

# Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas



## ***Five Tips to Keep in Mind When Visiting a Lutheran Church***

*This month's article is condensed and adapted from an article by Dr. Gene Edward Veith, my former colleague on the faculty of Concordia University Wisconsin. Though a native of Oklahoma, where he now lives in retirement, Dr. Veith has an important Kansas connection, earning his PhD in English at the University of Kansas.*

When first attending a Lutheran worship service it can seem to some like being transported back to the Middle Ages. Here's five things to keep in mind when visiting a Lutheran church.

### ***1) The Liturgy Consists Mostly of Words from Scripture***

The first reaction of many visitors is, "This is Catholic!" Or, "This is too Catholic!" Yes, the liturgy goes way back through church history and is similar to that of Roman Catholics, the Orthodox, and, among Protestants, Anglicans, whose Book of Common Prayer was greatly influenced by Lutheranism.

But, the Lutheran liturgy also shows forth the principles of the Reformation. Luther wanted to reform the church, not start a new one. Later Protestants would want to start, more or less, from scratch, but the work of "reforming" means changing only what is problematic, but leaving what is good. For Luther, everything that pointed away

from Christ and the Gospel should be eliminated, but what does point to Christ and the Gospel should be retained.

So, the Lutheran liturgy leaves out elements in the Roman Catholic mass such as praying for the dead and invoking the saints. But, it retains the overall structure and the ancient liturgy, including pieces such as the Kyrie ("Lord have mercy. . .") and Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"). In fact, those and nearly all portions of the congregation are taken straight from the Bible. When someone objects to our liturgy, I ask, "Which words of God do you think we shouldn't say?"

The sanctuary will also demonstrate the Reformation principle of retaining elements that point to Christ. There will typically be quite a bit of art in the sanctuary. Lots of crosses. That will include pictures of Jesus and other representational art. This is not idolatry, since that means worshiping false gods and Jesus is the true God, who came as a visible, tangible human being discernible by the senses (1 John 1:1). Lots of crucifixes, depicting Jesus on the cross. Some Christians say that one should only use empty crosses because Jesus isn't on the cross any more—He rose! Well, Lutherans certainly believe in His Resurrection (and also have empty crosses), but we need to keep a constant focus on "Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1 and 2 Corinthians 1:2), upon which our salvation is based.

### ***2) Chanting Lets Us Sing Prose, Such as Texts from Scripture***

The Divine Service is mostly chanted by both the pastor and the congregation. This may be the aspect that seems the most "Catholic" or "Medieval" or just unusual to visitors. But, chanting, with its flexible meter and flowing melodic line, is simply the way that a person can sing prose.

Most of our songs today—whether hymns or raps—are metrical, with fixed patterns of rhythm and rhyme. That is to say, they put music to poems. But, it is also possible to sing any sequence of words. That requires music that flows along with the pattern of speech. This is what chanting is.

Lutherans do sing hymns that will be familiar to most visitors, drawing on the vast and varied musical heritage of the church universal. Perhaps stranger to some visitors' ears are the hymns from the Lutheran tradition, particularly those from the 16th and 17th century, often in the baroque style, with beautiful but complex music.

### ***3) The Pastor Will Forgive Your Sins***

What most puts off quite a few visitors is at the beginning of the service when the members of the congregation confess their sins, first reflecting silently and then reading a prayer of repentance, after which the pastor says this or something like it:

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of the Word I announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

"I forgive you?" some say. "The pastor can't forgive sins! Only Jesus can do that!" Well, right, only Jesus can forgive sins. But, Lutherans believe that God works through human beings. Notice the wording: "As a called and ordained servant of the Word." God forgives sins through pastors, just as He gives us our daily bread through farmers and creates new life through mothers and fathers.

The basis of the pastor's forgiveness, also known as "Absolution," is "the grace of God to all of you" and the fact that He "has given His Son to die for you."

And the Scriptural warrant for human beings forgiving sins is pretty explicit. After His resurrection, Jesus breathes on His disciples, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them" (John 20:22-23).

#### **(4) You Will Hear a Law and Gospel Sermon**

The sermon may also be different from what you are used to. There will be no politics, no pop psychology, no Biblical principles for successful living. The sermon will be based on one or more of the three Bible readings, Old Testament, Epistle, or Gospel, but it will be handled in terms of the distinct Lutheran paradigm of preaching Law and Gospel.

The moral law in the Scripture will be proclaimed, but in a way that precludes self-righteousness. Listeners will be persuaded that they do not, in fact, obey God's Law, with its multiple ramifications, and that they are in sore need of repentance. Whereupon the sermon will move to a proclamation of the Gospel, namely, that Christ has fulfilled this law on our behalf and has

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November, 2022*

paid the penalty that we deserve for breaking it with His atoning death and resurrection. When we know that we are sinners and cannot save ourselves and believe that Jesus has died for us and offers us new life, we have saving faith, which, in turn, bears the fruit of love for our neighbors.

This is not "cheap grace" the pastor is teaching. A skillful preacher can really make you feel guilty, which tempers our bad behavior. And, by preaching the Gospel, he really make you feel free.

#### **5) You Must Be Instructed Before You Go Up for Communion**

If you are a non-Lutheran visitor to a Lutheran church, during Communion observe what is happening, sing along with the hymns during distribution, and if you want go up for a blessing. (Bow and cross your arms when the pastor comes your way.) But, you should refrain from taking the consecrated bread and wine. This is the ancient Christian custom of "close Communion," meaning that those who commune together should be "close" to each other in doctrine, holding to the same teachings.

Please do not be insulted, as some visitors are. Lutherans are not denying that you are a Christian. Anyone, of any denomination or non-denomination, who confesses faith in Christ is considered to be a Christian, and Lutherans do accept all Baptisms, of whatever mode or at whatever age. It's just that Lutherans hold to the Biblical teaching that no one should receive the Lord's Supper without examining oneself and without "discerning the body" (1 Corinthians 11:28-29).

By the way, the vast majority of the world's Christians in fact practice "close Communion," including Roman Catholics and the Orthodox. I have had occasions—weddings and funerals—to attend a Roman Catholic mass, but it never bothered me that I couldn't take Communion. I didn't want to. Because, if I received Communion I would be participating with a church body that I don't belong to, and whose teachings I don't agree with. This is also why most

Lutherans won't commune at other churches that may practice some kind of "open" Communion. It's a matter of respecting differences.

So, please, visitors, know that you are welcome to a Lutheran service, and don't let our quirks be an obstacle! I think you will appreciate the sense of transcendence and holiness found there.

## **Sermons for November**



Complete videos of all our services, as well as audio and printed text of the sermon only, are available on our church website at [www.trinitylcms.org/sermons](http://www.trinitylcms.org/sermons). Printed copies of that day's sermon and several of the most recent sermons are also available in the Gathering Room.

November 6

*"Dressed for Eternity"*  
Revelation 7:13-14

November 13

*"Warning: False Prophets!"*  
Matthew 24:24-25

November 20

*"The Conflagration Will Happen"*  
2 Peter 3:1-13

November 24 (Thanksgiving Day)

*"The Peace of God"*  
Philippians 4:6-7

November 27

*"Now Are the Days Fulfilled"*  
Jeremiah 33:14-16

## **NOVEMBER Birthdays & Anniversaries**

Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 913-849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at [trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com](mailto:trinitylutheranblock@gmail.com).

Nov 1 ..... Christopher England  
Nov 2 ..... Steve Debrick  
Nov 4 ..... Peyton Mitchell

- Nov 6 ..... Jill Druse
- Nov 7 ..... Fritz Meyer
- Nov 8 ..... Erin England
- Nov 9 ..... Greg Windler
- Nov 11 ..... Lana Kettler
- Nov 11 ..... Chylar Jones
- Nov 13 ..... Dennis Ohlmeier
- Nov 13 ..... Doris Rodewald
- Nov 14 ..... Elena Smithhisler
- Nov 15 ..... JoAnn Vaughn
- Nov 16 ..... Sacred Davis
- Nov 19 ..... Elaine Brocker
- Nov 19 ..... Kreston Debrick
- Nov 19 ..... Kathy Peckman
- Nov 20 ..... Alexis Belsanti
- Nov 20 ..... Luke Elkinton
- Nov 20 ..... Randy Maisch
- Nov 21 ..... Jim Prothe
- Nov 21 ..... Megan Tesar
- Nov 22 ..... Whitney Shoemaker
- Nov 22 ..... Burl Peckman
- Nov 22 ..... Jason Peterson
- Nov 23 ..... Lisa Shannon
- Nov 24 ..... Lindsey Lester
- Nov 25 ..... Carolyn Isenhower
- Nov 25 ..... Courtney Belsanti
- Nov 25 ..... Dana Hall
- Nov 26 ..... Liliana Peckman
- Nov 29 ..... Rick Druse
- Nov 30 ..... Alan Hutchison
- Nov 3 ..... Ken & Karla Debrick (40)
- Nov 18 ..... Darrell & Barb Brandt (50)
- Nov 20 ..... Harry & Gay Stubbs (46)
- Nov 23 ... Vernon & Donna Prothe (67)
- Nov 29 .. Webb & Virginia Oberheide (36)
- Nov 29 ... Brett & Becky Stutzman (53)



### After Church Snacks

Thank you to all those hosting Coffee Hour following our worship services. The signup sheet is on the counter in the Gathering Room. Drinks are provided so you only need to bring snacks. Consider signing up to honor birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc.

November 6  
Jan Minden

November 20  
Sharon Prothe & Ella

November 13 & 27  
Need Volunteers

## Pastor's Retirement

### Retirement Celebration December 4

Trinity will be holding a retirement celebration on Sunday, December 4 for Pastor Vogts, who is retiring at the end of the year, both from nine years of service to our congregation, and from 36 years of active service as a Pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The worship service will include the rite of "Farewell and Godspeed for a Pastor Entering Retirement," administered by Rev. Paul Helmer, a retired Pastor from Gardner who was Pastor Vogts' Greek professor at St. John's College and ordained him in 1986, and whose father Rev. Martin Helmer baptized Pastor Vogts in 1960. Following the service there will be a free catered dinner and reception in the Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendars and plan to attend!



The Call Committee met on October 2 to begin the process of filling out forms for the pre-call process. One of the first steps is to determine those characteristics of a Pastor that are the most important to our church. We are seeking your input on these characteristics in the form of a survey.

Copies of the survey can be picked up after church in the church office. You can leave your completed survey in the designated spot in the office also. An online version is also available by going to the web address [www.surveymonkey.com/r/tlc-pastor](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tlc-pastor).

All surveys should be completed by October 30th. For any questions, please see one of the Call Committee members, Elders, or Chairman Greg Windler.



Bring your family and holiday guests to celebrate Thanksgiving Day at our special service on Thursday, November 24 at 10:00am. The message will be "The Peace of God" based on Philippians 4:6-7. "O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good, for His love endures forever!" (Psalm 136:1).



### God's Grace in Galatians

Our current study in Adult Bible Class is on *God's Grace in Galatians*. So many vital teachings of our faith are packed into this brief epistle! And it was in this biblical book that Martin Luther found much of the Scriptural support for the Reformation.

Everyone is invited to join in Sundays at 9:00am in the Heritage Room to learn the Good News of God's Grace in Galatians!

### Missionaries of the Month



Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported by our congregation through our mission offerings to our Synod.

November 6  
Rev. Eric & Johanna Stinnett  
Ethiopia

November 13  
J.P. & Aimee Cima  
Cambodia

November 20  
Rev. Jonathan &  
Deaconess Cheryl Naumann  
Dominican Republic

November 27  
Rev. Andrew & Megan Fedder  
Ukraine



*Blakely Nicole Strawder*

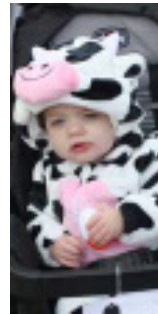
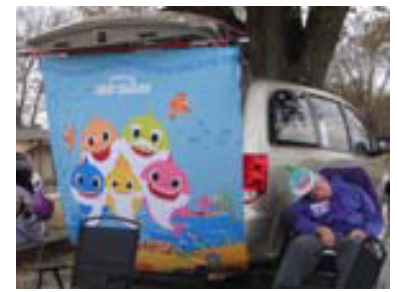
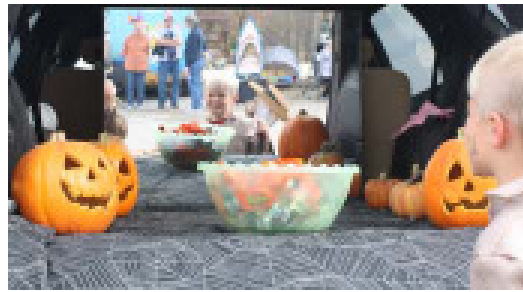
Daughter of  
Wendell Allen Strawder and  
Breanna Nicole Prothe Strawder

Born February 10, 2022  
Baptized November 5, 2022

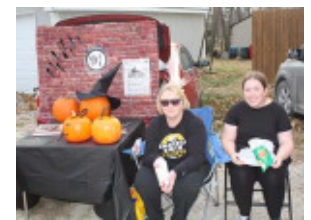
*"Let the little children come unto  
Me and do not hinder them, for  
the kingdom of God belongs to  
such as these." (Mark 10:14)*

## Voters Assembly Summary

The quarterly meeting of the Voters Assembly on October 16, 2022 was called to order by Chairman Windler, with Pastor Vogts offering opening devotion and song. Roll was answered by 18 members; there were no new member requests. Financial reports by the home treasurer and missions treasurer were given. Pastor Vogts reported on his official acts, worship, education, and administration efforts up to the fourth quarter of 2022. Elders reported they have been in contact with First Lutheran regarding vacancy pastor/service scheduling. Trustees reported on numerous items, including elevator inspection and service call, plumbing and electrical work at the



Thank you to everyone who helped make our 14th Annual Trunk or Treat on October 30 another big success! Thanks also to Greg Windler and Paul Haley for the photos of this event. Lots more pictures online at [www.trinitylcms.org/photos](http://www.trinitylcms.org/photos).



teachage, snow removal plans, and exploring possible kitchen remodel. Officers elected are Chairman – Greg Windler, Elder – Brian Meyer, Mission Treasurer – Susan Schmitt, Trustee – Pam Peckman, Board of Education – John Schlegel, Finance Committee – Jeff Garrison, Usher – Bill Koelsch, Secretary – Jim Prothe. Reports were heard from the Endowment Committee and Blocktoberfest. Cemetery guidelines were discussed; a draft will be prepared in conjunction with congregation input. The 2022 Mission Budget was set at

\$7500; Together In Missions commitment of \$500 will be redirected to the Missions commitment. Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas day loose offerings will go toward our Mission commitment. Endowment committee appointments of Phyllis Trickett and Stan Loftiss were approved. The church will be used for the upcoming November election, and will be locked in conjunction with same. The Call Committee reported that congregational surveys are due by the end of October, with anticipation of having the Pre-Call documents available for the district office by December 1.