



## Trinity Lutheran Church

Villa Park, IL

Always Growing in Christ

### The Lion's Roar

Amos 3:8

"The lion has roared; who will not fear?"

The Lord GOD has spoken; who can but prophesy?"

2 Corinthians 9:7

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

### Dinner at Taco Bell

One night last summer Danya and I were both working until late and the kids were home and we decided to pick something up for dinner. I was going past Taco Bell so I told her I would swing through the drive through. I was thinking something cheap for dinner. Dinner for five at Taco Bell was \$80. I nearly had a stroke in the drive through.

It got me thinking about how we spend money. In college, I worked at my student job for \$3.35 and hour. I was allowed 15 hours a week, so on a good week, after taxes, I brought home about \$40. It would have taken me two weeks to pay for my Taco Bell order! Now, I nonchalantly toss my credit card down and pay a fortune for practically anything I want. On the one hand, how blessed we are beyond so many people in this world. Most people in this world could never imagine pulling up to a building and ordering whatever their family wants to eat and not even checking to see what the cost is. On the other hand, I think our priorities easily go askew when we have so much more than we need.

Last November we had a congregational meeting in which you were informed by the Council that our giving was running somewhere around \$50,000 short of our spending. You chose to move forward without serious reductions and God provided in an amazing way. Not only did we make up the shortage but God provided a surplus of some \$22,000. Take a moment to wrap your mind around what God did. That is a huge swing! At that same meeting, we adopted a new spending guide for 2024. Remember that we work with a spending guide, not a budget because only God knows the resources with which we will have to work this year. Our spending guide for 2024 is close to the one we had for 2023 accounting for some increases in utilities and insurance. There were no increases in salaries which is our largest line item. Now we have about 130 families. If they were to give whatever they gave last year PLUS \$50 a month, that adds \$78,000 to the income. ( $50 \times 12 \times 130 = 78,000$ ). That means that we would not run short in September.

\$50 a month. That is less than one of my trips to Taco Bell. That is about 8 drinks from Starbucks. That is meatloaf instead of steaks once a month. Most of us spend close to \$50 at the gas pump every time we fill up. In today's economy, it is a very small sum but it makes a very large difference as we proclaim the Gospel in our community. Of course, there are a few who cannot afford even \$50 a month and so the Lord has blessed us with some who can afford much more than \$50 a month. He will make it all come out right in the end but what a joy it would be to get to that November meeting in 2024 and hear that we have more money than we need and so we get to give more away as a congregation!

We have a mission on this earth to make disciples. That means that what we do first and foremost is proclaim the love of Jesus to everyone within our sphere of influence. That is why we do everything that we do around here. Our music enhances worship. Our youth ministry seeks to speak the Gospel not only to our children but to all their friends and to the greater community. Our multiple Bible Studies seek to offer religious education many times during the week. There is nothing we do that is not aimed at proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As long as we are fulfilling our mission, God will take care of the finances. He does that by asking us to cheerfully give from what He has first given us. He will move you and empower you to give what is needed to accomplish the mission. We never have to worry about resources needed to accomplish the mission but oh what a joy it would be in November to have to form a committee to give away that surplus we have gathered.



# Holy Week Services

**Maundy Thursday**  
March 28 - 7 pm

**Good Friday**  
March 29  
Noon & 7 pm

**Easter Sunday**  
March 31  
8 & 10:30 am

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
**Villa Park IL**

## LENT SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday      March 24 @ 8 am and 10:30 am  
Maundy Thursday    March 28 @ 7 pm  
Good Friday      March 29 at noon and 7:00 p.m.  
Easter Sunday      March 31 @ 8 am and 10:30 am

### Easter Breakfast

9:00-10:30 a.m. There are 2 ways to enjoy Easter Breakfast!

In person or To-Go. Reservations are required by March 19th, for in person and pre-orders for pick up, please call the office, 630-834-3440 or email [margaret@trinityvp.com](mailto:margaret@trinityvp.com).

Payment will be taken at the door. \$10 per person, \$5 for kids 10 & under, under 3-Free.

### Easter Egg Hunt

THE EASTER EGG HUNT IS ON! Kids, please join us for an Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, March

31st at 10:00 am in the Courtyard. For kids up to age 9, with a separate area for kids 4 years & younger. In case of inclement weather, we'll move to the Trinity Center. Bring your basket or bag and join the fun!

## Stewardship Corner

Brothers & Sisters in Christ-

To be clear, don't let my words mislead you into thinking anything that Stewardship/financial committee members of this parish say will jeopardize Trinity's future. They don't. This message is not about numbers: it's about faith.

Last year we experienced an exceptional last month of tithing, allowing us to retroactively contribute to all of the missions, ministry, programs and outreach this wonderful family supports every single year. We like to think of the church as a business, but it's a family. If, for instance, my daughter happens to be down \$50k at the end of the year to support herself, we are going to collectively find a way to give her the money. Stewardship is just that. It's about the heart and not the money.

I can take that a step further. How would we know if something was off with someone in our family? I don't know about you, but I'm lucky to see my brother once a month and we live 15 minutes away from each other. In the church, it was traditionally noted by an empty space at the end of our church pew. If that went on for more than 1 week, you called them. We, as Christians, need to reclaim our Sunday mornings and take back the concept that eternity and everlasting life is more important than anything that will exist in this world.

When I first started my practice upon graduation from college, I struggled, especially financially. My father use to hold quite a few coins in this wooden box on top of his dresser. For what purpose I'm unsure, but this collection spilled over into a neighboring small velvet bag that sometimes had dollars in them. On days/weeks when I had no means to buy a meal for myself, I would stop over to the house and drop in a few quarters, and maybe even take a dollar or two out. This went on for months at a time during a period of several years. Putting my ego aside, I'm not certain if there were more proceeds just when I needed them, or if Dad knew I was struggling so he replenished accordingly and said nothing. Sometimes God lets us live through difficult circumstances to reinforce our trust in him, or He does his work through others in our families.

If you have never had a financial crisis in your life, it's hard to see how God will get you through. God needs to be the center of our lives and we need to completely trust in Him as there is no deficit that God won't take care of. Often God fixes stuff through other means that we never expected. I suppose that message is transcendent from our personal economics, health, faith or extended family relationships. We gain a great deal of wisdom when we are in the position where we have to ultimately put our trust in God.

Matt Thompson

## Sponsor-A-Bill

Plowing bills for January have totaled \$3,495.00. As you can, please consider donating to this expense, as your contributions in sponsoring our bills help keep our budget on track & reduce the need for end-of year pleas to meet the budget.

## Altar Flowers

Altar flowers are needed. Please clearly mark your envelope "Altar Flowers" with your donation of \$30.00.

## Worship Services

Saturdays 4:30 pm

Sundays 8 am & 10:30 am

## Save the Date

June 20 - Third Thursday

July 18 - Third Thursday

July 21-27 Summer Servant Event in North Carolina – Current 8-12 Graders

August 15 - Third Thursday