

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✠ Paola, Kansas



Dear Friends in Christ,

I've been having some rambling thoughts and reminiscences as I approach retirement at the end of the year, both from nine years serving here at Trinity, and 36 years active service as a Pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Martin Luther's father sent him off to university to study law, so that his son would make a good living and could support his parents in their old age. He was very upset when Martin switched to theology, and instead of a rich lawyer, became a poor priest and monk. Even after Luther launched the Reformation and became the most famous person in the world, his father to his dying day was never happy about it.

I started out at St. John's College in Winfield, Kansas in 1978 preparing to become a parochial school teacher like my three sisters. I first felt a calling into the Holy Ministry a few months later as I was sitting backstage during dress rehearsal for the famous St. John's homecoming show, and a female soloist was singing the contemporary Christian song "Lovely Jesus."

*Lovely Jesus, I have
So much to be thankful for,
You have given life to me,
And it's You I alone adore . . .
Lead me Lord with Your hand,
Take me Lord, here I am.*

St. John's had a wonderful, wooded outdoor chapel area called Meditation Hill, which I ascended alone after rehearsal. As I sat praying in the moonlight at the foot of the life-size cross atop Meditation Hill, with a great deal of trepidation I committed myself to becoming a Pastor.

I remember well going home and sitting with my parents around our kitchen table, telling them that I now felt a calling into the Pastoral Ministry. My parents—both of whom were descended from Johann and Katherina Windler here at Block—were very faithful, active members of Immanuel, Canton, Kansas, where I grew up, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Dad would rotate through various offices in the congregation and then start over again. All three of my sisters had already become parochial school teachers.

So, I thought they would be thrilled when I told them that I was going to be a Pastor. But, instead, I was quite surprised when my father's reaction was: "Are you sure you want to be a preacher? I think that would be really tough."



At my Ordination in 1986 with my Mother and Father, Leroy and Ruth Vogts.

However, unlike Luther's father, my father's concern wasn't me earning a living. That wasn't why he thought being a preacher would be tough. "You don't know how things work in a congregation," he said. "Everyone's always mad at the preacher, about something."

Forty-four years later as I enter retirement, I am extremely thankful to say that I have not found the concern of my father at all true in my ministry. In so many ways, serving as a Pastor has been an extraordinary blessing and great joy, with many emotional incidents, surprising twists, and great privileges.

One privilege already during my years studying at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis was receiving a "plum" Vicarage assignment to Bethlehem, Ridgewood, New Jersey, under a great supervising Pastor, and able to take the train and explore New York City. Quite a change for a boy from Kansas!

I also had the marvelous, life-changing opportunity during my college and seminary years to travel twice to the Middle East and Holy Land and work there as an archaeologist. And later Terry and I had the wonderful experiences of touring Germany for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, and this year seeing the Passion Play at Oberammergau.

Following my graduation and Ordination in 1986, an unexpected development was that, until my final Call here at Trinity, most of my ministry was spent assisting troubled mission congregations, at New Hope, Ossian, Indiana; Redeemer, Lawrence, Kansas; and Holy Cross, Dakota Dunes, South Dakota. And though not a mission congregation, Bethlehem, Sylvan Grove, Kansas had recently suffered a major split, when a group left to form a congregation of the ELCA.

So, until I came to Trinity, every congregation that I served was recovering from strife, and facing great challenges and looming closure. Striving to bring them healing and growth was a specialized area of ministry that I never planned to practice, but just fell into because of my first assignment out of seminary.

An offshoot of serving mission congregations was the totally unexpected joy of helping to design, watch being constructed, and dedicate two beautiful new sanctuaries, at Lawrence and Dakota Dunes. Our daughter Anna was baptized at Lawrence, grew up at Dakota Dunes, and is now a member at Lawrence again. She recently expressed surprise when she realized how much those two sanctuaries resemble each other, and I said, "Well, that's because I helped design them both!"

And it was quite unexpected when I had a similar experience here at Trinity with the major addition to and remodeling of our church. I never dreamed that I'd have the privilege of laying one cornerstone during my ministry, let alone three!

An exceptional privilege I had as an LCMS Pastor was serving five years as Director of Communications and Church Relations at Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon, Wisconsin, the largest Lutheran university in North America. This brought so many new and unusual experiences, administering a large staff and budget, travelling and preaching in congregations all across the country, publishing my own magazine, buying advertisements and billboards, and producing radio and TV commercials.

Trinity Tribune

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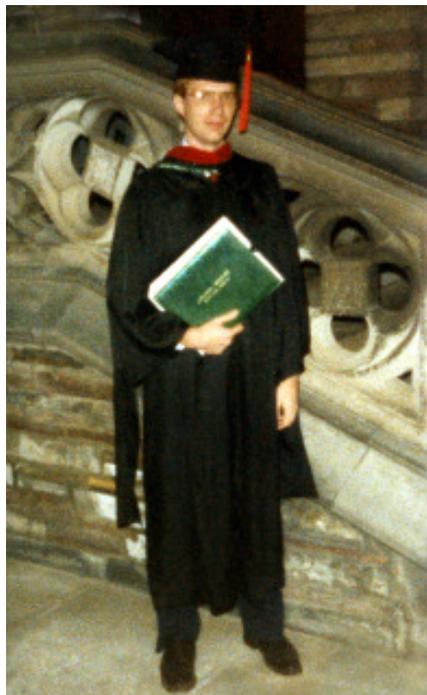
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December, 2022*

Once for our CUW alumni reception at the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans I even chartered a riverboat! Though I greatly enjoyed my work at CUW, I missed serving as a parish Pastor.



My graduation from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1986.

Returning to the parish, my tenure at Mequon opened up many other unique opportunities: serving as Vice-Chairman of the Synod's Board for Communications Services, writing many articles for *The Lutheran Witness* and other publications, being interviewed several times on the LCMS radio program *Issues, Etc.*

Because only one Pastor represents an entire circuit, most LCMS Pastors will never serve as a delegate to an LCMS National Convention. However, by a series of unusual, unexpected flukes, I had the privilege of being a national delegate five times, and serving three times on a Floor Committee, twice as Secretary.

A special highlight of my entire ministry was a two-week mission trip to Kenya in 2004 with Rev. Matthew Harrison, later elected LCMS President, and then having him preach for the 25th Anniversary of my Ordination in 2011, with Rev. Walter Obare, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, also in attendance.

The two most challenging situations I faced over the years came not from within the congregations I have served, but were overwhelming circumstances thrust upon us. The first was in 2011, when due to government mismanagement the Missouri River had extended flooding and our entire community of Dakota Dunes was threatened with destruction, and for four months was evacuated and our congregation closed. And of course the second very great challenge that we all faced recently was the Covid pandemic and lockdown.

There is so much more packed into the past 44 years since I began my Pre-Seminary studies in 1978! Especially all the wonderful people I have encountered and been privileged to work with and serve—including all of you! And of course for 32 of those years Terry has been my beloved, invaluable partner, in both life and ministry.



I was very privileged to have my friend, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, preach for the 25th Anniversary of my Ordination in 2011.

I am deeply thankful that through it all, contrary to my father's concern, I and my family have been blessed over the years with the kindest, most loving treatment, by all the congregations I have served and their members. It has been a great joy and honor to actively serve as a Pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for 36 years, including the last nine years here at Trinity. Terry and I have really enjoyed our time with you, and we will always look very fondly upon our years at Block.

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor Kevin Vogts

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. All are invited to attend and bid farewell to Pastor and Terry Vogts!

(Although the retirement celebration is being held early due to the holidays, Pastor Vogts will continue serving Trinity and conducting services thru Christmas Day.)

Our Vacancy Pastor



For tax and pension purposes, Pastor Vogts is officially retiring at the end of the year. However, he will be taking the last week of 2022 as vacation time.

2022 Advent Sermon Series



The Prophets Have Foretold It

1st Sunday in Advent – November 27

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

2nd Sunday in Advent – December 4

"Savior of the Nations, Come!" (Genesis 3:15)

3rd Sunday in Advent – December 11

"A Star Shall Come, A Scepter Shall Rise" (Numbers 24:15-17)

4th Sunday in Advent – December 18

"Isaiah's Picture of Jesus" (Isaiah 9:6).

Therefore, beginning the afternoon of Christmas Day, for pastoral needs you may call upon Rev. Christian Schulz, Pastor of First Lutheran Church, Paola, and Trinity's Vacancy Pastor. His cell phone is 785-313-4633 and his email is pastor@firstlutheran-paola.org.

Your input was helpful in ensuring our process represents the needs of the congregation. If you would like to see the survey results, please let one of the committee members know.

We are also in the process of finalizing the pre-call documents and will mail them to the Kansas District office by December 1. The District office will take the appropriate time needed to review our information and work to match us to potential candidates.

Please continue to pray for this process and all involved as we seek the Lord's will for our congregation.

Call Committee Update

Thank you for participating in the survey! The results revealed an overwhelming majority favor calling a current Pastoral candidate from the field.



Christmas Communion — Our annual “Christmas Carol Communion Service” with favorite Christmas carols being used for portions of the Liturgy will be on Sunday, December 18.

Two Christmas Eve Services — We will again have two services on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24. The Candlelight Carol Service at 5:00pm will not include the children’s program. The traditional Children’s Christmas Program will be at 7:00pm. Both services will open with Pastor Vogts singing the solo “O Holy Night” and feature your favorite carols, including “Silent Night” sung by candlelight, and the same sermon, “*Light Shatters the Darkness*” based on Luke 2:8-9.

Christmas Day — Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year, so our Christmas Day service will be Sunday, December 25 at 10:00am. The order of worship will be “A Festival of Readings and Carols,” a traditional English service featuring Scripture readings that tell the story of Christ’s coming, interspersed with favorite carols. Pastor Vogts’ message will be “*The Real Meaning of Christmas*” based on Luke 2:11. This will be the final service conducted by Pastor Vogts before his retirement at the end of the year.

*Oh, come, let us
adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!*



Sermons for December

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. Printed copies of that day’s sermon and several of the most recent sermons are also available in the Gathering Room.

December 4

“Savior of the Nations, Come!”
Genesis 3:15

December 11

*“A Star Shall Come,
A Scepter Shall Rise”*
Numbers 24:15-17

December 18

“Isaiah’s Picture of Jesus”
Isaiah 9:6

December 24(Christmas Eve)

“Light Shatters the Darkness”
Luke 2:8-9

December 25(Christmas Day)

“The Real Meaning of Christmas”
Luke 2:11



December 4

Retirement Dinner

December 11, 18, 25

Need Volunteers



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.

Dec 1	Kristie Gatlin
Dec 1	Brianna Chapman
Dec 5	Tyler Barnett
Dec 6	Susan Schmitt
Dec 6	Linda Oberheide
Dec 6	Jaxon Durham
Dec 8	Anita Koopman
Dec 9	Marsha Windish
Dec 9	Autumn Menefee
Dec 10	Betty Crome
Dec 11	Pam Holtz
Dec 11	Mika Menefee
Dec 13	Justin Prothe
Dec 13	Dillon Reyelts
Dec 15	Chris Jones
Dec 15	Linda Prothe
Dec 16	Joyce Johns
Dec 16	Jake Prothe
Dec 19	Samantha Honn
Dec 21	Carole Brandt
Dec 21	Nancy Green
Dec 22	Jack Smith
Dec 25	Shawn Brandt
Dec 25	April Bruce
Dec 25	Darleen Medlin
Dec 25	Brooks Massey
Dec 26	Brandon Prothe
Dec 28	Shemene Peckman
Dec 28	Royal Prothe
Dec 29	Dan Minden
Dec 29	Brian Meyer
Dec 31	Randy Shannon
Dec 2	Leland & Slina Prothe (67)
Dec 3	Henry & JoAnn Vaughn (34)
Dec 12 ...	Nicholas & Erica Peckman (7)
Dec 16	Mike & Trish Armstrong (27)
Dec 17 ..	Steve & Kristie McMullin (28)
Dec 28 ...	Richard & Mary Ann Green (47)
Dec 29	Kevin & Terese Vogts (32)



Donating poinsettias to beautify our sanctuary is a great way to remember loved ones at Christmas! There is a signup sheet on the counter in the Gathering Room to order plants from Price Chopper at a cost of \$9 each. Place your payment in the offering marked "Poinsettias." When signing up please indicate how many plants you wish to donate and for whom they are in memory or honor.

You are also welcome to bring your own poinsettias. Just drop them by the church sometime before Christmas Eve and leave them on the tables in the Gathering Room. Please still sign up on the sheet, indicating that you are providing your own plants, and for whom they are in memory or honor, so that information may be included in the newsletter.



Devotional booklets for the Advent season from Lutheran Hour Ministries are available at the church in both regular and large print. The daily devotions for the Advent and Christmas seasons thru Epiphany on January 6 follow the theme "A Son Is Given."

You will be blessed using these devotions to help you celebrate the real "reason for the season"!



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.

December 4

Rev. Nicholas Salifu
Ghana

December 11

Rev. Christian & Gudula Tiaws
Germany

December 18

Rev. David & Jennifer Preus
Dominican Republic

December 25

Rev. Tom Park
Taiwan



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!



Martin Charles Lee Carter

Son of
Fritz Christian Carter and
Miciah Natalie Jean Watt Carter

Born November 2, 2022
Baptized November 27, 2022

Miller Wade Barrett

Son of
Shelby Leigh Barrett
Born September 22, 2022
Baptized November 27, 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)



In Christian Sympathy

Chancy Owen Dizmang
October 7, 1933–September 20, 2022

*"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."
Revelation 14:13*

MISSION NEWS

For the last seven years, Erick Davis Kwoba has been able to attend primary and secondary school, thanks to a unique collaboration between the LCMS and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya that supports the education and Christian formation of young people in need, from primary school to college. The two church bodies work together on Project 24, a series of eight boarding facilities throughout Kenya that care for about 200 children who come from difficult family situations. Staff also remain in contact with another 163 students who have graduated from primary school, moved out of their Project 24 site, and now live and study at one of Kenya's many residential secondary schools.

While in the Project 24 program, the children attend a local school and are fed, cared for, and taught important life skills such as how to tend to the site's crops and livestock. Most importantly, the children learn about their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Kwoba originally came to live at the Project 24 site near Kisumu, Kenya, after the death of his father. His widowed mother struggled to provide for the family while paying the mandatory school fees for Kwoba and his four older siblings. The family attended an ELCK church, and church leaders identified Kwoba as a candidate for Project 24.

"The program has positively impacted my life; the problem of school fees has been fully settled, relieving that burden, and helping me study with ease," Kwoba says, as he prepares to attend university later this year to pursue a Bachelor of Education degree. "This has given me hope of changing my life for the better."

Although Kwoba has graduated from secondary school and the Project 24 program, he is not on his own. Before heading off to college he participated in a Pre-College Lutheran Academy, with refresher courses on the Bible, the Small Catechism, and study skills, among other things, to help strengthen the faith of those students.



Bring Your Family and Holiday Guests to Celebrate the Real "Reason for the Season"

Christmas Carol Communion Service
Sunday, December 18, 10:00am

Two Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
Saturday, December 24

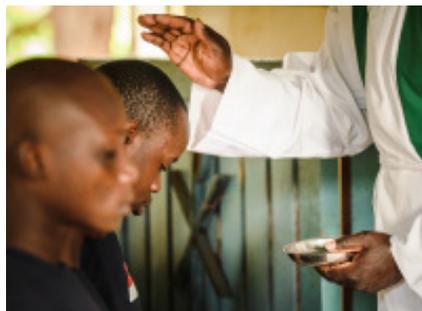
5:00pm—Candlelight Carol Service
7:00pm—Children's Christmas Program

Christmas Day Service—Festival of Readings and Carols
Sunday, December 25, 10:00am

All Services Livestreamed on Facebook

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!



Project 24 participants in Kenya receive Communion before leaving for college.

Rev. Walter Steele, an LCMS missionary who helps lead these sessions, thinks one course that is particularly useful is about "how to maintain your Christian faith while you are in a very secular environment. Many of these children have gone through the schools of the church here, but then

when they head off to high school some of that knowledge drops away. This gives them the chance to have their faith strengthened."

While the goal of Project 24 is for these young people to be successful in whatever vocations they choose, it is a great blessing that some use what they have learned to become pastors, deaconesses, or evangelists in the ELCK.

As he prepares to head off to university, Kwoba looks forward to one day becoming a science teacher—possibly at one of the ELCK's schools—and being able to give back to the Project 24 program. "By God's grace, I want to come back to support my fellow Lutherans," he says. "I want to be an example and change the future of our family and community."