

TRINITY

CHURCH



**848 Gold Coast Rd
Papillion, NE 68046
402-339-3788**

**JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER
Printed December 24, 2024**

FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

It's a new year and we are a quarter of the way through the century!

As with the beginning of each year there is an opportunity to set new goals, new practices, and for many New Year's resolutions. While most resolutions don't last past a few weeks, the start of the new year is certainly a good time to start new things.

As a church, last year our theme was Different: Because of Jesus. Over the past 12 months we have learned that as followers of Jesus we are called to live differently in the world to impact how the world sees Christ. **This year's theme is, Alive and Active** based on Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

During 2025, we will be encouraging everyone to intentionally create rhythms to be in God's word frequently and consistently. As the Word is Alive and Active, these practices bring transformation as we allow God's word to do what it does, change our hearts and minds in partnership with the Holy Spirit. The whole church is invited to participate reading through the entire bible in the year 2025. In February, we will launch the Bible Reading Plan, including a daily verse list, videos, articles, and an option to journal.

Sunday, January 12 is **Baptism Sunday** during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. We believe God is at work and moving in powerful ways at Trinity Church. Our response is to follow Jesus' command to be baptized. If you have not been baptized or you wish to reaffirm your baptism, we invite you to prayerfully consider this opportunity. At Trinity, we will baptize anyone of any age with any amount of water. Because of logistics for immersion baptisms, these are done on pre-scheduled Sundays. Please share your interest in baptism or reaffirming your baptism at Trinitylife.org/events. For parents wishing to baptize their infant or young child, please attend our Baptism Basics Course.

Men's Ministry Opportunities:

- **SAVE THE DATE - MANCAMP** - July 30th- August 3rd. Registration coming soon.
- Sunday morning **Men's Group** at 9am in the Student Wing. We are entering into Apologetics, answering questions about faith, truth, and suffering. This study and discussion will have us wrestling with hard questions and learning to effectively communicate and engage with our culture.
- All guys are invited to **Trinity Men on Facebook** group and our What's App men's group. Reach out to learn how to stay connected via social media.

Matt Pearson
Associate Pastor

FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! Many things are going on behind the scenes in church leadership and much is planned for 2025, but for now I am excited to announce that the Call Committee has done an incredible job. They have recommended Pastor Mike Skunes for lead pastor. The Church Council is excited and unanimously voted to recommend Pastor Mike to the congregation. (His bio is included below.)

Our next steps include a meet and greet with Pastor Mike on Sunday, January 5th. Then, on January 12th following the 10:30 service, we hold a special congregational meeting to elect Pastor Mike to serve this congregation. There will be a time for questions and answers. Then all active Trinity members will vote by paper ballot. As a council we are looking forward to God's plans for Trinity church in 2025.

Blessings,

Victoria Tomanek, Trinity Church Council President

Greetings! My name is Mike Skunes (pronounced "Skoo-ness"), and I am currently one of the pastors at Christ Church in Mequon, WI, a little north of Milwaukee. My wife, Rachel, and I have called Wisconsin home for the last seven years while raising our two girls, Hannah (5) and Bethany (3).

While we have loved our time here in Milwaukee, at heart I am a Vikings fan lost in a sea of cheeseheads. I grew up in Mahtomedi, MN, just outside the Twin Cities, where I spent my high school days playing football, basketball, running track, and playing guitar in various garage bands. I stayed in Minnesota for college where I studied philosophy and political science at the University of Minnesota-Morris and would later return to Luther Seminary in St. Paul after seven years of full-time ministry.

I started in ministry as a bible camp counselor for four summers at Camp Wapo in Amery, WI, where I would eventually meet Rachel as a fellow counselor my second year there. My passion for sharing Jesus with youth led me to spending five years as the youth and family director for St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield, MN, while Rachel taught elementary school music in a nearby public school. In 2017, I came to Christ Church, where I have served in various roles including youth director, worship leader, small groups coordinator, and missions pastor.

My passion in ministry is to see the incredible impact following Jesus makes in people's lives, especially for those who have walked away from church or didn't grow up going to church. I love helping the stories of scripture come alive in ways that allow people of every generation to connect their faith to their daily lives in real and relevant ways. As a former skeptic, I also deeply care about walking with people wrestling with questions, doubt, and loss, while trusting that the good news of Jesus makes a profound difference in this life and the next. As the Holy Spirit has pointed my family and I towards Trinity throughout this process, I am so encouraged by the prospect of being part of a community of believers with a passion for connecting people to Christ, caring for one another, and seeking to grow in ways that will make an eternal kingdom impact in Papillion and the greater Omaha area.

When I am not at church, you're likely to find me lifting weights in a CrossFit gym, cooking Mexican food, writing songs, fishing for bass, or taking my girls on a "worm hunt" after a good rainfall. I look forward to meeting and creating a future with you all.

Peace and God Bless,
Pastor Mike

FROM THE LEAD PASTOR CALL TEAM

After seven months of comprehensive interviews, careful deliberation and prayerful discernment, the Lead Pastor Call Committee has joyfully and unanimously recommended Pastor Mike Skunes to the Church Council for the position of Lead Pastor at Trinity Church.

Pastor Mike currently serves as associate pastor at Christ Church in Mequon, Wisconsin. Christ Church is an ELCA-affiliated Lutheran church in suburban Milwaukee that is similar to Trinity with multiple worship venues and both traditional and contemporary worship services. He has been at his current church for 7 years, serving as Ministry Director for youth, music and outreach. The past two years he moved to a pastoral call where his responsibilities include missions and connecting volunteers to mission partners. He is married to his wife of 12 years, Rachel, an elementary music teacher, and together they have two daughters ages 5 and 3.

Our committee's congregational forums revealed three primary criteria for Trinity's new lead pastor:

1. The current staff is doing a great job. Find a lead pastor who will guide and mentor the current staff and keep them at Trinity.
2. Find a lead pastor who is a good communicator and delivers biblically-based, scripturally-oriented messages.
3. Trinity's pastoral care could be improved. Find a lead pastor that is strong on caring for sick, terminally ill, homebound and grieving congregants.

Pastor Mike checks all three boxes and more. Our committee feels strongly that Pastor Mike will work smoothly with Pastor Matt and the rest of the staff here at Trinity. He is vibrant, energetic and personable. He has all the tools to be an excellent lead pastor and he comes to us from a church that is a "kindred spirit" to Trinity.

Our call committee is excited for the congregation to meet Pastor Mike and his family at the date and time currently being arranged by the Church Council. If you would like to view some of Pastor Mike's recent messages at Christ Church, go to: <https://www.christchurchmequon.life/messages/speakers/vicar-mike-skunes>

Sincerely,

George Madson, Call Team Chairperson

Sip & connect with

Pastor Mike Skunes

Sunday, January 5th

Immediately following the last service

Get your free brew and snack from Trinity Cafe.

Enjoy conversation with Pastor Mike!



Pastor Mike, Rachel, Hannah, and Bethany



FROM THE LITTLE LIGHTS PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Teaching Children to Grow, Learn and Shine for Jesus

Registration for the Little Lights 2025-2026 school year is coming soon!

Little Lights is Trinity Church's Christ-centered preschool where children can grow academically, socially and spiritually. Our dedicated and experienced staff is committed to creating a loving and secure environment where children can develop a solid foundation for life. Our very active schedule includes hands on classroom activities, fun field trips and parent-involved events.

Here is our registration information:

- Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 8:00 am - Current Little Lights families and families who have had a child attend in the past can register online.
- Monday, January 20, 2025 - Trinity Church members can register online

Are you interested or know someone who has a child that could benefit from our program? Come join us at our

Open House

Come and meet our teachers and explore our classrooms.

Saturday, February 1, 2025

10:00 am-1:00 pm.

Registration will open to the public on Open House day.

If this date conflicts with your schedule please call me to schedule a private tour.

In the event of inclement weather and Papillion La Vista Community Schools cancel events, we will host the Open House Saturday, February 8, 2025.

Stacy Denne

Director of Little Lights Preschool

littlelights@trinitylife.org

402-281-3133



FROM THE CHILDREN'S & FAMILY MINISTER

Happy New Year!

I am so grateful to lead our kids ministry into another year, and I have been praying about what direction we need to take and what our kids need to hear this year. With that said, each year Trinity Kids undertakes a campaign. Last years was called "We Are Your Village".

Our 2024 campaign resourced families with things they would do with their kids at home to show generosity and care to different people in their sphere.

This year, our campaign is called "Present in Prayer". Each month, kids will get a new prayer prompt to pray with their families, and learn about different types of prayer through the TACO format (Thanksgiving, Adoration, Confession, Others).

We can't wait to delve into prayer closer as a ministry in 2025!



LOOK OUT FOR THE TACO STICKERS!



Teaching our kids about tithing, generosity and our value of GIVE is presenting itself to be a challenge in our cash-less world. We are so grateful to be able to do all the missions we do in class- both local (changing every quarter) and global (TRS sponsorship).

Did you know that every dollar your kids give goes directly towards these missions?

However, if you're anything like me- sometimes having cash on you for your kids is hard to manage, at least routinely.

For this reason, this year we will be putting up an online QR giving code in our TK hallway, with these smiley tokens next to it. If you give online, give your child a token so they still have something to physically put in our offering bucket! This is an important step so your child can have the opportunity to learn the kingdom rhythm of tithing/giving. Thank you!

CONNECTING KIDS TO CHRIST

FROM THE STUDENT'S & FAMILY MINISTER



Rhythms

A 21-Day Challenge to Walk with Jesus

Hi Families!

I'm excited to share something special happening in our student ministry! At the end of our Elevate Retreat, I challenged students to participate in a 21-Day challenge called Rhythms. For 21 days, they will follow a daily guide filled with intentional practices to help them grow in their faith. The rhythms include three times of kneeling prayer a day, reading one chapter of John (since there are 21 chapters), reflecting on Psalm 23 daily, walking outside for 21 minutes without technology, and limiting social media and video games to 90 minutes a week.

You might be thinking, "There's no way students will do all that!" But I'm thrilled to share that many of them are fully embracing the challenge together. Would you join me in praying for them as they begin these rhythms to deepen their relationship with Jesus?

Chris Randall
Student and Family Minister
crandall@trinitylife.org

WHAT HAPPENS WEEKLY ON WEDNESDAYS?

Doors open at 6:00 PM

Program runs 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

Fantastic time of worship, teaching, and small groups

This is an amazing opportunity to grow closer to Jesus and connect with friends who share your faith.

Don't miss out, See you there!

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS & DISCIPLESHIP MINISTER

A new year is upon us and this reminds me of Revelation 21:5 where the Apostle John is sharing the vision of heaven that God reveals to him.

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

In 2025, our church family is diving into the Bible...all of us, together. God is making us new as we allow the truth of His word to take root in our lives. From this, our hope is that great conversations ensue, we spur one another on to good works, Connection Groups grow, and lives are transformed. Our discipleship team is diligently developing a pathway that connects people to Jesus and to one another.

We invite you to stay connected to Trinity by downloading the Church Center app and using it regularly. This communication tool will keep you up to date on events/registrations and help you find a group that suits you. The app also provides opportunity to check into worship, easily give toward our mission and communicate with the groups you are in. From your profile you can edit your contact information, sign up to serve, see your giving history and more. Give it a try. I think you will like it.

Juli Staab, Communications and Discipleship Minister



TRINITY
W O M E N

No matter where we are on the journey of life,
Trinity Women grow with Jesus and invite
all women to do the same.

THIS IS HOW WOMEN AT TRINITY CONNECT TO CHRIST AND TO EACH OTHER

GATHER

Worship | Trinity Cafe
Quarterly Parties
Retreats | Events

GROW

IF:Tables | Bible Studies
Connection Groups
Prayer Team, Book Club

GIVE

Generosity|Tithes|Offering
Sunday Hospitality
Find Your Serve Team

GO

Reach One More
Evangelism Course
Being the Light in the World

NEW WOMEN'S MINISTRIES BEGINNING IN 2025.

Book Club

Read, ponder, discuss.
A new women's group is forming that encourages growth and connection based on a variety of Christian literature and books of the Bible. Pick up a copy of Mere Christianity by CS Lewis and stay tuned for the start date.

Care Bags

Food is important for all occasions, from challenges to celebrations. Our women's ministry Food Team, under the guidance of Judy Montague, will be making frozen meals to share in these moments. Our first cooking time will be announced soon.

Reach One More

Tag, you're it! When we love Jesus we follow His call to GO and make disciples. Does that make you nervous? Then this six-week course is perfect for you! Beginning later this month, in a safe and friendly space, you'll grow your confidence and Jesus-sharing skills.

VISIT [TRINITYLIFE.ORG/EVENTS](https://trinitylife.org/events) TO LEARN MORE OR TO RSVP. AS ALWAYS, FRIENDS ARE WELCOME!

FROM THE CONNECTIONS MINISTER

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe it's already 2025. I hope you had a wonderful Christmas celebrating the birth of Jesus, finding time to slow down and rest in the Gospel peace He brings. Amid the holiday busyness, I pray you were able to spend meaningful moments with family and loved ones.

As we step into this new year, I'm filled with anticipation for all that 2025 holds. My greatest prayer as the Connections Minister is to continue helping people connect to Christ. Among the many exciting opportunities this year, I'm especially looking forward to our Marriage Conference on March 21-22. This is an opportunity to draw closer to Jesus and to your spouse.

Use the QR code below to get registered for this wonderful weekend! All of the details are on the registration page at trinitylife.org/events.

Finally, if you are not yet part of a Connection Group, I'd love for you to prayerfully consider joining one this year. If your New Year's resolution was to grow your faith, or you have been longing for connection with other followers of Jesus, this is your opportunity. Please don't hesitate to reach out, I'd be honored to help you get plugged into the right group for you!

Joyfully,

Morgahn Randall
Connections Minister



FROM THE CAFE MANAGER



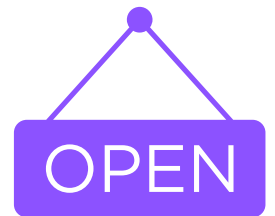
Well the Christmas “season” is over...
But the Christmas *Spirit* lives on!

Don't let the winter chill make you lose your warm heart. Did you know that people still need love and care, thoughts and prayer even after the Christmas season is over? We really shine during the Christmas season remembering and celebrating the love and blessings from Jesus' birth, but we sometimes tuck it away after a while and wait for the next year to roll around. DON'T pack it away, keep the momentum going! Did you know that 30% of all charitable donations are given in the month of December? That leaves an average of 6.4% for every other month of the year. Did you know that the fire and police departments get tons of goodies during the holidays, but get hardly anything the rest of the year? I challenge you to keep the spirit going all year long by showing continued support and kindness every single day!



VOLUNTEER IN THE CAFE!!

We would love to have you join our team! No, you don't have to like coffee!
You just have to like people!
Contact me today! jill@trinitylife.org



MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
8:00a - 12:00p

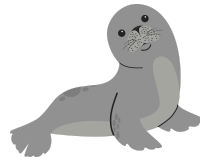
We're celebrating POLAR ANIMALS in January!



Polar
Bear
Blender



Pink
Penguin
Freeze



Sassy Seal
Reviver

Moose
Tracks
Latte



Café & Play
Trinity Café
Every Tuesday

Legacy Mornings
Trinity Café
One Thursday Each Month



Jill Pratt

AMONG OUR PEOPLE

Happy Birthday Trail Blazers (80+) Years

- 01.05 - Nancy Miller
- 01.12 - Jack Butler
- 01.15 - Mary Jane Nelson
- 01.26 - Hugh Cappen

Baptized into Our Family of Faith

- 11/24/24 10:30 Zachary Fabian Crisafulli

Health and Healing

- Mary Kreager, Sheryl Kenworthy, Nancy Aken, Bill Aken, Sue Lauritsen, David Myslinski, Vicki Schrawyer, Arlyn Montgomery

Sympathies to

- the family of Cindy Miller who went home to the Jesus on November 22. Please keep in prayer her children, Jonathan and Shannon, and her sister Kathie.
- the Chris and Juli Staab family on the loss of Chris' father, Al Staab
- John and Linda Shirk on the loss of John's mother.

Welcome to our New Members

- William and Christine McAllister and children Elliot (4 yrs) and William (18 mo)

Part Time Mission's Coordinator

Are you an energetic, creative, self-starter who loves Jesus and connecting people into His mission? This could be an opportunity for you. Trinity Church is seeking to fill a 10-hour-a-week Mission Coordinator position. This role focuses on offering excellent service and continued growth of our Little Miracles ministry, while maintaining our global and local Mission Partner connections, and encouraging our community to engage in Trinity's many mission opportunities.

[Click here](#) to share your interest in the position.



Little Miracles Christmas

Thank you for your generosity of resources and time! Our Christmas Giving Tree isn't possible without those who buy gifts and donate money and/or time. This year our church helped 40 families comprised of over 145 individual people feel the love of Jesus by providing almost 500 gifts!! Our Little Miracles Ministry is only possible through your support, so again I say **THANK YOU!**

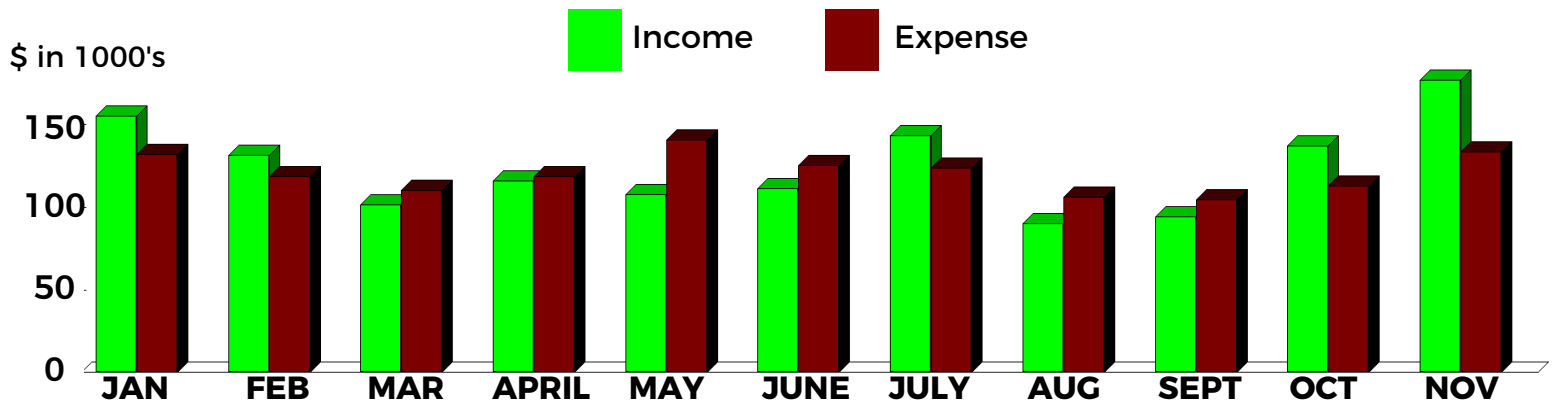
Rachel Staab, Little Miracles Director



OUR VISION: A place to belong and become who God is calling us to be.
OUR MISSION: Connecting people to Christ.
OUR PURPOSE: Love Jesus. Transform lives. Serve the community.

From the Financial Team

INCOME AND EXPENSE FOR ALL FUNDS BY MONTH



DETAILS FROM NOVEMBER 2024

All Fund: \$171,689.74 229 Donors 4 New Donors 106 Recurring Donors
General Fund Tithes and Offerings = \$82,224.54. Mortgage Fund Gifts = \$81,721.58

As we begin 2025, it is time to adjust your giving wishes to match your intent cards for the Here for Good and General Fund campaigns so that your offering is applied correctly.

- **Electronically:** Open the Church Center app. Click your profile in the upper right corner. Scroll down to "My Giving". Click on "Recurring Donations". Select the donation to edit. Update the amount, fund and date. If you have been giving to "GO!", please change to "Here for Good".
- **To set up a new online gift,** click "Give" on the bottom of the screen. Enter the amount of your gift, press "next". Indicate the fund, frequency, and payment method. When ready, click the button on the bottom right of your screen.
- **By check:** Use the memo to note the fund you want your gift applied. If nothing is noted, your gift will go to the General Fund.
- **From Financial Institution:** Please request a breakdown noted on the check.
- **Through HDs:** Request the breakdown for desired fund(s) to be noted.

If you are unable to make these changes, please talk with me at church, call me at 402-578-0233 or email me at cbestmann@trinitylife.org. My goal is to apply monies as intended. Please review your bi-monthly statement. If you find an error, notify me as soon as possible for correction. Thank you.

Carolyn Bestmann, Contributions Manager

Partner in the good work that God is doing through Trinity Church



ELECTRONICALLY

← Use this QR Code

- [Church Center App](#)
- trinitylife.org/giving

IN PERSON

Place cash or check in one of the offering boxes in the Chapel or Worship Center.

BY CHECK

Make payable to Trinity Church and mail to 848 Gold Coast Rd, Papillion NE 68046

Results of Trinity's Intentent Cards

- Here for Good 3-yr mortgage: 138 pledges totalling \$1,132,468
- 2025 General Fund: 157 pledges totalling \$751,420

**Here for Good
Online Intent Card**