayer, the phrase “Your kingdom come” is replaced by “May your Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us.” May our hearts be purified each day, all the more so for what is being demanded of us in the time in which we are living.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Raabe



Parsonage Update All required repairs are completed and we anticipate closing in mid-December. Thanks again to all who gave so much to bring this project to fruition!

ADVENT WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

We have an abundance of “points of entry” through which you can join us for worship in the coming weeks to experience the hope and excitement of Advent.

Wednesdays at 7 p.m. LIVE ON ZOOM starting December 2: “Holden Evening Prayer” with Pastor Raabe. Wednesday worship is back!

Zoom in for this luminous musical service that will include a reading and a short reflection. Holden Evening Prayer is a favorite among congregations worldwide for Advent worship. December 2, 9, 16, and 23, all at 7:00 pm; you may join starting at 6:45. Please “chat” to share greetings and let us know you have arrived. The Zoom invitation will be sent to all member families for whom we have email addresses, and is also posted on our web site for ready reference.

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84343553646?pwd=bDBSNnNkRjBhdEdzMVIneUN2eGZKUT09>
Passcode (required): 428474

Sunday, December 6: Children’s Christmas Workshop on Zoom

Join Holy Trinity families on Zoom on Sunday, December 6 starting at 11:30 am for Christmas card and ornament-making! Share your creations as you go! Bags with supplies are READY TO PICK UP in the bin outside the church. Cards will be sent to our homebound members and ornaments put on our big Christmas tree that will be visible for Sunday morning worship. Let's help make this Christmas special for those who need it the most. Join at this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86870319185> or you can find it on the “Events” page of our web site.



Sunday, December 13: Advent Lessons and Carols

Join Holy Trinity worship leaders Sandi Brewer and Wendy Franke, with Pastor Raabe and readers, for “Holy Manger,” a special service of lessons and carols offering a variety of perspectives at the manger on that first Christmas night.

View on holytrinitymarshall.com, link posted by 5 p.m.

Tuesday, December 15: “Away in a Manger: A Visit to Bethlehem on that First Christmas Night”

Virtual Christmas Pageant featuring Holy Trinity families, moos, quacks, and favorite carols.

View on holytrinitymarshall.com, link posted by 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 20: “Blue Christmas”

A “longest night” service for those dealing with grief and loss in the midst of the holiday season.

Join Pastor Raabe and Holy Trinity families for this reflective service honoring the light of Christ that shines in the darkness.

View on holytrinitymarshall.com, link posted by 5 p.m.

Christmas Eve, December 24: Candlelight worship and carols at our drive-in service at 5:30 and 7:30 pm. Worshipers will be invited to stand next to their cars for the singing of “Silent Night.”

ADVENT APPEAL

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Three years after he founded the church in Corinth in what is now western Turkey, the apostle Paul learned of factions, jealousies, and rivalries that had sprung up within the young congregation. In this sweeping letter Paul pleads for them to be united in common purpose in their love of Jesus Christ. “For Jews demands signs and Greeks desire wisdom,” Paul thunders, “but we proclaim Christ crucified.”

We, too, proclaim Christ crucified, he who is the defining revelation both of God and of the human condition. For ours is a God of compassion, a word that literally means “suffering with.” The crucified Christ meets us where we are, as we really are—in our pain, in our loneliness, in our uncertainty over the present and our fears about the future, gathering up our broken bodies into his own with the promise that he will never, ever abandon us. Our faith leads us into the heart of the world’s darkness to look for the light that shines in the darkness. And what we know is: The darkness will never overcome it.

Your light has continued to shine through these past several months. The disruption in our life together has not broken us. Rather, it has made us stronger. Just look at the incredible success of our Garage Sale in September and the Spaghetti Dinner in November. Look at how we came together to put our parsonage into marketable shape, after which it sold in less than a week. Look at how the attendance at our drive-in service has not diminished, but grown, with the colder weather (even though as Denny Woelffer said “We are living on borrowed time” where imminent subzero temps are concerned!). Look at how we have a confirmation class of 10 strong in partnership with Bristol Lutheran Church. Who knows what else we can do that we never dreamed of, in a time of challenges that we never imagined?

Like Paul, I now come to you with an appeal: As we approach the new year, I prayerfully ask that you increase your weekly or monthly giving by a percentage that you agree on with God. We know that times are tough and that you already give generously, but increased financial stability will enable us to discover new sources of strength together. If you give nothing, then prayerfully consider becoming an active member through a regular gift. We can easily get you set up with electronic giving or provide you with a regular supply of scripture-adorned offering envelopes.

Thanks for all that you do for Holy Trinity. Each of you is cause for rejoicing!

Yours in the hope of Christ,
Pastor Raabe

Some thoughts on worship attendance

What hard times for the church, one might say. But did you know that we are down only a few people in weekly attendance, on average, from where we were at this time last year?

Of course, online is hardly the same as in person. But this demonstrates our congregation's faithfulness to our worship life, even in the unexpected forms it has assumed.



For those we have been missing from our faithful Wednesday night regulars, good news: Wednesdays at 7:00 pm throughout Advent (note new time!) we will be worshipping together using Marty Haugen's beautiful service of "Holden Evening Prayer." Join with us on Zoom (download the software for free from zoom.us) to share this special time together.

Worship Attendance: Outdoor and Online Services

Date	Outdoor	Online	Total
June 7		49	49
June 14	28	33	61
June 21		128	128
June 28	30	20	50
July 5	20	28	48
July 12	25	57	82
July 19	39	22	61
July 26	37	27	64
August 2	33	55	88
August 9	34	35	69
August 16	32	33	65
August 23	28	21*	49
August 30	41	39	80
Sept 6	**	60	60
Sept 13	45	41	86
Sept 20	43	29	72
Sept 27	48	26	74
Oct 4	39	27	66
Oct 11	31	38	69
Oct 18	28	36	64
Oct 25	63	25	88
Nov 1	38	41	79
Nov 8	36	36	72
Nov 15	28	30	58

Nov 22 42 33 75

*Bishop's sermon only, no online service

**Not held due to severe weather



Bible study opportunity Pastor Raabe will be leading a Bible study starting this month on Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Study books are available; if you have already picked up a copy, please send Pastor Raabe an email to confirm, as she wants to make sure all who have the books receive the Zoom invitation. Write to her at pastor@holytrinity-marshall.com or call the office. Additional books can be ordered as needed.

CHURCH NEWS

The drive-thru Spaghetti Dinner on November 10 was a huge success, raising over \$1,000.00. The "Bake a Pie, Take a Pie" event on November 15 was also successful.

Holy Trinity Spirit Wear: Thanks to Ameriprint Apparel in Sun Prairie, owned by Kim Erb, we have a delightful line of outerwear designed especially for us with our new logo. You may order directly from our home page, holytrinitymarshall.com. Get your Christmas orders in now!



Council seat open: There is one Council seat available for anyone who would like to run for election. This is a lively group and there is never a dull moment (right, folks?). Please prayerfully consider this opportunity to become part of the Holy Trinity leadership. Open to all active members. Please notify Pastor Raabe or Gary Waalkens if you are interested. The election will take place at the January 24 Annual Meeting and the three-year term begins in February.

We are seeking a Sunday school superintendent. This person should be a visionary who can imagine new ways of rallying children and their families around our program. We have an extensive online curriculum available, but we need ideas for how to implement it. Here is one way you can make a great difference in the life of our church! Please contact Pastor Raabe or Council President Gary Waalkens if you can serve in this way.

HOLY TRINITY TASK FORCE FOR REGATHERING: DECEMBER UPDATE

A reminder that when we do go back inside, these procedures will be followed:

Face coverings will be mandatory. Those unable to wear them may watch the service online.

Hand sanitizer stations will be placed throughout the narthex, sanctuary, and fellowship hall.

Ushers: Three will be needed for each service – two to guide worshipers entering and leaving, and one for the Welcome Desk to sign in those who arrive for worship.

Seating: Individuals or family groups may choose their seats as long as they are spaced apart from others by three pew chairs and one row.

Communion: Worshipers will receive the packaged communion upon arrival in small bags, as we've been doing; use the bag for disposal. We will all commune at the same time.

During worship: No singing or praying aloud. Words to hymns will be projected. We will let the organ serve as the "singing" voice of the congregation as we pray the words silently.

Cleaning and sanitizing: A special sanitizing crew will clean the sanctuary thoroughly before and after each service. Cleaning methods will include a non-toxic ionized spray and thorough sanitizing of all surfaces and bathrooms.

Signups: No clipboard or bulletin board signups; these will be conducted online or by phone.

Fresh air: Doors will be kept open as much as weather allows for good ventilation.

Numbers present: Unless we begin to experience a larger attendance, the Council has decided not to limit the numbers present. If greater numbers are deciding to attend we will institute pre-service registration, as many other congregations are doing.

Thanks to the Task Force and Council for its commitment to this very important work.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The Holy Trinity Congregation Council met on November 3 on Zoom.

The required repairs for the parsonage were discussed and are in motion. Work will be paid for out of the proceeds of the sale.

Final plans were reviewed for the drive-through Spaghetti Dinner. A good team is in place, including youth as waiters and runners.

A Budget Task Force has been convened to do preliminary work on the 2021 Budget. Chair: Todd Madaus; members are Owen Raisbeck, Cheri Harwood and Paul Wehking. A report will be prepared for the Council's December 1 budget meeting.

YOUR 2020-2021 CHURCH COUNCIL

Gary Waalkens, President	608-655-4989 gwaalkkens1952@yahoo.com
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Second Harvest Mobile Food Bank: The drive-up distribution at 1:00 pm this month is on **December 18**. It will take place on fourth Fridays from then on. Please try to arrive early!

Quilts for LWR Please continue to provide new fabric that can be cut into squares for making quilts. It's possible, also, for someone to take the next step and cut 11-inch squares of fabric and donate them. Our quilters are thankful for all who have supported Holy Trinity's mission to make quilts that are sent around the world by Lutheran World Relief.

Offering Envelopes If you are giving electronically and no longer wish to receive weekly offering envelopes, please e-mail htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com and let us know that; otherwise you will continue to receive them. Thank you.

Electronic newsletter To save paper, you may prefer to receive this newsletter electronically if you do not already. Just e-mail htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com and let us know that.

Our web site, holytrinitymarshall.com, is regularly updated with all the latest news and information that you might need. And share the link to our online services with family and friends!

thank you

Our thanks and gratitude to those who continue to give so much for the sake of this body of Christ such as our organist and secretary, Sunday service helpers, hard-working Second Harvest Food Bank volunteers, dedicated Council members who have been meeting twice monthly since April, those so willingly donating time and materials to maintain the church and parsonage, and those who keep our grounds looking so well-manicured. **Abundant thanks to Gary and Judy Waalkens for organizing the volunteers for our Marshall-Waterloo Food Pantry hosting in November.** Gary and Judy were present each time and served as expert workers and supervisors. They are also our board representatives to the Food Pantry. Thank you, Gary and Judy! Thanks also to those who volunteered at the food pantry in November.



Thanks again to everyone who volunteered in making the Spaghetti Drive-Thru Dinner such a huge success. Thanks also to the bakers of pies and those who purchased pie on November 15.

Thank you to our volunteer elves who so beautifully decorated the narthex and the large Christmas tree in the church entrance.

Abundant thanks also to the Budget Task Force for its preliminary work on the 2021 budget, and to our faithful Council members for continuing to meet twice monthly during these last eight months.

Contact the church office at 608-655-4246 or htcstaff@holytrinity-marshall.com

--To schedule weddings, baptisms, or other events

--If your name is spelled incorrectly, your address has changed (post office charges church when things are sent to an old address), you no longer wish to receive the church newsletter, or you wish to have the newsletter e-mailed to you

--Especially to let us know if a member of your family is admitted to the hospital or a nursing home or will be needing surgery

--You know someone who is a shut-in and would like a visit from the pastor

--A baby arrives in your family

--A death occurs in your family

--You know of someone to be added to the prayer list

--A member of your family is deployed

COMMUNITY NEWS

Marshall-Waterloo Food Pantry The Marshall/Waterloo Food Pantry is located in the lower level at 117 E. Madison Street (Hwy. 19) in Waterloo. (Please use the door in the alley.) People may visit the food pantry once each month. Hours are Wednesdays from noon-1:00PM and again Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 PM. Saturday hours are from 9:00-10:00 AM. If you or someone you know needs help, please make use of this community ministry.

FoodShare Helpline 877-366-3635

Many individuals and families are struggling to make ends meet. FoodShare Wisconsin may be able to see your food budget stretch further. This Program is for anyone with low or no income. It includes working people or those receiving Social Security, SSWI, SSDI, or Unemployment. Call the FoodShare Helpline today to complete a confidential pre-screening and make an appointment for free application assistance.

Cold weather season is here. Do you need help paying your energy bill? The Wisconsin Home Energy Plus Program may be able to help with winter heating bills. **Find out if you qualify by calling Wisconsin Home Energy Plus Program at 1-866-432-8947 OR in Dane County call Madison phone 267-8601.**

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Note: Church is now locked when the office is not open.

608-655-4246

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Pastor Nancy Raabe phone

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Find us on Facebook and keep up with all the news there and on our web site.

*Have a Blessed Christmas and a Joyful New Year
Pastor Raabe and your Church Council*