

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
433 S. WINSTEAD AVENUE
ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804
(252) 443-7462
www.trinityrm.org

Identity Statement:
With God We Can!

THE JOYFUL NOISE
JANUARY 2024

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

SUNDAY, DEC. 31	WORSHIP 10:00 AM
THURSDAY, JAN. 4	DE-DECORATE 10:00 AM
SATURDAY, JAN. 6	COUNCIL RETREAT 10:00-2:00
SUNDAYS, JAN. 7-28	SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:00 AM
SUNDAY, JAN. 7	INSTALLATION OF CONGREGATION COUNCIL FOR 2024
SUNDAY, FEB. 4	SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:00 AM ANNUAL REFLECTION ON A YEAR OF MINISTRY

PLEASE READ ARTICLES IN THE NEWSLETTER FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED HERE AT TRINITY LUTHERAN
CHURCH DURING JANUARY.

PLEASE ACCEPT THE INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE.
BE SAFE, BE KIND.

Pastor: Rev. Alice Johnson-Curl
pastortlc@trinityrm.org 252-443-7462

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The LORD says to all the people –
For surely I know the plans I have for
you – plans for your well-being,
not for any harm. My plans are to give you a
future with hope!

Jeremiah 29:11 (my loose translation)

The last page of the 2023 calendar has been torn off, maybe crumbled into the discarded wrapping paper and ribbon and bows. (Aside – for those of you reading this who do not use paper calendars, I still do!). We're in 2024 – and many of us wonder where did the last year go, how are we already 24 years into this century?!

Regardless of how one tries to keep track of dates, this is often a time when we pause to reflect on the past months and begin to look forward in anticipation of the coming months. Given the tumultuous times in which we live, the wars and hostilities and financial stressors and political climate (as we enter another national election cycle) and whatever personal tensions and challenges in our lives, it might be hard not to question God's presence and holy plans. Or maybe we wonder not so much if God has plans as when will God reveal them to us!

This verse is part of a letter Jeremiah writes to those living in exile in Babylon. The prophet's words are to

encourage, to remind the people that God has not forgotten them, that God sees and hears them and loves them, that the LORD's heart for the people holds only for their best. And Jeremiah calls them to live in hope.

This message is for us, too. God loves each and all of God's children – even you and me. And God embraces us into God's promise of wholeness and abundance and peace and love and life today and tomorrow and December 31, 2024, and forever! The prophet calls us to trust the LORD, to believe that God is faithful to all promises made, and to live in hope for today and all days.

As we begin this New Year, may each of us spend time every day to grow being in God's presence, to release our need to try to control, to trust God to be God, and to greet each day as a gift of new opportunity and beginning and hope.

Happy New Year to you all!

Thank you for your partnership in ministry.

You continue in my prayers.

Breathe peace,
Pastor Alice

***Please include in your prayers our members, relatives,
and friends who have requested our prayers:***

people and land threatened by or recovering from recent weather events, our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and Gaza, Palestine and Israel, for all communities

wounded by violence, and those who feel there is no one to pray for them,

If you have added a name to the prayer list, please contact Pastor Alice and share an update regarding the person. Names will be rotated off the list every 30 days. Thank you.

Words of Appreciation

Thank You to Everybody who has given time and effort in assembling bulletins and newsletters in December! We are truly blessed by your partnership in ministry.

Thank You to the folks who share worship leadership!

Dear Trinity Family,

Thank you so much for the kind Christmas gift. I am very blessed to work in such a positive environment with such a supportive congregation. I was very surprised by the generosity, and I am very grateful that you remembered me in the busy time of Christmas. Merry Christmas to you all, and may God continue to bless us all in the coming year.

Administrative Assistant

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thank you for your generous gift and gracious card. I am truly blessed to serve here!

You continue in my prayers,
Breathe peace,
Pastor Alice

You Are Invited to Help Restock Our Love Meals. At this time, the cupboard is almost bare. Cans of meat, vegetables, fruit, juice boxes, crackers, and peanut butter are the items kept available for folks who need emergency

food. Our congregation is often mentioned to those in need as a source for immediate help, and we often have visited who are in crisis. We are blessed to be trusted in times of need. It is expected that this year will result in more brothers and sisters coming for help. If you have any questions, please talk with Pastor Alice. Thanks.

Yes, We Will Gather on Sunday, December 31, 2023, at 10:00 am for worship. However, the Sunday School classes **will not meet** on December 31. Thank you.

Sunday School Resumes on Sunday, January 7, 2024. Consider joining a class as part of your New Year's spiritual discipline when we Sunday School gathers **at 9:00 am**. There is a class for children and youth, and a class for adults. And - there's a place just for you! All are welcome!

Book Group On Tuesday, January 9, 2024, our Book Group will meet at **11:00 am** to discuss *The Bridges of Madison County* by Robert James Waller. The February selection hasn't been made. Everybody is welcome!

On **Thursday, January 11, 2024**, Trinity is honored to host the **Chief and Clergy Meeting** for the Greater Rocky Mount area at **10:00 am**.

Meals on Wheels Trinity is scheduled to help deliver meals on **Wednesday, November 29, 2023**. Please pick up meals **at First Presbyterian Church at 10:00 am**. A sign-up sheet is on the table in the Gathering Space. Please contact the church office if you have any questions. Thanks!

Looking Ahead

Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2024

Mark your calendars for mid-week Lent services. More information about Lent will be in bulletins and the February newsletter.

Congregation Council Updates

On **Saturday, January 6, 2024, council** will gather for their annual retreat in Resurrection Hall, 10:00-2:00.

On **Sunday, January 7, 2024, installation of council and appointed leaders** will be celebrated during worship.

At their December 2023 meeting, Council endorsed participation of **Trinity and Pastor Alice in a collaboration of the Rocky Mount Police Department** and local congregations. This new initiative provides **mentors for youth** who are in the juvenile court system. The hope and goal is to assist young people in this system with support and encouragement by broadening their opportunities to succeed. There will be training provided and invitations to participate in this ministry opportunity will be extended in the near future.

Please Mark Your Calendars and Reserve the Date!

Sunday, February 4, 2024, will be our Annual Reflection on the Year of Ministry after worship. Watch for more information. Please plan to stay! God calls us in many ways to be partners in ministry during 2024!

Council invites any questions or comments.

Please continue to pray for our congregation. Thank you.

Weekly Worship continues to be posted usually by late Sunday afternoon. Google **Trinity Lutheran Church ELCA Rocky Mount NC Facebook** to access the recording. You may also search YouTube or go to our website at www.trinityrm.org, use the menu to select worship services where you'll find the YouTube videos. Remember, you do not need a Facebook account to view, only to comment. All the worship videos are available on our Facebook page for you to watch at your convenience. Hope you'll share this virtual worship time if you are unable to attend in-person.

A New Year's Prayer
Lord, You make all things new.
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again.
Thank you for this new year,
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us a mighty flame
So that in our time, many will see
the wonders of God
And live forever to praise Your glorious name.
Author Unknown

Congregation Council
Cluster Reports
December 10, 2023 meeting

Worship Cluster

- Saturday, December 2, 2023- Help prepare the Sanctuary for Advent and Christmas at 10:00 am- decorate the Chrismon tree; place candles and greens in the Sanctuary windows; prepare the Advent wreath; and change paraments.
- Sunday, December 3, 2023 Advent begins
- Sunday, December 10th- Advent
- Sunday, December 17th- Advent
- Sunday, December 24th- Advent (blue)
- Christmas Eve service is Sunday December, 24th at 7:00pm (white)
- Midweek Advent Services at 7:00 pm- Theme- Pause, Prepare, Ponder
- Wednesday, December 6th
- Wednesday, December 13th
- Wednesday, December 20th

Faith Growing Cluster

Christian Education

Sunday School classes will not meet on Sunday, December 31, 2023. Thank you to those who serve as teachers..

Stewardship

Hopes are to have a resource to use during the Sundays after Epiphany

Caretaking Cluster

Family Life

As a reminder, refreshments will be available every first and third Sundays after worship, rather than every Sunday. The first Sunday of every month will continue to be set aside as the birthday and anniversary celebration day, with a special cake being provided for all who make it to Resurrection Hall after the service.

The Thanksgiving dinner was attended by approximately 25 people preceding the annual Trinity congregation meeting on November 19th. Turkey was provided by the church, and various members provided the side dishes for the occasion.

Finance – see separate report

Property

It is once again leaf "harvesting" time for the church yard, with members of the property yard team in charge of getting the leaves to the curb for the city employees to dispose of them.

The live Christmas tree has been purchased and is soaking up water in a bucket under the picnic shelter. It will be brought into the sanctuary later in the week, along with the greenery for decorating the interior of the church on Saturday, December 2, 2023.

Invitation Cluster

Evangelism

Weekly worship continues to be uploaded to YouTube and Facebook each week. Google **Trinity Lutheran Church ELCA Rocky Mount NC Facebook** to access this

ministry through Facebook or go to

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxPbmFjOZotM3IcoT0aU-fg> to watch through YouTube. Links are provided on the church website for quick links to these recordings under the Worship section.

Information has been provided to the church office to add a giving mechanism to Trinity's website. Hopefully this will be up and running soon.

Social Ministry

With God We Can! And Freeze For the past 11 years, Trinity Lutheran has provided homeless and low-income families with nutritious fruits and vegetables collected each week from the Nash County Farmers Market at Rocky Mount Mills.

For the first eight years of the *With God We Can!* ministry, we primarily canned produce in glass jars for delivery to the United Community Ministries Soup Kitchen. However, once Covid arrived, the strategy changed to allow produce to be frozen in quart freezer bags and delivered to the families of the students served by Peacemakers. This is when we renamed our ministry, *With God We Can! & Freeze*.

Also in 2020, Trinity began delivering fresh produce that could not be frozen to the Salvation Army store on Wesleyan Boulevard for distribution to its customers and staff.

This past year Trinity stopped canning and delivered only the frozen quart bags to Peacemakers each Monday along with selected fresh produce such as fruits and vegetables not suitable for freezing. We also continued delivering fresh produce to the Salvation Army store every Saturday as well.

Monday, November 20, 2023, was the end of this year's ***With God We Can! & Freeze*** ministry with the delivery of apples, new potatoes, sweet potatoes, sweet rolls, turnips and Mexican potato chips to Peacemakers.

From mid-June to mid-November of this year, ***With God We Can! & Freeze*** produced 979 frozen quarts of fruits and vegetables. Add 979 to the previous year's totals and Trinity Lutheran Church as processed, frozen or canned 11,548 quarts of nutritious produce.

Thank you to all that have participated in this ministry. Trinity is blessed to have the help of each and every one of you providing this service to our community.

Trinity will again sponsor **5 children in foster care** to provide Christmas presents. Gift cards will be made available on the table in the Gathering space in early November. Please remember to attach this gift card to the wrapped presents. The Trinity community has always been gracious and generous in this ministry. Thank you for being a part of this ministry. As time is quickly approaching, please return you gift along with the tags to the gathering space. Thank you!

TLC

Trinity's Christmas Caroling adventures will continue this year. ALL, and we mean ALL, voices are invited to join us on Saturday, December 9, 2023. More details will be provided in future bulletins.