

Joy

“The joy of the
LORD is your
strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10, NIV

3rd Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025

The Evangelical Lutheran Church
of the Holy Trinity

Holy Communion 9:00 AM

Sunday School 10:30 AM

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

Welcome in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Our worship follows a traditional order inspired by scripture and rooted in ancient patterns. The full order for worship (liturgy) is found in this bulletin.
*Please stand as you are able. Spoken congregational responses are in **Bold**.

GATHERING

Worship begins with the organ prelude. It's a time for silent meditation as we turn our hearts and minds to God.

ORGAN PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***GATHERING**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who calls us by name and draws near to us with grace and love. **Amen.**

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN -**

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn Hymn 242

***GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

***ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING - The Weaver Family**

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (verse 3) #240



3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.

ADVENT PRAYER

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.]]
³Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm

Tone:



R:



The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down.

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob ¹ for their help,
whose hope is in the ¹ LORD their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that ¹ is in them;**
who keeps promis- ¹ es forever;

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food
to ¹ those who hunger.

The LORD sets the ¹ captive free.

⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those**
who ¹ are bowed down;
the LORD ¹ loves the righteous. R

⁹ The LORD cares ¹ for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the
way ¹ of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The LORD shall ¹ reign forever,**
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. ¹ Hallelujah! R

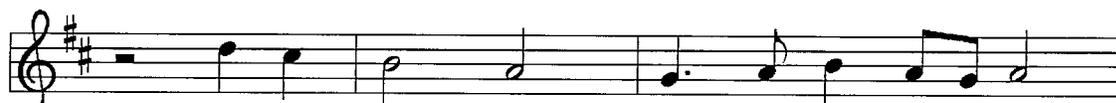
SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SENIOR CHOIR - O Come, O Come Immanuel Natalie Sleeth

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION - Page 151



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

*GOSPEL - Matthew 11:2-11

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 11th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord. (*spoken*)

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ¹¹ "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON The Rev. Althea Seidel

*HYMN OF THE DAY -

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding Hymn 246

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Response: God of grace, **hear our prayer.** (After the prayer) **Amen.**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING - (*Offering plates are located in the narthex as you exit the sanctuary.*)

*OFFERTORY HYMN - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Hymn 257, verse 3

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 7/8 time. The lyrics are: "3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe. Re-joice! Re-joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el." The word "Refrain" is written above the third staff. The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 7/8 time signature. The music consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some phrases marked with a fermata.

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God our provider, **by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and Everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new on the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***SANCTUS - Holy, Holy, Holy Page 153**



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

***WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

You are indeed holy, Almighty and Merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen.**

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet of Christ. All are welcome. **Amen**

***AGNUS DEI - Lamb of God** Page 154



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

EVERYONE IS INVITED to come forward to receive Communion. If you are unable to come forward, you may remain seated and the pastor will bring you communion at your seat. Children may come forward to receive a blessing. After receiving Communion, please do not hesitate to come forward to the altar for a time of prayer.

***POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your goodness. You are our hope and joy. Strengthen us by this food, and send us to share with the world your love and welcome others to your house, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE SENDING

***SENDING BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. Amen.

***SENDING HYMN -**

He Came Down Hymn 253

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

ORGAN POSTLUDE

PARTICIPANTS

The Rev. Althea Seidel - Pastor

Paul Copenhaver - Minister of Music

Shannon Engle - Pianist

Heather Buffington - Bell Choir Director

Sue Ann Houser - Lay Assistant

Heather Buffington - Choir Accompanist

Renee Nelson - Lector

Sam Seiders - Acolyte

Betty Schriver - Greeter

Denise Rhoades - Greeter

♿ *Elevator access to upper and lower levels is located at rear entrance of church.*

📵 *Remember to silence cell phones & other electronic device*

A GIFT HAS BEEN PRESENTED IN LOVING ✝ MEMORY OF:

In memory of Janice Copenhaver by Craig & Nancy Brightbill

In memory of Joette Hollinger by Craig & Nancy Brightbill

In memory of Charles Robert Malstrom by The Malstrom Family

In memory of Cookie Rothermel by Wilson & Nancy Shaffer

In memory of Cookie Rothermel by Bonnie & Gina Battistelli

In memory of Cookie Rothermel by Judy Cassel

In memory of George Smith by Craig & Nancy Brightbill

In memory of The Rev. Conrad Youse by Craig & Nancy Brightbill

THIS WEEK AT HOLY TRINITY:

Monday, December 15 - Praise Ringers 6 p.m.; Psalm Ringers 7 p.m.

Tuesday, December 16 - Finance Committee Meeting 6:30 p.m.; Senior
Choir 7 p.m.

Wednesday, December 17 - Private Event 9 a.m. -3 p.m.; WELCA
Meeting 4:30 p.m.; Mentor A Mother Meeting 5:30 p.m.;
Blue Christmas Service 7 p.m.

Thursday, December 18 - Executive Council Meeting 6:30 p.m.;
Church Council Meeting 7 p.m.

PRAYER CONCERNS: If you no longer wish to be included in the prayer update list, please let the Church Office know to remove your name.

PRAYER UPDATE: We have been asked to keep Barb Atwood, Terry Clearwater, The Family of Dennis Culp, Deb Dobson, Donna, Susie Eckert, Dan Fox, Mike and Nancy Hentz, Patty Hess, The Family of Joette Hollinger, Jim & Judi Light, Michael Miele, Janice Peiffer, Rachel, Ed Ream, The Family of Lemoyne Reigle, The Family of Cookie Rothermel, Marie Smith, Nancy Warner, and Mary Yeagley.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY: If Church is going to be cancelled due to weather, it will be posted on our website page: www.trinityleb.org. Don't forget to refresh your browser when viewing the website. You can also find information on our Facebook page: facebook.com/htlclebanonpa. The decision will be made by 7 p.m. the Saturday prior to service.

POINSETTIAS: For those who wish to provide a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one, please use either the envelope included in your November envelope packet or include a note in your donation. **\$7.00 provides one poinsettia** Please remember to include the name of the person(s) presenting the poinsettia. Place the envelope in the offering plate or in the envelope slot. **Deadline for acknowledgement on the Poinsettia List is TODAY.**

SOUP FOR SALE: There are still limited amounts of both Vegetable and Chicken Noodle soup available! They are frozen. The cost is \$7 each. If you are interested, please contact the Church Office or see Denise Rhoads or Neal Galbraith.

MEMBERS' PHOTOS ON DISPLAY: The Lebanon Valley Council on the Arts December display features photographs from our very own Tom Gainer and Terry Weaver. Both are members of the Lebanon Camera Club. If you would like to see their work, Lebanon Valley Council on the Arts is located at 770 Cumberland Street, Lebanon. You can stop by Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

SHARE & CARE: Prayerfully consider making a donation of shelf stable grocery or personal care items. Suggested items: granola or protein bars, snack packs of crackers, cookies, etc., pasta, toothpaste, soap, brushes, shampoo, sanitary items, tuna, peanut butter, and more! **ANY DONATION IS WELCOME!** Items can be placed in the tote marked "Share & Care" in Luther's Place. Monetary donations are also needed. If you would like to contribute simply place a note on your donation or use a blank pew envelope and mark it "Share & Care."

ADVENT FOOD DONATIONS: Bags are now available outside Pastor's Office. The list is a suggestion. Please feel free to fill your bag or bags with whatever donations you like. When you are done, please return the bag to Luther's Place. We will be taking the donations to Lebanon County Christian Ministries in January. Thank you for your participation.

DONATIONS NEEDED: As the weather starts to get colder, the Spread the Warmth campaign will begin. Donations of blankets, gloves, scarves, hats, jackets, sweatshirts, and socks are needed. We welcome any donation of clothing or shoes. Please place your donation in The Giving Place in the Spread the Warmth bin. Thank you!



**THIS WEEK:
Wednesday,
December 17th
at 7 p.m.**

SANTA CLAUS: The video "Santa Claus" will be viewed in the social room after worship on December 21. It is a fascinating story that begins with the person, Nicolas, Bishop of Smyrna to his becoming the most popular saint of the middle ages. Then how Protestants and even the Roman Church attempted to eliminate his popularity. But the popular culture of the USA revived and transformed the image of Santa Claus whose anticipated arrival is expected by children at Christmas. Despite the commercialization, he remains a symbol of what is worthwhile about the holiday season: generosity, kindness, and good will to men. A snack and coffee are available to all who wish to see "Santa Claus."



YOUR GIVING MATTERS!

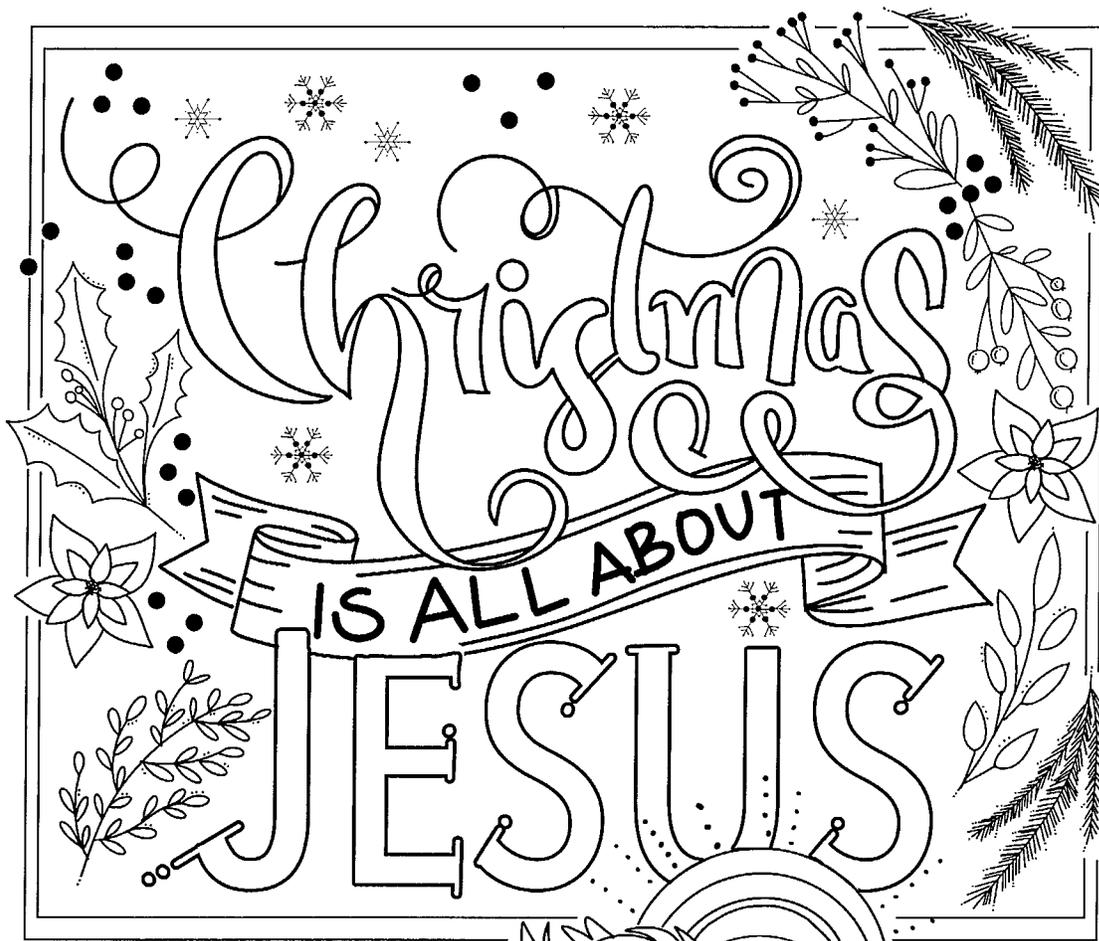
There are many ways that we, as a congregation and as individuals, give back to the Lord. Many of us share our gifts, talents, and money in order to have our many ministries flourish. Your support, in whatever ways it is shared, is always appreciated.

Scan to donate online:



Church Treasurer's Financial Summary - October 2025

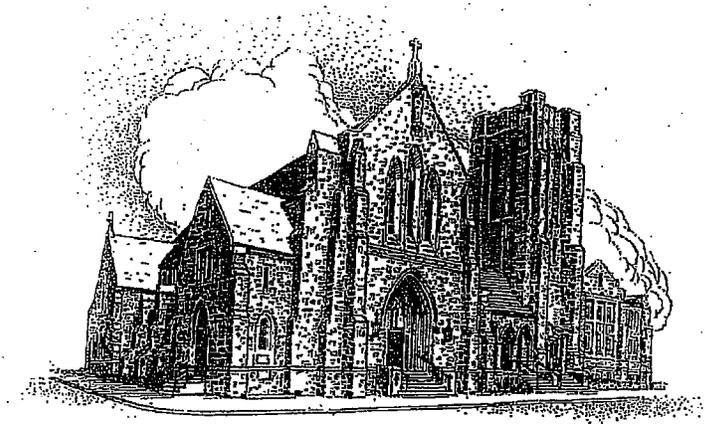
	Month of October	Actual Year to Date	Budget Year to Date
Income	\$27,356	\$232,895	\$258,311
Expenses	\$(28,289)	\$(260,180)	\$(259,806)
Net Income	\$(932)	\$(27,285)	\$(1,494)



"She will give birth to a son,
and you are to give him
the name Jesus, because
he will save his people
from their sins."
Matthew 1:21, NIV



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Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

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Office Hours: Tuesday - Thursday 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.,
also available by phone, email, text message, or appointment

Stephanie Kaylor: stephanie@trinityleb.org

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.