

# Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

## A message from Pastor Kock

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Isaiah 61*

### "THIS IS THE BEST OF TIMES"

A politician running for office was asked what steps he would take, if elected, to usher in the greatest period of happiness in human history. "I believe such a time is behind us," he said. "I believe that the greatest period of human history was when the Lord lived on earth." He was not elected.

What a special time it was when the Lord Jesus lived on earth. It was the time that all believers living beforehand had been anticipating. Then he came and lived among us. The four gospels of the Bible record many of his words, miracles and actions. The disciples John could barely contain his excitement when he wrote in his gospel, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." To this day, tourists continue to flock to the land in which he walked and visit the famous sites where he stood.

Jesus himself recognized he was part of history. He told the people assembled in the synagogue of Nazareth that he was the fulfillment of God's promise to usher in a new age of peace and prosperity. And we Christians believe that this was no overstatement by Jesus. He has in fact ushered in the year of the Lord's favor. He has freed all sinners from sin and death by his holy life and innocent death. The gospel of Jesus is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes. It breaks the bonds of Satan's tyranny and frees us to live with God eternally.

Because Jesus still lives, and because his gospel is still preached, this is still the year of the Lord's favor. God is giving you in his Gospel all the blessings of Jesus' redemption. By faith you are living pardoned of all sins and freed from all futile service. You are enjoying daily the fullness of God's kindly love and of Christ's kingly rule. It is your privilege to live each day meaningfully, serving your Savior with faith and your neighbor with love. You are living in the greatest of all times.

Pastor Mark Kock

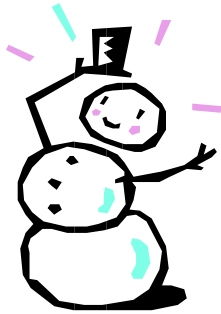
"I will forgive their sins and will remember them no more."

Jeremiah 31:34

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## Miscellaneous News



*Share this website address:  
www.WhatAboutJesus.com*

*People will get real answers  
about Christ, the Bible and  
faith.*

- If you would like to pray with us weekly, there are copies of the **prayer chain requests** in the church office every Sunday morning. If you would like to make a request for prayers, please call Pastor Kock at 294-2828 or 294-2979.
- **HELP Supply the Foodshelf** — The Open Cupboard is always in need of donations. You may bring the items to church and we will bring them to the food shelf.
- Have you looked in your **church mailboxes** lately?!
- **Spiritual Renewal Weekend for Women.** March 26-28, 2004, Radisson Downtown Rochester, MN. Weekend of speakers, music, entertainment, and fun. **MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!** Theme: “*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*” John 3:16
- **The Minnesota Circuit** invites you to the **41st National LWMS Convention** at the Sheraton & Sioux Falls Convention Center June 24-27, 2004. For more information visit the website at [www.goodshepherdwels.com/wms](http://www.goodshepherdwels.com/wms).
- **Be A Shining Star!** Minnesota District Regional Youth Rally July 11-13, 2004. Come to the 2004 WELS Youth Rally held at Cragun’s Resort on Beautiful Gull Lake in Brainerd, MN. For more information contact Gerald Pieper at 294-3836.
- Do you need help paying for your **heating costs?** Wisconsin’s Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) helps you pay for the cost of heating your home. To make an appointment to learn more about this program, please call Polk County Human Services Department at 715/485-8876 or 485-8400.
- **Schwan Center’s** next event will be January 8-11, Weekend Confessional Christian Worldview Seminar—Especially for college students. This long weekend seminar will help conservative Lutherans understand the cultural and religious trends that conflict with confessional theology.
- We have a new address for **Willis & Pat Loney:** Family of God, PO Box 10949, Fort Mohave, AZ 86427. Their phone number is 715/377-9352. They will be at this address after January 4, 2004.

## Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Library has many items that are helpful to assist you. We have a catalog available in the church office listing books and videos available. The listing is user friendly, so you can find items of use to you, whether it is to ease communication with an elderly hard of hearing person or to foster a toddler’s eagerness to learn sign language. Parent of deaf children often find it difficult to locate Bible story books with lots of pictures. We have a listing of such books. If this would be of interest to you, stop by the church office to get more information.

## The WELS Connection

### A TROPHY OF GRACE

Years ago a Japanese Christian family gave a two-hundred-year old family heirloom to their WELS church as a gift. Why? Why would anyone part with something that had been in their family for two centuries? They gave their gift because they had become Christians, and Christ meant everything to them. Christ was now more important to them than that priceless antique cabinet.

### A MISSION TOOL

Recently, one of our WELS congregations—Pilgrim of Menomonee Falls—received a similar trophy of grace: an expensive Persian carpet. Pastor Behringer tells us, “When we opened Little Lambs Learning Center we hoped it would open the doors of our church to others. We wanted it to be a mission tool. Little did we anticipate that the first souls to come to Jesus via the Learning Center would come from Iran (ancient Persia) - first Daisy Ghasemi-Vaghar, then her mother, Nancy Hamedi, and next little Daniel.”

### A GIFT FROM THE HEART

From the time Nancy and her family became Christians, she had the dream of giving a special gift out of gratitude to Jesus. She knew that in Persia, one of the finest gifts one can give is a hand-woven rug—an exquisite Persian carpet. A short time ago, Nancy was able to fulfill her dream and donate such a beautiful carpet. Pilgrim members hope that the story behind the rug will encourage everyone to remember what a special gift it is to know that Jesus is their Savior.

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## NORTH AMERICAN OUTREACH

America is increasingly a pagan nation. The majority of Americans of all nationalities and cultures do not believe in Jesus Christ and have no peace. It's a vast mission field.

Because of this and because our WELS membership has begun to decline, North American outreach is WELS number one priority for the next four years. This is outreach that includes all of North America and stretches from Canada to Mexico.

### HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

This North American outreach focus means figuring out why WELS lost 107,000 members in the last twelve years, and strengthening and developing ministries to keep more of our precious souls in our care.

- It means assisting WELS congregations to utilize their elementary schools as outreach to precious children whose families have no Christian church.
- It means creating a stronger base at home as a way to further expand the precious gospel outreach now carried on in 26 countries.
- It means witnessing for Christ in your family, neighborhood and work place.
- It means bringing peace—Christ's peace—to America!

## 2004 PLANNING AND BUDGET OPEN FORUM

I would like to invite everyone to our 2004 Planning and Budget Open Forum on Sunday, January 18 at 11:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. The Board Chairmen will share the goals of their boards for 2004. We will also review the proposed 2004 budget. Board overviews and a copy of the proposed budget will be placed in the mailboxes prior to the meeting so you can prepare your questions and comments. This will be a great opportunity to learn more about how we as a congregation will serve the Lord in 2004. Please contact me with questions. Thank you.

Chris Riba, Council President.

## DEAR CHRISTIAN STEWARDS OF GOD'S MANY GIFTS

The African boy listened carefully as the teacher explained why it is that Christians give presents to each other on Christmas Day. "The gift is an expression of our joy over the birth of Jesus and our friendship for each other," she said.

When Christmas Day came, the boy brought to the teacher a sea shell of lustrous beauty. "Where did you ever find such a beautiful shell?" the teacher asked as she gently fingered the gift.

The youth told her that there was only one spot where such extraordinary shells could be found. When he named the place, a certain bay several miles away, the teacher was left speechless.

"Why ... why, it's gorgeous ... wonderful, but you shouldn't have gone all that way to get a gift for me."

His eyes brightening, the boy answered, "Long walk part of gift."

This story (by Gerald Horton Bath) says something about our gift-giving, doesn't it? Gifts of value come from thought and effort. They reflect the heart of the giver.

That certainly was true of the first Christmas Gift. Red and wiggling, the precious child that slipped from his mother Mary's womb into Joseph's rough carpenter-hands was God's own Son in human form. His tiny heart beat with heaven's love for a world gone wrong. Did he cry as he took his first infant breath? Luke 2 doesn't say. But 30 years later he did cry out—in victory—as Jesus died, "the righteous fore the unrighteous" (1 Peter 3:18) His long walk led from the manger to the cross.

The gifts I give to Jesus I give in gratitude for the salvation he has won. Yet how many of those gifts are "gifts of convenience," those which I can 'reasonably afford' to give? Should I be satisfied with a *short* walk, when Jesus traveled such a distance for me? My new self says, "No!" In the joy of forgiveness I want to show God with my own, personal gifts of extravagance that his sacrifice means everything to me. I, too, will take the long walk.

## Home Visits

The Board of Stewardship is looking forward to gathering with you and others of the church at several home visits that will be held January 30-February 8. We have several members who graciously open their homes to host these visits. Look for sign-ups to appear at church in a couple of weeks. The purpose of the visits is to give you an update on the mission work we hope to carry out in 2004 and to show you several ways that you can help us achieve our mission.

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## ENRICH YOUR MARRIAGE THROUGH GOD'S WORD AND GRACE

Do you remember your vows? The vows of Christian Marriage are: "I (your name), in the presence of God and these witnesses, take you (spouse's name), to be my wife/husband. I promise to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live." In less than a minute you can say the vows. Marriage is the rest of your life to honor them.

How do we renew our wedding vows? By living daily in the presence of God. Through prayer and the use of God's Word our Lord is with us, and his blessings of love and help are given to us. We renew our vows by living in the presence of witnesses. We continually make use of the church, our family of believers. We seek their prayers and encouragement and gather with them for worship and growth in Jesus Christ.

We renew our vows by daily taking our wife. We don't take her for granted; we don't make assumptions about our relationship. Daily we take her as God's gift; we possess her with all our love. In a similar way a wife daily takes her husband to herself. Finally, we renew our vows through faithfulness. We pray the Lord to create in us pure hearts that have no interest in anyone else. We make use of God's Word and Christ's holy supper to receive the strength of faith to avoid all temptations and remain faithful in thoughts and actions to our spouse.

Husbands, wives: What else can you do to renew our commitment to each other?



## TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH COUPLES' WEEKEND

There is still time to sign up for the couples' weekend retreat.

**Dates:** Friday and Saturday  
January 23 & 24, 2004

**Place:** Holiday Inn Express  
St. Croix Falls

**Guest Presenter:** Pastor Dennis Klatt

This retreat is aimed to enhance closeness and communication between husband and wife. The weekend begins Friday evening at 6:30 pm with a brief session and fellowship time. Saturday will include breakfast, lunch and study sessions that will continue until 4:00 pm. There is more information on the retreat and a sign up sheet in the narthex. Sign up soon!

## Blessing Baskets 2003

Many thanks to everyone's generosity towards the Blessing Basket program for this year! Roseanne Anderson, coordinator reported that 80 families and over 200 children were given food and gifts this year. Please remember the food shelf throughout the whole year—you can bring items here to the church or directly to the food shelf. The telephone number for the Open Cupboard (food shelf) is 294-4357.



## “WHO’S DIRECTING YOU?” - ATTEND A BIBLE CLASS AT TRINITY

It’s easy to attend! All you need to do is show up. Classes are held at church, usually in the Fellowship Hall. Everything you might need is provided—a Bible for reference, study guides, refreshments, and an abundance of opportunity to meet other members of Trinity. Most classes allow you to sit back and listen quietly and learn, or you can actively ask questions and give answers, if you’d like. Whatever your style, Bible Class is a way to explore God’s Word and a way for all of us to become more eager and active Christians.

**Sunday Morning 9:30 a.m. “Hosea—The Lord is My Salvation.”** See how our generation is much like that of Hosea’s day, and why we absolutely need God’s Word.

**Women’s Bible Study & Fellowship**—Are you looking to spend some quiet, enriching, contemplative time with some friends? If so, please accept this invitation to join our Women’s Bible Study group. We meet twice a month on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm in the Trinity Church library. All you need to bring is yourself and your Bible (a pen might be handy too!).

## INTRODUCING MISSION PARTNERS

**A new avenue for growth ... growth in getting to know brothers and sisters who work in God’s kingdom; ... growth in supporting one another; ... growth in my personal commitment to the work of Jesus Christ; ... growth in Christian giving.**

Mission Partners offers WELS members and congregations the opportunity to express their love for a particular mission, school or program of the WELS

To find list of possible Mission Partner projects, go to: [ww.wels.net/mpg](http://ww.wels.net/mpg) and click on “Mission Partners.” You can sponsor an entire project, or a portion of a project.

You will have the opportunity to correspond with and perhaps interact with your Mission Partner.

**There are three different ways for you to participate in Mission Partners:**

### I. MISSION PARTNERS IN ANNUAL GIVING

For individuals, congregations and groups which want to support the global mission of the WELS and are not seeking direct communication and involvement. Gifts under this program can be designated for one of six areas of ministry: North American Outreach; WELS Operations; Ministerial Education; Home Missions; World Missions and Parish Services.

### II. MISSION PARTNERS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

This avenue is for WELS members and groups (Ladies groups, Sunday Schools, etc.) who want to support a specific portion of the global mission of WELS and who seek direct communications and involvement.

### III. MISSION PARTNERS FOR CONGREGATIONS

This is for congregations and groups of congregations, such as a circuit, which want to support a specific portion of the global mission of WELS and who seek direct communication and involvement with a Mission Partner.

## Tender Loving Care Preschool News

This month has buzzed by quickly for the preschoolers of Tender Loving Care. We have been talking this month about Christmas, putting an emphasis on the birth of Jesus. We learned many Christmas songs and sang a couple in church. We did craft projects such as painting with pine boughs, decorating Christmas stockings, making handprints for the parents, painting ornaments and learning how to make paper chains. The children also had the opportunity to bake cookies for our party.

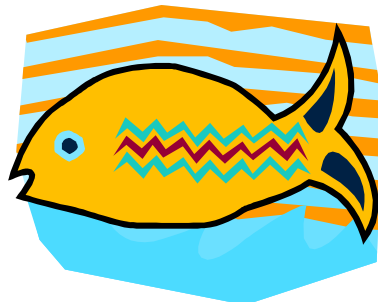
The highlight of the month was our Christmas party for Jesus on the 23rd of December. The parents came to join us for an hour of fun. We sang songs for them, had a birthday cake for Jesus, participated in a gift exchange, and played little games. The children had a great time.

Almost half of the year is over and our program has been very successful. It is so great to see how the children love listening to the Bible lessons and how they are going home and sharing them with their parents and grandparents. This what has been so exciting for me to see in these little children. I can see how God is working through their lives and how we are planting a seed and touching their hearts. Thank you for all the support that you have shown for our preschool. I pray that God will continue to bless our program in 2004.

## 2004 Regional Youth Rally—July 22-24

The 2004 Regional Youth Rally will be held Thursday, July 22—Saturday, July 24 at the Kalahari Resort and Water Park in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. The rally will be centered around the theme, F.I.S.H. (Fun in Serving Him) and will focus on service and stewardship. Registration for the rally will be done by congregation, not by individual. Registration deadline is February 1, 2004. Space is limited to only 800 participants. The total cost of the rally is \$240.

Come and enjoy the attractions the Dells has to offer. There is even a water park right in the Kalahari which is the largest indoor water park in America. Prepare yourself for three days of enjoying music by Corban Creek, the beauty of God's creation and most of all, Christian fellowship! You will participate in workshops, worship and Bible presentations with hundreds of other Christian youth! Check out our website at [www.welsyouth.com](http://www.welsyouth.com) to find out more about the rally.





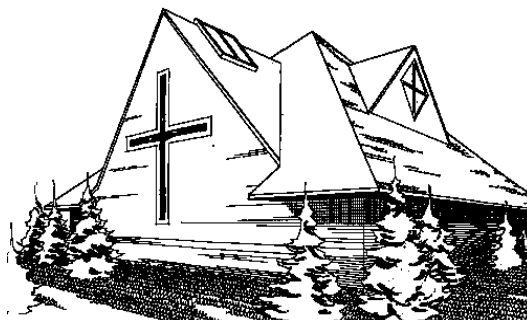
### Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Chris Riba, Council President  
Harry Beck, Treasurer  
Nancy Beck & Carol Jensen, Church Secretaries  
JoAnne Johnson, Altar Guild, 294-2020  
Ken & Lorna Stob, Fellowship Coordinator, 715-248-7244



#### 2003 Trinity Church Council Members:

Chris Riba, President	Wayne Riba, Vice-President	Harry Beck, Treasurer
Dick Durand, Secretary	Curt Richter, Evangelism	Bob Wells, Stewardship
Dean Dehmer, Trustees	Jerry Pieper, Christian Education	Kevin Rogers, Elders

#### 2003 Board of Elders:

Jim Brown	John Harvieux	Randy Getschel	Roger Howard
Mike Plaster	Kevin Rogers	Don Rogers	Ken Stob

# Epiphany

### Special Dates!

- Friday & Saturday, January 9-11--Youth Retreat--Camp Croix
- Thursday, January 15--Ladies Aid--12:00 Noon
- Sunday, January 18--Congregation Open Forum--11:45 am
- Friday & Saturday, January 23 & 24--Marriage Retreat--Holiday Inn Express in St. Croix
- Saturday, January 17 & 31--Synergy at 9:00 am
- Sunday, January 25--Voters Meeting--11:45 am
- Cottage Meetings--January 30-February 8



"In his hand is the life  
of every living thing  
and the breath of  
every human being."

*Job 12:10*