

# *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Newsletter*

*December 2016*

*104 West Main Street, Stafford Springs, Connecticut 06076*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

In Matthew's Gospel, the disciples were cautioned by Jesus to always be prepared and stay awake. Our Lord compares his coming to a thief coming in the night. Jesus uses this image because of how unexpected a thing a thief in the night is. Most people rarely have thoughts

about such things. Most nights we fall asleep expecting that the next morning we will up right where we left off. *"Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."*



When we look at the Gospel accounts of Jesus birth, we see how unexpected his arrival was. Despite the eager anticipation of patriarchs and prophets throughout the ages, how prepared were God's people for the Savior's arrival? Many of our favorite Christmas songs idealize this sad reality: While the Savior of the world was born, when history was being made and the world turned upside down, the "little town of Bethlehem" was "sleeping." Throughout Jesus earthly mission we see again and again that people were not ready for him. Certainly Jesus was not what many expected.

Jesus warns us against being spiritually sleepy, against slumbering through his arrival and missing him. But during this advent season, we are challenged to be awake with our eyes open and prepared for our Lord whenever he might come to us, not just expecting a baby in the manger at Christmas or at the end of time some day far off in the future. As we prepare for Jesus coming at Christmas, we should be careful not to take for granted our familiarity with the story. We know that Jesus was born and how this took place, but too easily we fail to remember that Jesus comes to us still. All too often we are unprepared, and sleeping when Jesus comes to us.

To take our advent observance and celebration of Christmas seriously we must believe

not only that Jesus could return at any moment, but that he does! Jesus comes to us in the reading of the word and in the celebration of the sacraments. Jesus comes to us in our neighbor who needs our love because he tells us whatever we do to them we do to him. Even at such a festive and charitable time of year it is too easy to overlook those things that are inconvenient for us. We must not forget that Jesus comes to us in worship in a true and meaningful way, and Jesus comes to us in our neighbor whom we are called to love, forgive, and be with.

At Christmas we remember that Christ came to live among us. It's easy to look forward to the holidays with our closest friends and family, but we miss out on a lot if we don't love and cherish the other people whom Christ came to live with and die for. Being prepared for Christ's coming means being prepared to meet him and to recognize him in people we often disregard, or perhaps in those whom we avoid.

And so in our lives, we keep vigil, staying awake for we do not know when or where or in what guise the Lord comes. And yet we know that he does indeed come because we trust his promise. His promise is to come again and take us to our eternal home, but his promise is also to come to us every day, in the bread and the wine, and in the face of friend and stranger.

What do we do to remain awake? This Advent, I invite you to a discipline of being watchful for where Christ is coming to you unexpected. Is there someone you have avoided? Is there someone who have not reconciled with? Is there a face you have failed to see Christ in, and a neighbor you have trouble loving?

Prepare this Advent season by recognizing Christ in someone you have a hard time loving. Prepare this Advent season by recognizing Christ in Holy Communion. And let our joy be made complete in our God who comes to us at unexpected times.

Peace and Joy,  
Pastor Tom



## **Thy Kingdom Come by Michael Welch**

Over the last few weeks there has been a constant bombardment of news regarding our government and how it works. We Americans have many notions on how our government is supposed to work and it seems that everyone believes the Constitution says, what they believe. For example we are not a democracy, though many refer to it as such, we are a representative republic. The civic indoctrination and the governmental ideals that have been ingrained in us, along with our cultural biases, have in no way prepared us with an understanding of what it means to live in a kingdom, and the relationship between a king and his people. More precisely the Lords Kingdom, and His Subjects. I began to think about this and I realized, if there is so much diversity in thought about the nature of our own government and how it works, how little we must know about our Lords Government. In a kingdom the king makes the laws. In our Lord's Kingdom they are written on our hearts. So the question begs to be asked, why should we want to become subject to a king? We Christians boldly proclaim every Sunday that our King and Savior reigns now and for ever, and never stop to ponder, what it means to be subject to the king.

In days of old a person seeking protection would come before a king and ask him to become a citizen of his realm and pledge themselves and all that they had to him. This person would submit themselves to the king and his laws, and respect his rule. In-doing so, they would become beloved of the King. What does 'submit' mean to you? The best definition I have heard for the word submit is "to fall under ones protection". The two parties would make a covenant. For example, if you are attacked I, the king, will come to your aid and lay down my life for you, if necessary. If I am attacked, you likewise will come to my defense. The subject also agreed to return to the king a portion of their earnings (tithes). Just as an aside, if you were to give a gift to a King, he would feel obligated to reciprocate by giving you a greater gift, or he was not the king. Our King said test me. The Queen of Sheba gave a gift to David and he sent her home with treasure far exceeding her gift. The king would love, protect, and reward his faithful subjects, and would expect their respect and honor in return. In essence the relationship between king and subject is a marriage contract.

Is it any wonder that our Lord and Savior, our King, performed His first miracle at a wedding? We are the bride. He is the groom. The scripture says that the greatest need of the Groom is the respect of the bride, and the greatest need of the bride is that the Groom would lay down His life for her.

As we enter this Advent Season, let us remember our Lord and Savior has already began His reign on earth, at His conception, and we the bride, like the maidens, await His coming. We pray that upon his return, He finds us prepared, and doing the work He has called us to do. We look forward to the return of the King, praising and thanking Him for our salvation, trusting that His laws written upon our hearts are good and just and for our protection. We serve the King and we abide in His Word. He is the Word, and we seek His forgiveness and rejoice, because of His saving grace. As we bask in His love, let us not forget that all glory, honor and praise go to Him. He is our King, and His Government takes precedence over all others. We watch. Amen.





## Coming Soon – Christmas Party!!!

Day / Date: Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$10.00 each for members

FREE for Guests

The menu will be Roast Pork with different side dishes.

Also the council would like the attendees to bring a potluck Appetizer or Dessert.

There will be a sign-up sheet posted in the Narthex to indicate you'll be attending.

Walter has tickets for this event and are available before or after church.





## **Pastoral Care**

Pastor Tom will be on sabbatical October 1 to December 1.

During this time, he will return messages left to his phone (860-806-2440) and email as quickly as possible.

**In the event of an immediate need or emergency**, you may contact Pastor Ryan or Pastor Kathleen Mills (Holy Trinity Trumbull) at [\(203\) 903-8352](tel:2039038352), or the synod office at [\(860\) 482-6100](tel:8604826100).

If you'd like to write Pastor Tom via snail-mail, his address during this time is:

Rev'd Thomas S. Drobena  
Selwyn College, Cambridge University  
Grange Rd  
Cambridge CB3 9DQ  
United Kingdom

**Please keep him in prayer, as we are in his.**

Mailing address:

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
7 Green St. Stafford Springs, CT  
06076-1334

Church – [htlc-church@att.net](mailto:htlc-church@att.net)

Website – [holytrinitystafford.org](http://holytrinitystafford.org)

**Members of the Council are:**

Rev. Thomas S. Drobena  
President – Andrew Fisher  
Vice-President – Walter Kovaciny  
Treasurer – Catherine Lichanec  
Secretary – Amelia Hinchliffe  
Melissa Fisher  
Leonard Lichanec  
Michael Marvonek  
Patricia Marvonek  
(Non-Council position)  
Financial Secretary – Leigh Maxa

## **Service Teams**

† Worship & Music Team: Leigh Maxa

† Property Team: Andrew Fisher,  
Michael Marvonek, Adam Tremblay and  
Michael Welch

† Learning & Youth Group Team:

Rev. Thomas Drobena, Melissa Fisher,  
Walter Kovaciny, Cathy & Leonard Lichanec

## **Shut-in Members**

Attn: Mr. Harold Barton  
Fox Hill Center  
1253 Hartford Tpke. Room #49A  
Vernon, CT 06066-4560

Attn: Mrs. Barbara Bulick  
Brookdale  
1715 Ellington Rd. Room # 212  
South Windsor, CT 06074-2702

Ms. Shirley Kaba  
7 High St.  
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1215

Attn: Ms. Barbara Kovaciny  
Evergreen Health Care Center  
205 Chestnut Hill Rd., Room # 1101  
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-4005

Mr. Paul C. Kovaciny  
242 East St.  
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3923

Ms. Anna Mandak  
21 Old Monson Rd.  
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3343

Mrs. Tonia Marvonek  
Evergreen Health Care Center  
201 Chestnut Hill Rd., Rm. # 2107  
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-4005

## **December Anniversaries**

10 – Richard “Rik” & Nan Hayden

Happy 36<sup>th</sup>

30 – Phil & Janet Renn

Happy 44<sup>th</sup>

## **Birthdays**

02 – Debra “Debbie” Hlobik

05 – Rev. Thomas S. Drobeno

08 – Danny Lichanec

09 – Jennifer Welch

17 – Paul Hockla

19 – Carl “Tim” Mercier

20 – Melissa Fisher

23 – Finnegan Cooley

27 – Anna Mae Hockla

30 – Harold Barton

## **Calumet Resident Camp for Children**

July 2 to August 19, 2017

Brochures, Registration Forms and a link to Online Registration are available at [www.calumet.org](http://www.calumet.org). For all resident camp concerns, contact Bonnie at 603-539-3223 x221 or [bonnie@calumet.org](mailto:bonnie@calumet.org).

Also some good news about changes at the conference center. Plans are being made to renovate the 1<sup>st</sup> floor sleeping rooms with a small bathroom in each room. Each bathroom will include a sink, shower and toilet. No need to leave your room and walk down the hall to use the facilities. The title of the one-day campaign to support the renovations is Calumet’s Baths & Solar project planned for January 26, 2017. The conference center was constructed in the 1980s and everyone’s wishes for individual bathrooms has finally seen results.

The tentative plans are to combine several sleeping rooms, along with removing the present bathrooms and replacing the area with a small lounge.

There are fundraisers being planned now for individuals and all the New England Synod churches. The fundraiser is titled Hope & Trust.

Respectfully,

Walter H. Kovaciny, HTLC’S Link to Calumet.

## **Annual Meeting**

The meeting has been planned for Sunday, January 15, 2017 after church. The deadline for submitting reports for the annual report is Monday, January 2, 2017.

## **Roast Pork dinner report**

The dinner was held on Thursday, November 10, 2016 from 5 to 7 p.m. The food was excellent and was well attended. We covered expenses and made in excess of \$400.00. Thanks to all for their assistance with helping make the dinner a success.

## **Christmas Caroling and Donations of Baked pastry or Candy**

You are invited to join us singing Christmas Carols to our shut-ins. Bring a friend or family member to help with the singing. We’ll meet at church at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 18. Also, we would like donations of baked goods and candy to give to our shut-ins when we visit. All are welcome to join us.

## **Welcome Home Pot Luck Lunch for Pastor December 4th**

will be held after Church Sunday December 4th. Come one come all and bring a dish.



## December / January Service Schedule

The Season of Advent is the first Sunday of the church year so we'll be using readings from Series A.

Tellers                      Ushers                      Worships Assistants                      Reader

### **December 4, 2016 – 10:00 a.m. – The Second Sunday of Advent - Blue**

Isaiah 11: 1 – 10; Psalm 72: 1 – 7, 18 – 19; Romans 15: 4 – 13; Matthew 3: 1 – 12  
Amelia Hinchliffe                      A Volunteer                      Leigh Maxa                      Daniel Lichanec  
Michael Marvonek                      Walter Kovaciny

### **December 11, 2016 – 10:00 a.m. – The Third Sunday of Advent – Blue**

Isaiah 35: 1 – 10; Psalm 146: 5 – 10 or Luke 1: 46b - 55; James 5: 7 – 10; Matthew 11: 2 – 11  
Michael Welch                      Walter Kovaciny                      Sheila Welch                      A Volunteer  
Sheila Welch                      Cathy Lichanec

### **December 18, 2016 – 10:00 a.m. – The Fourth Sunday of Advent – Blue**

Isaiah 7: 10 – 16; Psalm 80: 1 – 7, 17 – 19; Romans 1: 1 – 7; Matthew 1: 18 – 25  
Leonard Lichanec                      Daniel Lichanec                      Cathy Lichanec                      Steve Marvonek  
Patricia Marvonek                      Leonard Lichanec

### **December 24, 2016 – 7:30 p.m. – Christmas Eve, Candlelight Service – White**

Isaiah 9: 2 – 7; Psalm 96; Titus 2: 11 – 14; Luke 2: 1 – 14 [15 – 20]

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Walter Kovaciny

### **December 25, 2016 – 10:00 a.m. – The Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day – White**

Isaiah 52: 7 – 10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1: 1 – 4 [5 – 12]; John 1: 1 – 14

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Walter Kovaciny

### **January 1, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – Holy Name of Jesus – White**

Numbers 6: 22 – 27; Psalm 8; Galatians 4: 4 – 7 or Philippians 2: 5 – 11; Luke 2: 15 – 21  
Amelia Hinchliffe                      A Volunteer                      Leigh Maxa                      Daniel Lichanec  
Michael Marvonek                      Walter Kovaciny

### **Attention all Lay Assistants and Volunteers that help with services**

This includes Council Members, (Tellers), Ushers, Worship Assistants and Readers.

Please let me know dates and days of when you aren't available to serve in your position.

You can hand me a piece of paper when we see each other at church; or send me an email at [walterkovaciny@cox.net](mailto:walterkovaciny@cox.net) or send me the information via snail mail. Just don't tell me verbally.

Thanks to everyone for their assistance with this. Walter Kovaciny, part of the newsletter team.

**December    *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church*    2016**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
<p><b>4 The Second Sunday of Advent</b>            10:00 a.m. Holy Communion            11:15 a.m. Potluck Luncheon welcoming Pastor Tom home</p>	5	<p style="text-align: center;">6  <b>Nicholas,</b>            Bishop</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pastor's Day off</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7  <b>Ambrose,</b>            Bishop</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:30 p.m.            Vespers</p>	8	9	<p style="text-align: center;">10            8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.            Safe Net Distribution</p>
<p><b>11 The Third Sunday of Advent</b>            10:00 a.m. Holy Communion            11:15 a.m. Church Council Meeting            Deadline for ordering Poinsettias</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">12            Deadline for submitting articles for the January newsletter</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">13  <b>Lucy,</b>  <i>Martyr</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pastor's Day off</i></p>	14	<p style="text-align: center;">15            6:00 p.m. Christmas celebration at church</p>	16	<p style="text-align: center;">17            8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.            Safe Net Distribution</p>
<p><b>18 The Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>            10:00 a.m. Holy Communion            11:15 a.m. Social Hour            1:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling</p>	19	<p style="text-align: center;">20  <i>Pastor's Day off</i></p>	21	22	23	<p style="text-align: center;">24            7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Holy Communion Candlelight Service</p>
<p><b>25 The Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Day</b>            10:00 a.m. Holy Communion             This is the last day to make contributions for credit in 2016.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">26  <b>Stephen,</b>  <i>Deacon and Martyr</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">27  <b>John,</b>  <i>Evangelist and Apostle</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pastor's Day off</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">28  <b>Holy Innocents of Bethlehem,</b>  <i>Martyrs</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">7:30 p.m.            Holy Communion</p>	29	30	31



## Christmas Poinsettias

The members and friends of Holy Trinity are encouraged to donate poinsettias each Christmas in order to give Glory to God and beautify our sanctuary during the Nativity liturgies. Those who donate the poinsettias may take them after the 10:00 a.m. liturgy on Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>. The cost of each poinsettia is \$6.50.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Given in honor of (for the living) \_\_\_\_\_

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**OR**

Given in loving memory of (for the deceased) \_\_\_\_\_

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Return this form to Walter Kovaciny with the correct payment, by Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. If paying by check, it should be payable to the: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Please indicate what color and quantity poinsettia(s) you would like, red \_\_\_\_ or white \_\_\_\_.

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### \*\*\* Coming Events \*\*\*

#### December

#### **4-Welcome Home Pot Luck for Pastor Thomas**

- 18 – Social Hour – 11:15 a.m.
- 6 – Ambrose, Bishop Vespers – 7:30 p.m.
- 11 – Deadline for ordering Poinsettias
- 12 – Deadline for submitting articles for the January newsletter
- 15 – **Christmas Party at church** – 6:00 p.m.
- 18 – Christmas Caroling – 1:00 p.m.
- 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight service with Holy Communion – 7:30 p.m.
- 25 – The Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day, Holy Communion – 10:00 a.m.
- 25 – Last day to make contributions to get credit in 2016
- 28 – Holy Innocents of Bethlehem, Martyrs, Holy Communion – 7:30 p.m.

#### January

- 1 – Social Hour – 11:15 a.m.
- 1 – Learning and Youth Group committee meeting – 11:15 a.m.
- 2 – Deadline for submitting reports for the Annual Report
- 6 – Epiphany of Our Lord, Vespers – 7:30 p.m.
- 15 – Annual Meeting – 11:15 a.m.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church 104 West Main St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076

Web site address [www.holytrinitystafford.org](http://www.holytrinitystafford.org)

Address Correction Requested Slovak Zion Synod – ELCA

