

# Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

## A message from Pastor Kock

*“For the grace of God that brings salvation to all men has appeared. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”*  
Titus 2:11-14

“I will forgive their sins and will remember them no more.”

Jeremiah 31:34

The term “Christian” has been so over-used that it often stands for little or nothing. Anyone who has a remote relationship to a church or occasionally wears jewelry in the shape of a cross is labeled “Christian.” America is still called a “Christian” nation, in spite of our continuing pattern of abortion, sexual immorality, and abuse of youth by corrupting them with materialism.

The verses of Paul to Titus give depth to the term “Christian.” A Christian is one who has come to know the grace of God, who has entered the stable of Bethlehem on the knees and bowed before the Savior, the Son of God, expressing thanks to the Father above for giving us his gift of love. A Christian believes that he is saved by grace alone through faith, that salvation is an undeserved gift that is ours solely because of the love of God for this world of sinners, a gift that was wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in the manger, crucified on the cross, and raised on the day we call “Easter.”

A Christian is one whose life and behavior has been affected by God’s grace. God’s love to save us in Jesus becomes a living power in the Christian’s life – we cut all ties to the life of the past, of serving Satan, scratching the itches of our flesh, and trying to fit in with the world. We say “No” to such things and “Yes” to the things that glorify God – being self-controlled, living in harmony with God’s holy will as expressed in his Commandments, and reflecting to our neighbor by our behavior the kindness, love for souls, and forgiveness that the Father has for us.

A Christian is one who has a blessed hope – he believes that he is going to heaven. He is sure that Jesus will appear on earth again, not to rule here for a 1,000 years, but to show his glory and escort his Church of believers to heaven. This is a blessed hope, for it is centered around the Lord who gave himself for us so that we would be his holy people, who have the privilege of dedicating our lives, now and forever, to the praise of our holy Savior.

We call ourselves “Christians.” May we always attach to the term the grace of God that creates in us new lives and a blessed hope, through Jesus Christ.

Pastor Mark Kock

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## Miscellaneous News



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?!

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.

Be sure to pick up your box of **offering envelopes for 2007** this month. They are located on the narthex table. If you don't see any there with your name on them, please speak with Nancy at 294-2828.

Many thanks to everyone's generosity towards the **Blessing Basket program** for this year! Ninety-eight families and 247 children were given food and gifts this year! 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.

Want to help a neighbor? **Interfaith Caregivers** provides volunteers to assist seniors and adults living with disabilities. The services are provided free of charge by caring volunteers from churches in Polk County. Contact Interfaith at 715/483-9263 for more information.

**Spiritual Enrichment Weekend for Women:** Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church Women (WELS) of Stillwater, MN invites you to join them for a weekend of speakers, music, entertainment and fun. Mark your calendars now for April 20-22, 2007! Detailed information will be available soon. Questions can be directed to Karen Diethert 715/549-6519.

**Upcoming Chats on wels.net (sponsored by Parents Crosslink and Living Bold):**

\*January 9, 8-9:00 pm: "Emotional Intelligence in Children"

with Jason Nelson, author of "Inform Their Hearts"

\*January 16th, 8:900 pm: "Dealing with Additions"

with counselors from Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service.

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

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



**Did you know . . . ?**

**Every family has a MAILBOX, located in the narthex. This is how we communicate with our members. Newsletters, notes, cards, schedules, and various items are distributed in the boxes. Please check your box weekly!**

## Our Life of Worship at Trinity– January Highlights

### January 6—Epiphany Day:

January 6 is Epiphany Day, the day the Christian Church devotes to recalling the visit of the Magi to the child Jesus in Bethlehem. It begins the Epiphany season of the Church Year, that allows us to see Jesus in all his splendor, as the Savior of Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, of all the world.



### Wednesday Evening Devotion at 7 p.m.

Here is an opportunity for our 8<sup>th</sup> grade catechism students, their families, and others of Trinity to gather in the Father's house for prayer and meditation on God's saving Word.

## Evangelism: Our Mission to Reach Out with the Gospel

Visit new residents to our communities – Saturday, January 6, 10:45 a.m.

### “The Real Jesus”

The title of a Bible Class that Pastor Kock will teach, Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m. beginning January 17. The Class teaches from Scripture the Real Jesus, not the da Vinci one, or any other that the world offers, to the distortion of the Savior's glory. The Class runs for 5 Wednesdays. Tell your friends about it. This is a way for those who do not have a full knowledge of Jesus to learn of him, and receive the joy of salvation.



### WELS Mission Work

The World and Home Mission Boards of our Synod are working jointly to increase outreach to the Muslims of America. A Muslim believer in our fellowship has been trained and is making presentations on Islam to WELS congregations.

Help promote the sharing of the peace of Jesus. Join the Mission Awareness Committee. It's purpose is to inform our membership of mission activity of our Synod, display where and how our support is being put to work, and encourage hands-on involvement in mission work. The Mission Awareness Committee meets **Saturday, January 6, 9:00 a.m.**



## We Grow Together in Studying God's Word

### *Trinity offers you these opportunities to study God's Word.:*



#### **The Inner Court (High School Members), 9:15 a.m.**

Plan on attending The Winter Retreat at Camp Croix on January 19-21. Fellowship, spiritual growth, and recreation in a beautiful North-woods setting.

#### **Sunday Adult Bible Class at 9:25 am**

#### **Tuesday Women's Bible Class—7:00 pm**

Women of Trinity! You are all invited to join us in our weekly Bible Study and fellowship time. The group meets every Tuesday evening at 7 pm in the Trinity library. On January 3rd, we will begin a several week study on the history of the church. Be sure to join us!

#### **Wednesday Bible Class—10:30 am**

Topic: "A Study of Christian Church Bodies"

#### **Parents, check out the website: "parentscrosslink.net."**

This is a WELS site intended to serve families in Christ. The WELS also publishes a quarterly newsletter, "Parents Crosslink." Both resources celebrate the blessings God gives our children and families, and encourages and supports Christian parents as they navigate the challenges of raising children in today's world. To order a subscription to "Parents Crosslink", telephone 1-800-662-6093.

#### **WELS International Youth Rally Dallas, TX—July 4-7, 2007**

The purpose of this rally is to provide youth from across the Synod a large-scale worship, education, fellowship, recreation and service opportunity that deepens commitment to Christ and his Church. Deadline to inform Pastor Kock of your attendance is January 7.



## The WELS Connection

### *Synodical Council Discusses Preliminary Plans and Budgets*

At its November meeting, the Synodical Council reviewed plans and the resulting budgets for each area of ministry for the next biennium (July 1, 2007-June 30, 2009).

To ensure a balanced budget, the council limited ministry plans to available funding. Plans for the operating budget show small increases in ministry support for each of the next four years. Seventy-five percent of the total operating budget will fund ministerial education and mission outreach. Other significant ministry needs are unfunded in these proposed budgets and funding is tight for all areas of ministry.

Most challenging is the projected deficits at the ministerial education schools. Primarily because of lower enrollments, the schools are facing shortfalls of \$2-\$4 million in each of the next four years. To minimize the impact these shortfalls will have, the Synodical Council approved a special, one-time grant to Ministerial Education of an additional \$2.6 million for the next biennium.

Ministerial Education is to return in February 2007 with a plan to manage the remainder of its budget shortfalls. That plan may include no longer funding Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., and only partially funding Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., after the 2007-08 school year.

In late February 2007, the council will give final approval of all ministry plans and budgets for the next biennium—including the ministerial education plan—and then submit the information for consideration at the 2007 synod convention. Synod convention delegates, who will meet July 30-August 3, will have the final say in whether these ministry plans and budgets are adopted for the next two years.

The Lord continues to provide great blessings to WELS, including 150 Home Missions ministry opportunities in the next two years and a new World Missions professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.; and ministerial education school enrollments that will provide the workers WELS needs to accomplish God's work.

### *Popular Online Q&A*

The WELS Web site, [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net), has more than 75,000 pages of information, including belief statements, informational articles, news stories, and more. Perhaps the most popular section of the site is the Topical Q&A, a service that provides biblical answers to questions of faith and practice or general information about WELS. Started about 10 years ago, the Topical Q&A now contains almost 9,500 questions and answers and continues to grow.

"Our ability to provide solid biblical responses to very specific and sometimes tough questions is a resource not found elsewhere on the Web," says Martin Spriggs, WELS' chief technology officer. "No book or Web FAQ provides that flexibility."

The format is simple. WELS members as well as nonmembers submit issues ranging from general questions about WELS beliefs to personal questions about Christian living. Professors at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary then answer the majority of the questions that come in—an average of 130 questions a month. The questions and answers are then either posted online or sent back privately to the questioner. "We aren't a substitute for the parish pastor," says Professor John Brenner, who assigns the questions to the appropriate person for answering. "But I think we help people outside and inside our circles learn a little more about the Bible, our synod, and what we believe and confess."



## Serving Your Savior—Stewardship at Trinity



### BUDGET UPDATE

	<u>Last Month</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Income:	\$ 17,879	\$ 191,938
Expenses:	\$ 18,033	\$ 194,027 \$

### PLEASE PICK UP YOUR SET OF 2007 OFFERING ENVELOPES LOCATED IN THE NARTHEX:

If you have not already done so, please pick up your box of offering envelopes for 2007. Please mark the back of the offering envelope correctly:

“Our Church Ministry” is the category that funds our every day congregational life and ministry. Sunday School, youth ministry, evangelism, pastor, missions to the Synod, and much more are supported through the offerings you mark as “Our Church Ministry.”

The term “Other” refers to an offering that will enter a special fund or mission, as you indicate. Such funds include:

- Expansion Fund:** for additions to our church buildings, or exceptional maintenance projects
- College Student :  
Fund** provides assistance to our members who receive higher education at one of our Synod’s schools toward the preaching or teaching ministry of the WELS.
- Assistance Fund :** provides relief for members and neighbors in material need.

### Offering Envelopes



## Opportunities for Fellowship at Trinity

### Come Chat with Pastor Kock



Each month Pastor Kock set aside a day to give you an opportunity to visit with him at church, ask him questions, talk the spiritual talk of Christ, or whatever is on your mind. No appointment necessary. Just stop by.

### PASTOR’S DAY:

January 27

12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

***“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”***

Hebrews 13:4

The Sunday Adult Bible Class recently reviewed what God’s Word teaches regarding marriage, and received applications to areas of modern living. Living together by unmarried couples has become common in our country, and an issue of faith and church life. The St. Croix Falls Pastor Conference of the Minnesota District of the WELS recently discussed marriage and living together, and presents the following article for the building up of faith and church life among our WELS congregations.

## **“LIVING TOGETHER”**

In 21st century America we live in a self-centered, pleasure-oriented, post-Christian society. One manifestation of this is the frequency of couples, young and older, living together apart from or before marriage. The skyrocketing percentages are alarming and the growing flippancy of their attitude to do so is even more frightening. And so it goes, despite secular studies all indicating that those who choose the “trial marriage route” suffer two or more times the divorce rate of those who follow the “time-honored, traditional way.”

Few people within our fellowship would argue with these statements. The real issue is whether Biblical standards of righteousness and morality can be maintained among God’s people, the Church. Can God’s people be expected to continue to be a glowing light in an ever darkening world? A true salt on earth’s unsavory landscape?

What is marriage anyway? From the Bible we learn that marriage is a life-long, exclusive union between one man and one woman, as husband and wife. From the beginning of time it was God’s plan, revealed in Genesis 2, that “*a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*” The “leaving” spoken of here is a leaving to establish a second generation household. The “uniting” is in the life-long bond of marriage. It is only in this established new home in the bond of marriage that they are to “become one flesh.” This includes the exclusive sexual union that further binds them together and potentially opens the door to a third generation of legitimate offspring.

Such principles could be scoffed at as relics of a past time. But what does the Word of God say? “*It is God’s will that you should be sanctified; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God...The Lord will punish men of all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life*” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7).

It should not surprise us that “heathen, who do not know God,” might give themselves to “passionate lust.” What is grievous is that anyone claiming the title “Christian” should boldly “live in sin.” God calls sexual intimacy between unmarried persons (fornication) sin. Specific Bible passages soundly condemn fornication as immoral (1 Corinthians 6:9, Ephesians 5:3, Hebrews 13:4)

Okay, but the couple claims that they “are not doing it.” They are still “cohabitating” - living together as husband and wife without honoring the state, God, themselves, or each other. Furthermore, as Christians, we are called to live above reproach—*“Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality...because these are improper for God’s holy people”* (Ephesians 5:3).

Is the Church being judgmental in condemning members who are cohabitating? Yes, but not wrongly, because God calls upon Christians to lovingly and firmly admonish each other when they sin. The Holy Spirit’s warning is severe: *“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left (not even Christ’s sacrifice on the cross) but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”* (Hebrews 10:26-27)

*If a cohabitating person refuses to repent, or claims to repent but continues in the sin, God says there is no forgiveness (Luke 3:8). Sin separates from God.* (Isaiah 59:2). While making wedding plans may include an admission of wrong, this in and of itself is not true repentance, if the living arrangement remains unchanged.

Under these circumstances, a pastor and congregation will rightly urge a couple to reconcile with God first. Then they may proceed with plans for a wedding and marriage blessed by God. To be sure, we do not want to drive individuals or couples away from the church. The gravity of the situation, however, calls for Christian admonition to bring them back into the invisible Church, the Family of God. Their unrepentant sin has separated them from God and His Church (see paragraph above)

Years ago, a pastor and his congregation implemented loving church discipline for a young lady who was living with her boy friend. Communication with the individual was lovingly carried out by phone, correspondence, and the pastor driving a considerable distance for a visit. The stress of a guilty conscience contributed to this person losing much of her beautiful hair. Finally the congregation excommunicated her. The public announcement of this voters’ decision received mixed and strong reaction within the congregation. Members who understood the Biblical principles helped disturbed fellow members grasp the importance of the congregation’s actions carried out according to Jesus’ directives in Matthew 18:15-18.

Before much time passed, the young lady “returned home” - to her parents and to her church family. She received full and free forgiveness from her church and from her God (1 John 1:7-9, John 20:23). A year or two later the pastor accepted a call to another congregation. At the church door after his farewell service, the pastor received his most appreciative tearful hug from this young lady whom he had counseled and regarding whom he had called for excommunication. It doesn’t always work out that way, but if we proceed according to God’s loving will for His wandering sheep, the bitter sting of the Law and the sweet comfort of the Gospel can accomplish great things.

May God bless our congregation as together we strive to correct, rebuke, and encourage God’s people—motivated and empowered by the Gospel—to live holy and righteous lives!

*(Prepared by the Northern Circuit, St. Croix Conference, Minnesota District, WELS October 2006)*

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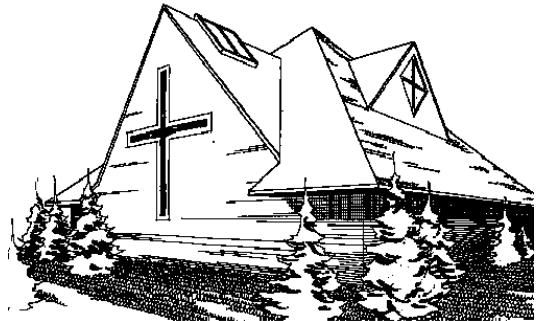


**Trinity Evangelical  
Lutheran Church**

300 Seminole Ave  
Osceola, WI 54020  
Phone & Fax—715/294-2828

Email: telc@centurytel.net  
Pastor's email: pastorkock@centurytel.net  
Web-site: <http://www.telcoscwi.org>

Mark Kock, Pastor  
Wayne Riba, Council President  
Scott Doerr, Treasurer  
Nancy Beck & Carol Jensen, Church Secretaries  
Jean Brown, Sherry Lueck, Altar Guild  
Lorna Stob (248-7674, Fellowship Coordinator



**2007 Trinity Church Council Members:**

Wayne Riba, President	Curt Richter, Vice-President
Bob Jensen, Secretary	Open, Evangelism
Darryl Klawitter, Stewardship	Colin Hendricks, Trustees

Scott Doerr, Treasurer
Jerry Pieper, Christian Education
Kevin Rogers, Elders

**2007 Board of Elders:**

Jim Brown	Kevin Rogers	Ron Lueck
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**ANNUAL VOTERS MEETING  
OF CONGREGATION  
January 21, 2007—11:45 AM**

**Special Dates!**

Friday, January 6—Epiphany

Sunday, January 21—Annual Voters Meeting—11:30 am

Saturday & Sunday, January 19/20—High School Youth Winter Retreat