

FAMILY MATTERS

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY NEWSLETTER

CYF STAFF

Heather Day

Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Director
heatherd@trinity-ec.org

Pastor Tom Westcott

Associate Pastor of Children, Youth, and Family
tomw@trinity-ec.org

Marlee Knickerbocker

Noah's Ark Preschool Director
Early Childhood Enrichment Coordinator
marlee@trinity-ec.org

Emily Kreiner

Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Assistant
emily@trinity-ec.org



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FAITH FORMATION



FAITH FORMATION SCHEDULES

SUNDAY SCHOOL 8:50-9:35 am

Preschool

Dec 1 - *First Sunday* family lesson
Dec 8 - The Christmas Story
Dec 15 - The Christmas Story
Dec 22 - **No Class**
Dec 29 - **No Class**

School Age (PreK-Grade 6)

Dec 1 - *First Sunday* family lesson
Dec 8 - Angel Visits Joseph
Dec 15 - Jesus is Born
Dec 22 - **No Class**
Dec 29 - **No Class**

WEDNESDAYS 6:45-7:45pm

Connections (Grades 5-6)

December 4-Syrophoenician Woman
December 11 - Young Samaritans
December 18 - *Christmas Party*
December 25 - **No Class**

Confirmation (Grades 7-8)

December 4 - Covenants
December 11 - Shepherds
December 18 - *Christmas Party*
December 25 - **No Class**

Please note: There are no classes from Dec 22-Jan 1. Have a GREAT Winter Break!

ADVENT WORSHIP

Join us for worship during this Advent season. Each week, there are two distinct opportunities to worship.

Sunday mornings 8:15 & 9:45 am

This Advent, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a “thrill of hope” in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even and especially if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, we find many ways to rejoice.

Wednesday evenings 6:00 pm

The season of Advent is itself a gift—a time set apart to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. This worship service is more reflective in nature and will help us to center ourselves on the gift of the Christ child as we walk with Mary during her pregnancy. **Join us for supper before worship!**

YOUTH & FAMILIES SERVE IN WORSHIP

Youth and families are invited and encouraged to serve in a variety of roles before, during, and after each worship service. Sign-ups are currently posted for the month of December for the following roles:

- Scripture Readers
- Communion Servers
- Communion Prep/Clean-Up



Sign up for specific dates/times at Clipboard Central in the lobby. [Email Heather](#) or [Pastor Tom](#) for more information.

FIRST SUNDAYS

The next *First Sunday* class will be held on December 1, from 8:50-9:35 am and all families are invited! On the first Sunday of each month, regular Sunday School/Connections classes will NOT be held. Instead, parents should come with their children to the Trinity Room for faith formation for the whole family.
December 1 - The Christmas Story

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS WREATH FUNDRAISER

Wreaths and swags ordered through Trinity's youth will be available for pickup at Trinity on **Sunday, December 1**, from 9:00-10:00 am and **Wednesday, December 4**, from 5:00-6:00 pm. Orders can be picked up at the courtyard entrance across from the library (next to Rm 506). Thank you for supporting Trinity's youth attending the St. Louis Service Trip in June 2025!



ANGEL BREAKFAST

Preschool and kindergarten age children and one adult guest per child are invited to the Angel Breakfast on **Saturday, December 7** from 8:30-10:00 am.

Children and adults will participate in activities, enjoy a fancy breakfast together, and hear the Christmas Story told by a REAL ANGEL! Join us for this special morning. Registration is required and available on [Trinity's website](#) or by submitting a paper form to Heather.

GET CRAFTY!

Ornament Making Workshop

Come to Trinity's lobby on the second Sunday of Advent, **December 8** between 9:00-11:00 am. We'll provide a variety of material to create and decorate ornaments that we'll use to trim the trees that help us celebrate the Christmas season.

Kids, youth, and adults are all welcome to create ornaments!



ADVENT SUPPERS

Join us for Advent Suppers in the Trinity Room prior to worship on **Wednesday evenings** in December. The meal will be available from 4:30-6:00 pm, so families have the opportunity to eat a warm meal before choir rehearsal or worship and confirmation/connections classes. Meals will be kid-friendly, consisting of soup and sandwiches.

CAROLS & BARRELS

Brace your elves! Get ready for a not-so-silent night singing all your favorite Christmas carols and rockin' around the Christmas tree.

Whether you bring the kids down for a fun evening or come with a group of friends, pick up supper and join us on the second floor at the Brewing Projekt (1807 N Oxford Ave) on **Thursday, December 12** starting at 6:00 pm. A live band will lead the crowd in Christmas carols while we enjoy the season together. Special prize for best (worst) ugly Christmas sweater!



CHRISTMAS PRELUDE

A holiday tradition at Trinity is the Youth Musician Prelude at the 11:00 am **Christmas Eve** Service. This is a time to celebrate our budding young musicians. We welcome all students, no matter their age or instrument, to be part of our special musical prelude. The musical prelude will begin at 10:30 am. To participate, please [email Dr. Frank Watkins](#)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

ANGEL BREAKFAST YOUTH VOLUNTEERS



We are looking for 15-20 middle/high school age youth to assist with Trinity's Angel Breakfast! Some youth will serve food to our special guests and clear the food when they are finished eating. Other youth will assist with the children's crafts and activities. All youth volunteers are asked to be at Trinity from 8:15-10:15 am on **December 7**. Assuming we have plenty of food, volunteers will have a chance to eat our fancy breakfast before they head home. Leaders can sign off on volunteer hours students might need for NHS, JNHS, or another service requirement.

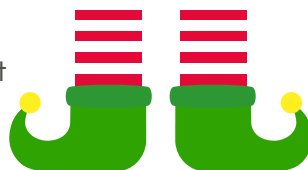
Want to help? [Email Heather at heatherd@trinity-ec.org](mailto:heatherd@trinity-ec.org).

SEEKING CHRISTMAS ELVES!

Volunteers are needed in Trinity's lobby on **Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings** (December 1-15) to receive Christmas Sharing gifts from Trinity members.

Helpers will take in the gifts and mark them off the master list so we know which gifts we have gotten back and which gifts we are still waiting on. They will also help organize and move gifts to the secure storage room. [View shift times and sign up for a shift here.](#)

This is a great opportunity for a parent and child to volunteer together!



ADVENT SUPPER HELPERS

Several volunteers are needed from 4:00-6:00 pm on Wednesdays during Advent to serve food during the Advent Suppers and to assist with clean up. Because volunteers will be working in the kitchen, they should be in grade 9 or above, or middle school age with adult supervision. Sign up at Clipboard Central or [email Heather](#).

CHRISTMAS SHARING PROJECT

Trinity is excited to provide clothing, gifts, and other household items to families in the Chippewa Valley this Christmas. This year we are partnering with several Eau Claire elementary schools to identify families in need of special attention.

Gift tags are available [on Trinity's website](#) and in the lobby. You have the opportunity to select items, purchase and wrap the listed items, and return the items to Trinity by Sunday, December 15. There will also be an opportunity to deliver gifts to families following worship on December 22 (sign up at Clipboard Central or [email Heather](#) to deliver gifts).

Drop off your gifts to the table in the lobby on Sunday mornings (8:00-11:00 am) or Wednesday evenings (5:45-7:00 pm). Thank you!

Thank you for contributing to the Christmas Sharing Project as we serve in Christ's love and share the good news!

TRINITY YOUTH



CHRISTMAS TREE DISPOSAL FUNDRAISER

To raise funds to attend the St. Louis Service Trip this June, Trinity youth will pick up your Christmas tree from your curb and deliver it to the city's brush site. Simply [sign up online](#) or at Clipboard Central, pull your Christmas tree to the curb by 11:00 am on Sunday, January 5, and a group of young Lutherans will dispose of your tree for you! This service is available to Trinity members and the community, so tell your friends and neighbors to sign up by January 1! Questions? Contact Heather at heatherd@trinity-ec.org.

Date: Sunday, January 5 after 11:00 am.

Cost: \$20 (per tree) payable at time of pickup -- simply leave an envelope with money taped to your front door. We accept cash or checks payable to Trinity Lutheran Church.

Locations: any address in Eau Claire, Altoona, and immediately surrounding areas only

COZY MOVIE NIGHT

High School Youth Group

Trinity high school students are invited to a cozy night in the Youth Room on Wednesday, December 4 starting at 6:45 pm. We'll watch a Christmas movie, drink hot cocoa, and have some cozy snacks. Wear your pajamas for extra coziness! Message Heather via Remind if you plan to attend.



STAY IN TOUCH!

High School Youth should join the Trinity Youth Remind group to receive reminders about activities directly on their phone and to message with Heather Day. Text @trinh to the number 81010 or follow the link remind.com/join/trinh

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE GSAFE CONFERENCE

I (Heather) attended the "Safe Schools, Safe Communities" conference in Madison last month as a part of my continuing education. This conference is held annually by [GSAFE](#), an organization whose mission is to create just schools for LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin, and the target audience for the conference included adults who work with youth and their families. The conference included a variety of speakers and workshops facilitated by local and regional experts. *Continued on page 6*

Takeaways from the GSAFE Conference*Continued from page 5*

Here are my top 3 takeaways:

There are so many resources! I attended a workshop with researchers from UW-Madison who shared links to dozens of reputable data sources, advocacy organizations, legal organizations, curriculum resources, book ban resources, as well as their own research findings. I learned how to access LGBTQ+ inclusivity leadership trainings, toolkits for building safe and affirming K-12 school environments, community support groups, mental health warmlines, and many other available community resources. In addition, I found a variety of books about how to support LGBTQ+ loved ones and students. I even purchased one book that I'm happy to loan out called ["A Grand Love: Stories for Grandparents of Transgender Grandchildren" by Janna Barkin](#). If you have ever wondered how to learn more about how to support the LGBTQ+ community, come talk to me and I'm happy to direct you to a variety of resources.

Community is Necessary (especially Adult Allies!) Keynote speakers JR & Vanessa Ford (parents of a trans teenager) spoke about how necessary it is for LGBTQ+ kids and their families to have a community to lean on for support. They spoke about the gift of trans adults, and how helpful it is to their trans child to have supportive trans adults in their lives. Another workshop noted that LGBTQ+ youth (especially trans youth) are less likely to come to adults in their family for support when they are depressed and anxious (often because of lack of familial support). However, those same kids are MORE likely than other kids to seek out adults outside their family for support. This makes it especially important that those of us who work with youth (or who have youth in our lives) make ourselves available to authentically support them when they need us.

Families are Exhausted (and Terrified!) Many of the families of LGBTQ+ kids at the conference have needed to publicly advocate for their children. They have spoken at school board meetings, testified in front of the state legislature, been interviewed by national media, attended rallies, etc. Most families have also had to do private advocacy on their child's behalf for them to have a healthy, supportive atmosphere at school and in the community. They know that this advocacy is an integral part of parenting their children, but they are exhausted. They used metaphors like "boats tethered together" and "singing in a chorus" to explain how we can all work together to advocate for LGBTQ+ children, rather than leaving it only to those closest to them. By combining our efforts, the stress and pressure of advocacy can be shared between families and other allies.

"Safe Schools, Safe Communities" was held November 1-2 and I can tell you that these families were terrified about the upcoming election. We now know the outcome of the election and it's easy to assume that the incoming administration will target the transgender community and potentially the entire LGBTQ+ community. Families are now even more concerned about how to keep their children safe in communities, health care systems, and school environments where their existence is considered dangerous and unacceptable. They worry about bullies and harassment, about bathroom access, and whether their children will be called by the correct name. They also worry about their children's mental health. The Trevor Project's recent national survey on the mental health of LGBTQ+ young people found that 90% of LGBTQ+ young people said their well-being was negatively impacted due to recent politics.

The good news is that according to this same survey, LGBTQ+ young people who had access to LGBTQ+-affirming spaces, (and transgender and nonbinary youth who had access to gender-affirming spaces,) reported better mental health and lower rates of attempting suicide compared to those who did not. **We, as a church, can provide affirming spaces for our LGBTQ+ young people and for those not-so-young people as well.** When families at the conference heard me say that I am a church staff member who works with kids and families, they overwhelmingly responded, "Thank you for the work you do," and "We need more allies like you." This conference helped me to see more clearly the role that Trinity can play in contributing to a safe community for the LGBTQ+ young people in our midst. -Heather Day

[The Trevor Project: 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People](#)