



THE WITNESS

Merry Christmas!

“Come Celebrate With Us”

Inside This Issue:

Pastor's Column
Pages 1—2

From Your Congregation
President
Pages 2—3

Council Boards
Pages 3

Advent-XMAS Schedule
Pages 4

Thankfulness
Page 5

Announcements
Pages 6—8

WELCA
Page 9

Pics of the Month
Pages 10

New Members
Page 11

More Fun-filled Pics
Pages 12—15

Reminders, etc.
Page 16

Calendar Highlights
Page 17

Worship Leaders
Page 18

Prayers/Contact
Information
Pages 19—20



SUNDAYS OF ADVENT

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

December – 2023

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”
(St. Mark 1:3)

(Holy Gospel appointed for Advent II)

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Advent – Christmas Schedule – 2023

“O come, let us adore him!”

Dear friends,

As noted by the schedule outlined on Page 4, the month of December will be a busy one. The season of Advent is upon us and the celebration of the birth of our Savior will soon follow. As we expend our energy preparing for the celebration to come, may we do so with the confidence that our God has already come to us and blessed us greatly. God does this each and every day, as we actively wait for his coming to us once more. Our God has torn “open the heavens and come down” to redeem and save his creation. God gives us the opportunity once more to participate in this coming down and celebrate to the full the great blessing of the presence of Jesus, the Christ-child of Bethlehem among us. May God’s presence with us here and now help us as we prepare and make straight the way of Jesus, the Word made flesh, living and dwelling among us, possible and evident in all that we say and do.

What a grand celebration we enjoyed this past Sunday of Christ the King. We welcomed 15 new members and gave thanks for the commitments made to our “Embrace, Enhance, Expand” Stewardship Appeal for 2024. What an abundant blessing we are privileged to enjoy and share not only among ourselves, but in the communities and world where we live, move and have our being.

Our annual Congregation Assembly will be held on the Second Sunday of Advent, December 10th, immediately following the 10:00 am Service of Holy Communion. Agenda items include election of Congregation Council Members, adoption of the Spending Plan for 2024 and the hearing of various ministry reports. Plan now to be with us for this important time of setting the course for our ministry together. May the Holy Spirit be with us and guide us in the way that God would have us to go.

On the Third Sunday in Advent, December 17th, Ms. Lorraine and I will host the annual Christmas Luncheon for the congregation. What a joy and pleasure it is for us to be able to celebrate with all our Holy Trinity family and friends in this way. Please plan now to be with us and share in this special time together. It continues to be a great pleasure to share in this ministry entrusted to us by our all loving and all gracious God and Lord!

It is also one of those special years when the Fourth Sunday of Advent is also Christmas Eve. We will celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent at our 10:00 am Service of Holy Communion in the morning. In the evening, we will celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Eve with our 5:30 pm Candlelight Carol Service of Holy Communion. It doesn't happen very often but when it does it is a special day of celebrating the birth of Jesus among us! Come, Lord Jesus, come! See you in Church!

Peace, Pastor Rich



From Your Congregation President

Welcome to December 2023. Halloween and Thanksgiving are behind us. Advent, Christmas, New Years and Mardi Gras ahead. I love this time of year.

We are in the process of wrapping up the stewardship drive and we truly appreciate your support. As I have stated in prior articles, we are not flush with cash but we are meeting our obligations and that is significant, particularly with some of the surprise expenses we have had this year. In 2024, we want to keep moving forward and start building up a case reserve for emergencies.

Please plan on attending the Annual meeting after the service on 12/10. We will talk about what was accomplished over 2023 and what we may be looking to do in 2024. We will also be voting on new council members for 2024.

We have all council positions staffed for 2024 but we are missing a volunteer for Discipleship. Discipleship runs children and adult education. We have had great success in children education with a new Sunday school program, a successful vacation bible school and 5 confirmands. This was a considerable accomplishment following Covid. For 2024, we want to start more educational opportunities for adults: Sunday school, more bible studies, etc.. If you have a heart for this role, let us know, you will not be left alone to do this one on your own.

In addition to the usual Advent activities, there will be an Advent Bible Study in December. Reach

out to Lynn Russell if interested. The Thursday morning bible study just completed Hebrews and will be starting Romans after Thanksgiving. The time and location are noted in the Sunday bulletin.

For all new and returning council members, there will be a kickoff meeting on 1/13/2024 from 9:00am to 2:00pm to plan for the 2024 plan.

I think that is enough for now. Blessings and enjoy this wonderful season!

Rick



Board of Discipleship

Children's Sunday School is CONTINUING!!

During the month of December, there will two opportunities children and adults to explore the season of Advent.

Children's Sunday School will be held on Sundays **December 3rd and 17th at 9:00 am.** (Please note the time change!) Sunday School is for all children ages 4 thru 5th grade. During this Advent Season, the children will be learning about the birth of Jesus. The topics for each week will be:

- † Sunday, December 3rd – God's Christmas Promise
- † Sunday, December 17th – The Nativity Story

If you have any questions, please contact Barbie Ramsland at 251-625-2421 or ramsland@mindspring.com.

Adult Sunday School

Adult Sunday School will also be held on **Sundays December 3rd and 10th at 9:00 am.** Spiritual Practices for the Season, is an adult study that introduces participants to several practices that can improve their personal faith journey. Both sessions include scripture for reflection, activities centered on biblical passages that tell the Advent story, and a prayer practice.

If you have any questions, please contact Lynn Russell at 256-665-8894 or lrussell@jruss.net.

The **children's Christmas Program, The True Spirit of Christmas**, will be held on **Sunday, December 10th during the 10 AM church service.** There will be a **short rehearsal on Saturday, December 9th at 9 AM.** All children (ages 2 and above) can be a part of the program. Casting continues. **There is a need for more children to play present day kids.** If you have any questions, please contact Barbie Ramsland at 251-625-2421 or ramsland@mindspring.com.

Barbie Ramsland

Advent-Christmas Schedule

Advent Event: Wednesday, December 6^h, 5:30 pm

Begins with supper and brief Advent study.
Decorating of the Christmas Tree
Ends with Service of Evening Prayer.

Second Sunday of Advent: December 10th, 2023

10:00 am Service of Holy Communion
Includes Sunday Church School Presentation
"The True Spirit of Christmas"

Third Sunday of Advent: December 17th, 2023

10:00 am Service of Holy Communion
Annual Parish Christmas Luncheon
follows the service in the Fellowship Hall.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 24th, 2023

10:00 am Service of Holy Communion

The Nativity of our Lord

Christmas Eve Candlelight Carol Service of Holy Communion
Sunday, December 24th, 5:30 pm

"Come Celebrate with Us!"

† † †



A Heartfelt Thank You

Colter Burkey, the son of Kevin and Pam Burkey, thanks everyone at Holy Trinity for the prayers during his Army Basic Training and his recent Airborne training. He is now headed to AIT (Advanced Individual Training) in North Carolina so please continue to remember him in your prayers.



Christmas Prayers for Military Personnel

Christmas is a time to be with family and friends. This year some are serving our country overseas or domestically and are not with the ones that they love. We ask you Lord surround those in the military with the presence of loving comrades and times when they can decompress from the stress of combat. We ask you to reveal yourself to those who are lonely and depressed. Help them to embrace the hope of the Babe in the Manger.

For those who worry about their soldier overseas, give them a peace that passes understanding. Help them to find constructive ways to deal with the stress of this situation. And for our governmental leaders, both friendly and not, help them to see past their fears and anger and embrace the One who is called Love. We ask you Lord to bring a lasting peace to the World Lord that your kingdom might come and you will be done. In the name of the Christmas Baby.

Daily Prayer (thedailyprayerblog.blogspot.com)



Announcements

Weekday Morning Bible Study

The **Weekday Morning Coffee Shop Bible Study** will continue on **Thursday mornings during December except for December 28th**. We will start at **7:05 am** and will be done about 7:55 am to meet the needs of those who work. All are invited.

This month we continue our focus on the book of Romans. Here is a link to the study and discussion materials: <https://enterthebible.org/courses/romans>

Our Bible Study group continues to meet at **Warehouse Bakery in Fairhope**.



[Warehouse Bakery & Donuts \(warehousebakeryanddonuts.com\)](http://warehousebakeryanddonuts.com)

759 Nichols Ave, Fairhope, AL 36532

Any questions, contact Rick Russell thumper335999@live.com or (256) 417-1474



Holy Trinity will hold our **first Nativity Walk on Saturday, December 2nd from 10 -- 4**. It will be an open house type event and we are inviting the community. It is an outreach event which gives all of us the opportunity to invite a neighbor or friend. Perhaps someone open to the idea of church, but not yet a regular attendee.

It is also an event that **needs widespread participation**. We need to **borrow your Nativity Sets** for about a week for them to be part of the display. We will need to **borrow a few tables**. We will be asking for donations of Christmas cookies to serve. We will be asking for volunteers to help install hanging stars after fellowship.

Our vision is that visitors will enter the Narthex. Christmas music will be playing. The tables will all be draped in blue. Pale silvery stars will be hanging. On each table there will be one or more Nativity Sets displayed. After walking around to see the displays, visitors will enter the Fellowship Hall where tables will be covered by blue cloths. Refreshments will consist of Tea, Cocoa, Coffee and Christmas Cookies.

We are so excited about this event and look forward to all of us participating in one way or another to make it happen.

Judi Luken



Holy Trinity's
Annual Christmas Tea
December 3rd 2023
2pm to 4pm
In the Gathering Place

Bring a finger food to share while we enjoy fellowship with our sisters
in Christ

ALL women are invited; Bring a friend!





ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

Our annual congregation meeting is scheduled for December 10th immediately following the worship service. Topics include the annual reports, the 2024 Ministry Financial Plan, and elections. Voting members - please plan to attend and let your voice and vote be heard.

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN DAPHNE 2023



Thursday, Nov 30 • Annual Tree Lighting
featuring musical guest Roman Street
Daphne City Hall

Friday, Dec 1 • Baldwin Pops Christmas Concert
Daphne Civic Center

Saturday, Dec 2 • Christmas Parade
Main Street Route

Friday, Dec 8 • Movie Night in the Park
W.O. Lott Park

Friday, Dec 15 • Ice Skating with Santa
Daphne Civic Center

More information at www.daphneal.com

Daphne



WELCA—Sojourner & Phoebe Circles

During **November**, our Sojourner and Phoebe Circles **collected items** for Advent Bags. Your help with the collecting of items is appreciated. Suggested items include: wrapped snacks, calendar, hand lotion, lip balm, anti-bacterial gel, word find books, small packages of tissues, note pad/pen, emery boards, hot chocolate mixes, and “fuzzy” socks. (See pictured examples below.) A box remains in the narthex to gather any last minute items you might want to contribute.

The **bags will be filled** before church on **Sunday, December 3rd**. The visits and drop-off will take place in early December..

Thanks for your help.

Barbie Ramsland



Pics of the Month



Emily Cormier got her birthday sign for Thanksgiving



November's Prodigy Pantry Crew



Kate Oldham wants to thank whoever has the insider connection with Minnie Mouse!



Thanks to our Veterans



I want Minnie Mouse ears too ...



A new sign was installed at the end of October

Welcome New Members!!

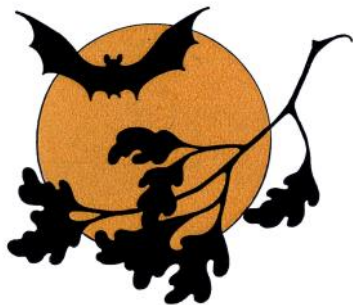


From left to right: Audrey, Jeff, Sophie, Lily and Sadie Smolik; Dora Hall, Katie and Lila McCrory; Tony and Thomas Stinnett; Anna Younkin; Cathy Jones; Paula Watkins; Ronda DeFavero and Jieying Guan.



Boo fest





Turkeys Were Trotting



November's Lunch Bunch

MANDINA'S RESTAURANT

Braveheart Hellen



Birthday Signs

Despite what you may have been told, the Birthday Signs are not delivered by Santa's elves. Rather, the grumpy old guys of the Men's Breakfast group enjoy this mission. Each month a schedule is created in which one guy delivers the sign and another retrieves the sign AND keeps it until the next delivery (we have four signs). So, when the sign appears in your lawn, enjoy it and know that one of the guys will be by to take it to its next assignment. There is no reason for you to return it to the church.

Dave Kummer



Reminders

HOLY TRINITY GOES LIVE! Our Sunday morning Service of Holy Communion is now being live-streamed and recorded each week at 10:00a on our [Holy Trinity Facebook Page](#). If you are not able to be present in person, you are invited to join us on the internet. We also continue to provide a copy of the sermon text and the bulletin with music links via email. Many thanks to those who have volunteered to operate the camera on Sunday mornings. **Volunteers are always needed.** If interested in helping out in this way, please contact **Debi Horlebein**.

Donating Altar Flowers: Please keep in mind that your normal offering contributions do not pay for altar flowers. If you would like to donate a particular Sunday's flowers, the cost is \$35.00. Simply use the sign-up sheet on the corkboard located in the narthex, and as the Sunday approaches place your donation in the offering plate. Make checks payable to Holy Trinity, noting "*Altar Flowers*" on the check. Please note there are no flowers at the altar during Lent.

Current vs. Building Fund Reminder: Specify how you want your offering split between the Current Fund and the Building Fund. If you do not specify on your envelope, it will by default go to the Current Fund. Anonymous cash (without an envelope specification) will all go towards the Current Fund. Checks without an envelope or notation on the check will by default go 100% towards the Current Fund. If you wonder about the percentage split that best services both funds, try directing 65% towards the Current Fund and 35% towards the Building Fund. Ongoing mission activities and Synod/ELCA funding is sourced from the Current Fund.

DECEMBER AT HOLY TRINITY

Lunch Bunch

We will meet on Tuesday,
December 12th @ Noon



17870 Baldwin Farms Pl.
Robertsdale, AL 36567
(251) 200-0249



Name Birth Date

Pam Burkey	12/03
Donna Thorsrud	12/03
Linda Veren	12/04
Timothy Beach	12/05
Bell Molina	12/08
Gordon Gunderson	12/09
Alexia Beach	12/11
Dave Howell	12/14
Gage Foxworth	12/16
Rick Russell	12/19
Joy Sullivan	12/20
Katrina Schonemann	12/21
Eva Veren	12/23
George Winslow	12/26
Caitlin Manicke	12/27
Kate Oldham	12/27
Heather Sanders	12/31

Men's Breakfast

8 AM Saturday, Dec 2nd

Gathering Place

Fellowship Hall



We will volunteer at **Prodissee Pantry** on
Wednesday, December 13th @ 5:30pm fol-
lowed by dinner and fellowship.



Steve & Debi Horlebein
12/23/1988 35 yrs

Worship Leadership Assignments for December

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church - Worship Leader Assignments						
	December 3, 2023	December 10, 2023	December 17, 2023	December 24, 2023	December 24, 2023	December 31, 2023
Assisting	Rick Russell	Jeff Ramsland	Dave Kummer	Lynn Russell	Dave Kummer	Jeff Ramsland
Acolyte	Lynn Russell	Cait Manicke	Diane MacShane	Emily Cormier	Nic Bogle	Cait Manicke
Lector	Pam Burkey	Kevin Burkey	Andy Veren	Sandy Vontroba	Cyndi Howell	Ginny Peterson
Cantor	Randi Patterson	Randi Patterson	Phyllis Buccholz	Debi Horlebein	Phyllis Buccholz	Debi Horlebein
Children's Sermon	Sandy Vontroba	Cyndi Howell	Pam Burkey	Linda Veren	Sarah Howell	Pam Burkey
Altar	Linda Gregg	Judi Luken	Linda Gregg	Judi Luken	Linda Gregg	Judi Luken
Greeters	Phyllis Buccholz	Jerry Driskell	Judi Luken	Lorraine Mueller	Judi Luken	Russells
Usher	Dave Howell	Curtis Manicke	Rick Russell	Phyllis Buccholz	Dave Howell	Nic Bogle
Teller	Dave Howell	Lisa Manicke	Diane MacShane	Phyllis Buccholz	Dave Howell	Lisa Manicke
Teller	Jerry Driskell	Diane MacShane	Jeff Ramsland	Jerry Driskell	Jerry Driskell	Jeff Ramsland
Camera Operator	Diane MacShane	Nate Manicke	Linda Veren	Andy Veren	Lynn Russell	Nate Manicke
Hospitality	TBD	TBD	Christmas Luncheon	TBD	TBD	TBD
Altar Flowers	<i>Advent</i>	<i>Advent</i>	<i>Advent</i>	<i>Advent</i>	<i>Advent</i>	<i>Poinsettias</i>

If you are unable to do this assigned worship leadership responsibility, please trade with a person with your same responsibility assigned to another date



If you have a prayer request for the e-prayer group, you have a few options on relaying this information to the congregation.

Option 1: Write it on the yellow attendance sheet in your bulletin and place it in the offering plate.

Option 2: Send and email with your request to

holytrinityprayers@googlegroups.com.

Option 3: Email, text, or call Erika Oldham: erikaramsland@gmail.com or (256) 404-2975.

Like Us on Facebook!! Search for [Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Daphne, AL](#).



Prayers for our People

We continue to pray for the following:

Ministries in the Church

Those who are serving in leadership roles at Holy Trinity, including Congregation Council

Lutheran – Episcopal Mission of the Annunciation – Lumberton, MS

Those who are seeking Christian Community may find Holy Trinity to be a welcoming place

Those who are new to Holy Trinity that they may find opportunities to grow in faith.

Those worshipping for the first time at Holy Trinity

Those Who Serve & their Families

Those serving in military, firefighters & law enforcement, including Marc Alverson, Daryl Bogle, Colter Burkey, Adam and Cathryn Cormier, Steve Duke, Shawn Ethington, Brent Massey, Jordan Miller, Christopher Mueller, Titus Nissen, Rich Peacock and Dylan Winslow.

Those Who Are Ill/Injured/Hurting/Hospitalized, Recovering: Tammy Cain, Milissa Collins, David Durant, Jay Fassbender, Elsie Lamb, Dot Peterson, Sheila Ross, David Scott and Charles Sharp.

ELCA LEADERS: SE Synod Bishop Kevin Strickland, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Pastor Rich Mueller

PURPOSE STATEMENT

God's purpose for Holy Trinity is to grow faith that moves us beyond ourselves.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. Faithfully living with Christ at the center.
2. Prayerfully listening with open hearts and minds.
3. Selflessly welcoming all without preconceptions.
4. Courageously bearing our neighbor's burdens
5. Relating to one another with respect and honesty
6. Boldly sharing our blessings with others.

STAFF

Pastor Rich Mueller

251-621-2968 (church), 914-388-2240 (cell)
rcapm52@aol.com (email)

Steve Horlebein, THE WITNESS Editor; 251-621-2968
(church email) htlcdaphne8271@gmail.com

Joy M. Sullivan, Congregation Musician
251-533-9899

CONGREGATION OFFICERS / APPOINTED LEADERS

Rick Russell, President

thumper335999@live.com 256-417-1474

Cyndi Howell, Vice-President

cynhla@yahoo.com 251-625-3508

Randi Patterson, Treasurer

randipat@bellsouth.net 251-510-9860

Jenny Shrider, Financial Secretary

jennyshrider@yahoo.com 260-571-6165

Council Secretary: Lynn Russell

lrussell@jrussnet.com 256-665-8894

BOARD LEADERS

Administration: Mike Shrider

shridermike@gmail.com (260) 571-6164

Discipleship: Barbie Ramsland

Ramsland@mindspring.com 256-404-5256

Nurture: Pam Burkey

pamelahance@yahoo.com 308-641-4280

Outreach: Tiffany Bogle

tiff.bogle@att.net 251-622-7273

Property: Lynn Russell

lrussell@jrussnet.com 256-665-8894

Worship: Debi Horlebein

purrrdfh717@bellsouth.net 251-680-0776

OTHER CONTACTS

E-Prayer Chain

E-mail prayer concerns to
htlcdaphne8271@gmail.com, 251-621-2968

Women of the ELCA: Tommie Morgan

tommie456@gmail.com, 251-591-1019

Return Address:

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
8271 Whispering Pines Road
Daphne, AL 36526



An ELCA Congregation Serving the Eastern Shore

Phone: 251-621-2968
E-mail: holytrinitydaphne@gmail.com
Conveniently located 1/4 mile east of the Daphne YMCA

Please visit our Holy Trinity Lutheran Church website at:

www.holytrinitydaphne.org.

Any comments or suggestions, please email the church office at htlcdaphne8271@gmail.com.

The deadline for articles and information for the July issue of

THE WITNESS

is **Monday, December 25th**

If you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter, please contact us at (251) 621-2968.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
8271 Whispering Pines Road
Daphne, AL 36526

Periodical Identification Statement:

THE WITNESS is published monthly throughout the year by Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 8271 Whispering Pines Road, Daphne, AL 36526.

Volume 24 Issue 12