TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
1314 E Lexington Blvd • Eau Claire, WI 54701

MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

LENT 2026

As we enter the season of Lent, we are reminded that we are people marked by the cross. On Ash Wednesday, ashes are placed on our foreheads in the shape of the cross—an honest sign of our mortality and sin, and at the same time, a powerful sign of belonging. We are marked not because we have earned God's love, but because God has already claimed us in Christ.

This Lenten season, our worship will center on what it means to live as people marked by the cross in a broken and often uncertain world. The cross names the reality of suffering, loss, and human limitation, but it also reveals God's deep solidarity with us. In the cross of Christ, we see a love that does not turn away from pain, but enters it, redeems it, and promises new life beyond it.

Lent is not a season of spiritual self-improvement or easy answers. Instead, it is a time to return—again and again—to the grace that meets us where we truly are. As people marked by the cross, we are freed to be honest about our lives, confident that God's mercy is deeper than our failures and stronger than death itself.

You are invited to join us for worship throughout Lent:
Sunday Worship: 8:15 a.m. (traditional) and 9:45 a.m. (band led, contemporary)
Wednesday Lenten Worship: 12:15 p.m. (traditional) and 6 p.m. (Holden Evening Prayer)

A simple soup meal will be served after the 12:15 p.m. service and before the 6:00 p.m. service, offering time for fellowship and rest in the middle of the week. Wherever you find yourself this Lent—hopeful, weary, curious, or unsure—you are welcome. Come and be reminded that you are marked by the cross and held in grace.

WITH GRATITUDE

Offering Update as of January 31, 2026.

- Amount Budgeted to Date: $736,981
- Amount Received to date: $734,058
- Expenses to Date: $641,812
- Deficit/Surplus: $92,246

Trinity offers three giving options:

- Scan the QR code
- Text "GIVE" to 715.468.6800
- Click GIVE on www.trinity-ec.org

Trinity Food Pantry Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 1:30–3:00 p.m.

Update on Rental Home - Water Damage

We want to share a brief update regarding our rental home. Recently, a small pinhole leak was discovered in a radiator, which led to some water damage inside the home. The issue was identified quickly and has since been fully repaired. Thankfully, the damage was not extensive. As a precaution, ServPro was brought in to professionally clean and address the affected areas to ensure everything was properly cared for and safe. No structural damage was found, and the home is now in good condition. We are grateful for the quick response that limited the impact.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK:

During the month of March, libraries around the U.S. will be celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday by showcasing many of his works. One of our favorites is the lesser-known tale, "The Zax." In this story two zax run into each other and refuse to move. Each of them claims to be moving in one direction and one direction only. They will not budge one inch east or one inch west. And so, they stand there...not moving, not solving their problems, just glaring at one another. The story ends with the following words, "Well...Of course the world didn't stand still. The world grew. In a couple of years, the new highway came through. And they built it right over those two stubborn Zax and left them there, standing un-budged in their tracks."

The Zax refused to cooperate with one another, and it left them stuck in a particular place and sour attitude.

Fortunately, we are not called to embrace this sort of life where we become immovable in all aspects of our lives. We are all called to work together for the wellbeing of all creation, or as we like to say, bringing about God's preferred future.

Perhaps the best image that highlights this life of cooperation and working together comes from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. He writes, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."

We all have different gifts, talents, and abilities, but what do we do with all these gifts? While it may be easier to do things by ourselves, we will not be able to live as faithfully as we could when we are in community with one another. May you find a sense of cooperation as elemental to who we are as we live out our callings.

Pastor Patrick and Pastor Tom

MEMORIALS & GIFTS

Food Pantry

- In memory of Charles Wallen from Phyllis Grohn
- In memory of Charles Wallen from Nancee & John Burbank
- In memory of David Mahoney from Elizabeth Circle at Grace Lutheran Church

General Fund

- In memory of Charles Wallen from Carol Wallen

Library Fund

- In memory of Charles Wallen from Carol Wallen

In Memory of:

- Charles Wallen from Carol Wallen- Coffee & Donuts

HOLY WEEK

Holy Week invites us to walk with Jesus through the final days of his earthly ministry and to remember once again that we are a people marked by the cross. From shouts of Hosanna to the silence of the tomb, this week tells the story of a love that does not turn away from suffering, but enters fully into it for the sake of the world.

We invite you to join us for worship throughout Holy Week:

Palm Sunday: March 29- 8:15 a.m. and 9:45 a.m.
Maundy Thursday: April 2- 6:00 p.m.
Good Friday: April 3- 12:15 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Easter Sunday: April 5- 7:00 a.m. (traditional), 8:15 a.m. (traditional), & 9:45 a.m. (contemporary)

As we gather in worship, we remember that the cross is not the end of the story—but it is the place where God's love is made unmistakably clear. Wherever you are on your faith journey, you are welcome to come, to listen, and to be marked once again by grace.

LIBRARY TIDINGS

New Books:

There will be much activity in the Trinity Library during March. We will celebrate Women's History Month, Dr. Seuss' Birthday, and the start of Spring. Among all this, committee members will do the annual inventory and book culling. We invite you to stop in and check us out – better yet, check out a book or one of these four new novels:

***Keeper of Lost Children* by Sadeqa Johnson.** Another impact of WWII that most of us are not aware of – the plight of mixed-race children born of black US military fathers and German mothers. The true-life circumstances of these children are told in this fictionalized account of a character Ethel Gathers who is determined to save as many of these children by sending them to the US to be adopted. (FIC JOH)

***Skylark* by Paula McLain.** In Paula McLain's newest historical fiction work, there is a spellbinding look at the side of Paris known to very few, the underground city that is a mirror reflection of the glories above. The story chronicles two parallel journeys of defiance and rescue that connect in ways both surprising and deeply moving. (FIC MCL)

***Clutch* by Emily Nemens.** *Clutch* follows a group of five women, friends for twenty years as they go through the biggest challenges of their lives. The five women converge on Palm Springs for a long overdue gathering. It is a story of friendship as they help one another reconcile professional ambition with personal tumult. (FIC NEM)

***The Bookbinders Secret* by A.D. Bell.** Every book tells a story. This one tells a secret. A young bookbinder begins a hunt for the truth when a confession hidden beneath the binding of a burned book reveals a story of forbidden love, lost fortune, and murder. (FIC BEL)

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

***The Night Watchman* by Louise Erdrich**

Erdrich, defender of the lives of her Ojibwe people, has won a Pulitzer for this book. It is based on the life of her grandfather, a night watchman at a jewel-bearing plant near the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in rural North Dakota. It is 1953, and a new "Emancipation Bill" is in the U.S. Congress. But it is not about Emancipation, but TERMINATION, and threatens the rights of the Indians to their land and their very identity. Erdrich's character takes the fight against this bill to Washington D.C.

An excellent book with many ideas and characters, based on real events.

Sonnie Jacobson
Library Committee

Picture Books for Spring:

- ***Little Blue Truck's Springtime* by Alice Schertle.** Young fans will love finding all sorts of baby animals by tapping the images in this delightful interactive book. (++ FIC SCH)
- ***Welcome, Spring!* by April Stott.** Young children will enjoy hearing how Bunny and her animal friends share their favorite ways to welcome spring in this beautifully illustrated book. (++ FIC STO)
- ***Chicka Chicka Peep Peep* by Julien Chung**. This hardcover book is a springtime companion to *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* where the alphabet letters discover a surprise in a pink tree, involving fuzzy friends and decorating eggs. (++ FIC CHU)
- ***Mostly What God Does Is Love you* by Savannah Gutherie.** Children discover the wonders and beauty of God's creation, along with God's unconditional love, which they can share through acts of kindness and compassion. (++ FIC GUT)

For Women's History Month- Seven Women in the *Who Was Series*

Mercy Watson is a children's book series by Kate DiCamillo, illustrated by Chris Van Dusen. The main character, Mercy Watson, is a pig called a "porcine wonder" by her owners, Mr. and Mrs. Watson, and loves buttered toast. Each book in the series is a new adventure that children will enjoy reading.

- *Who Was Maya Angelow?* by Ellen Labrecque (+ B LAB)
- *Who Was Princess Diana?* by Ellen Labrecque (+ B LAB)
- *Who Was Ida B. Wells?* by Sarah Fabiny (+ B FAB)
- *Who Was Amelia Earhart?* by Boehm Jerome (+ B JER)*Who Was Clara Barton?* by Stephanie Spinner. (+ B SPI)
- *Who Was Marie Curie?* by Megan Stine. (+ B STI)
- *Who Was Susan B. Anthony?* by Pam Pollack and Meg Beviso. (+ B POL)

FRIENDS OF FLYNN

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Friends of Flynn ministry over the years. Your generosity helps provide snacks, laundry support, clothing, books, boots and shoes, and food pantry items for students at Flynn Elementary.

Our annual fund drive is in March, and we invite you to donate anytime this month so our ministry team can continue supporting students. Donations can be placed in the offering plate, dropped off at the office, or made online.

We know many organizations are asking for support right now, and many are helping neighbors in need locally and beyond. At the same time, needs within schools continue to rise. Food insecurity is real for many families, and our funds are providing more support than ever for Flynn students and families.

You may remember the Flynn principal speaking to our congregation last March. As a refugee from Laos, she shared her family's gratitude for Trinity's support when they first arrived in this country, and the ongoing appreciation from Flynn staff, students, and families today.

Thank you in advance for your donations. Every gift directly supports Flynn students.

We also invite you to follow "Flynn Elementary School" on Facebook to see the learning, events, and student joy happening at our school and often there is a special shout out to Trinity Lutheran Church in appreciation of all that is given to support the learning and student joy at Flynn. Plus, it's fun to see the smiles on the faces of the students in their posts.

P.S. If you'd like to join the committee, please let the office know. All are welcome.

ANNOUNCEMENT CENTRAL

MIDWEEK WORSHIP SERIES- 12:15 P.M. & 6 P.M.

Our midweek series will follow Jesus along the Palm Sunday path. As he approached the city, he staged a procession, a display that both called into question the usual symbols and privileges of power and embraced a different way.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Summer will soon be here, and it's time to start thinking about our Annual Women's Retreat at Luther Park in Chetek. The dates are a little different this year, we will gather Monday, June 29, and Tuesday, June 30. Our speaker will be Pati Kachel. You can learn more about her meaningful and humorous presentations at www.theparablefund.org/bio. More information will be shared soon, but for now, please save the dates: June 29–30, 2026.

Join us for fun and learning at the Academy of Lifelong Learners on June 2 at the Davies Center at UW–Eau Claire. This event brings together a variety of engaging workshops, opportunities for social connection, and valuable information shared by area sponsors. Participant scholarships are available. Registration opens in March. For more information, call 715-836-3636 or email ce@uwec.edu.

The Friendship Group will meet Wednesday, March 11 at 10:00 a.m. at the church. The Threshold Singers will perform. They share music at the bedside of those who are dying, offering comfort and peace.

Hope to see you there.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Pastor Tom highlighted phases of his sabbatical
- Photo Directory layout has been submitted
- The ELCA social statement "Faith & Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All" was discussed
- Palm Sunday Path host duties were reported

A full breakdown of the council minutes can be found on the Trinity website.

NEW MEMBER CLASS & CELEBRATION

Are you or someone you know knew to Trinity? We invite you to participate in our upcoming New Member Classes on Sunday, March 15 and Sunday, March 22 at 10:30 a.m. in room 208. These sessions are a wonderful opportunity to learn more about how you can grow in faith and connection within this community.

Together, we'll explore our shared mission, our life of worship and service, and the ways each person's gifts help shape the body of Christ. Whether you've been attending for a few weeks or several months, these classes are designed to be welcoming, informative, and meaningful. There will also be time for conversation, questions, and getting to know others who are on a similar journey.

We will joyfully welcome new members during a special New Member Celebration at the 9:45 a.m. service on Sunday, March 29 (Palm Sunday). This is a beautiful moment in the life of our church as we celebrate new beginnings and growing community together.

If you're interested in participating or would like more information, please contact the church office or speak with a pastor. We would be honored to walk alongside you as you take this step.

2026 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE DRIVE

Our 2026 stewardship pledge drive is an opportunity for each of us to take a little time during this sacred season of Lent to reflect on how God has shown us love, and how we respond to that gift of grace. How do we live out God's love for us? How are we showing God's love to our neighbor? Is the Spirit perhaps nudging us in new ways?

One of the important ways we embody God's love is in sharing the gifts that God has provided: our time, our talent and our treasure. Each of these is an important piece of the whole that makes us who we are. How are you doing with each of these expressions?
We invite you to consider your response between March 15 and Palm Sunday, March 29. Then on Palm Sunday, please drop your completed pledge card for the 2026-2027 fiscal year in the offering plate at church. You can drop it off at the office or mail it back if you can't be at church on Palm Sunday. It's just one way we can love God and our neighbor. Thank you!

FOOD PANTRY: MARCH CORNER CUPBOARD

EVENTS

Rescue food is a valuable asset to Trinity Food Pantry. Food rescue is the practice of collecting edible foods that would have otherwise gone to waste from local retailers. Rescue food not only distributes food to our guests, but also helps reduce food waste.

In 2025 Trinity Food Pantry partnered with seven local retailers, collecting nearly 96,000 pounds of food that was distributed to those in need.

Thank you to HyVee, Aldi, Kwik Trip-Patton Ave, Kwik Trip-Golf Rd, Kwik Trip-Brackett Ave, Kwik Trip-River Prairie Altoona, Stop N Go-Birch St for these donations.

Thank you also to ALL the volunteers who take the time to pick-up from each location and deliver to Trinity Food Pantry. Jeff, Bill, Joe, Bruce, Diane, Tom, Tami, Peggy, Tom, Sheila, Ron, John, Paul and all subs!

COMMUNITY

First Presbyterian Church on Rudolph Rd continues to host monthly food drives delivering 82 pounds of food in February. Total of 172 pounds for the year.

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church has donated 149 pounds of food for the year.

JANUARY ACTIVITY/FINANCIAL

- Number of families served: 59
- Total food costs for 2026: $5,900
- Dedicated account balance: $62,000
- Average weekly food expense: $700

CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILY

LUTHER PARK BIBLE CAMP

Trinity children and youth are invited to join us for a fun week at summer camp! Trinity encourages students to attend Luther Park Bible Camp in Chetek during Week 3, June 21-26. Campers will stay in cabins and experience the wide variety of fun and activities available at Luther Park. Kids will engage in creative Bible studies, worship, campfires, and meaningful small group discussions, along with fun activities like swimming, large group games, and developing community with new and old friends.

Check out the Luther Park website at www.lutherpark.org to learn more about Luther Park programs and to register. Scholarships are available to Trinity kids – just enter the code TLEC when registering for a 25% discount off one week of camp.

SUMMER AT TRINITY

Mark your calendars! Dates have been set for many of the summer opportunities for children and youth! Registration for Summer Stretch, Camp Come & Play, and Vacation Bible School opens on Monday, March 9 at 8:00 a.m. Register online at trinity-ec.org/register.

- **Camp Come & Play** (for 2-3 year olds) – June 22-24
- **Summer Stretch** (for middle-high school students) – June 29-July 2
- **High School Trip to Estes Park, CO** – July 12-17
- **Vacation Bible School** (for preschool-elementary ages) – July 27-30
- Playground playtime- Thursdays (June-July) 10:00-11:00 a.m.

FIRST SUNDAY

The next First Sunday family faith formation event will be held on Sunday, March 2 in the Trinity Room. The topic is TBD.

SPRING BREAK

There will be no faith formation classes March 29-April 5 as we take a spring break. Have fun, find some time to relax, and we will see you when you come back!

HOLY COMMUNION INSTRUCTION

Children in first grade are invited to join Pastor Tom and Katie Conner on Wednesday, March 25 from 5:00-5:50 p.m. in Classroom 208. Students will meet with Pastor Tom to learn together about God's love for us and the special gift of Holy Communion. Children are welcome to commune at any time, but there will be a special recognition of their participation in Holy Communion at the Maundy Thursday worship service on Thursday, April 2. Please register at www.trinity-ec.org/register or email Katie Conner at katie@trinity-ec.org with any questions.

VBS VOLUNTEERS

Adults and youth completing grade 6 and above are invited to volunteer for Vacation Bible School (July 27-30). Volunteers are needed in a variety of areas including STEM, snack/kitchen, nursery, and more! Middle school volunteers will be paired with a high school counselor and a small group of children. Watch for a volunteer sign-up coming later this spring! If you are interested in being part of the VBS planning group, please contact Katie Conner at katie@trinity-ec.org.

Hiring Soon: VBS Counselors Current high school students (completing grades 9-12) can apply soon to work as small group leaders during Trinity's Vacation Bible School. Students will lead a small group of children for four mornings during VBS (July 27-30) and will have a required training on Wednesday, July 22. Students will be paid a stipend at the end of VBS unless they prefer to volunteer their time. Application forms will be available online in April and will be due on June 1.

NOAH'S ARK PRESCHOOL & ECE CLASSES

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:9

The school year continues to unfold, and we are thankful for the time we share each day with the children entrusted to our care. Through play, learning, and daily interactions, students are growing in kindness, friendship, and an understanding of what it means to be peacemakers within their classroom community. During the winter months, children have enjoyed outdoor play in the snow as well as active indoor play in the Trinity Room, which has served as a welcoming gym space. These opportunities allow students to move, explore, and build large muscle skills while learning and playing together. Our Come and Play classes have also enjoyed using this space for active movement.

NOAH'S ARK REGISTRATION | 2026-2027

Registration is currently open for the 2026–2027 Noah's Ark Preschool school year. A limited number of spots remain. Information and registration opportunities for fall 2026 Early Childhood Enrichment classes, including Come and Play and Music and Movement, will be available this spring. For more information, contact **Kim Dewey at 715.832.6601 ext. 205.**

OPEN GYM

The Trinity Room is open to parents and their young children, from toddlers through preschool age, for supervised play in a safe and spacious environment. An Early Childhood teacher will be present to oversee the space, and a story will be offered during the final twenty minutes of each session. Pre-registration is not required, and all families are welcome.

Open Gym is held on Mondays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. and will continue weekly through March 23, with no Open Gym on March 2. Sessions take place in the Trinity Room. The cost is three dollars for one child and two dollars for each additional child from the same family.

Registration is available online through the Trinity website. For additional information, please contact Kim Dewey, Noah's Ark Preschool Director, at 715.832.6601 or kim@trinity-ec.org.

"SERVING IN CHRIST'S LOVE AND SHARING THE GOOD NEWS"

STAY CONNECTED

Find inspiration, updates, and ministry news on our Facebook pages:

- Trinity Lutheran Church
- Children, Youth, & Family Ministries
- Noah's Ark Preschool

CONTACT & LOCATION

- Phone: (715) 832.6601
- Website: trinity-ec.org
- Location: 1314 E Lexington Blvd
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Kelly Bruxvoort
Early Childhood Enrichment Teacher

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WORLD MISSIONS

Jabneh Christian Academy, Grange Hill, Jamaica
Blantyre Lutheran Parish, Malawi, Africa
Jacqueline & Patrick Bencke, Japan

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- All submissions must be your own work. Any copyrighted materials (code, images, or otherwise) must include written permission from the original source.
- Deadline for the Newsletter is the **15th of each month.**