



*God's Not Stingy
With His Seed*

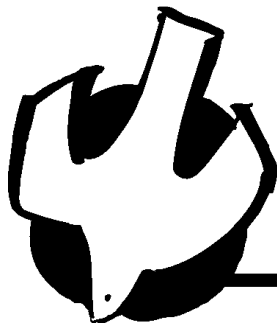
July 12, 2026

An Explanation of Our Communion Practice

Today we are celebrating the Lord's Supper, which is a wonderful gift from our gracious God. In his Word, God teaches that Christians need a proper understanding of the Lord's Supper before receiving it (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). He also tells us that Christians should be completely united before communing together (1 Corinthians 10:17). Therefore, we ask that only members of our fellowship (The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and, worldwide, The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference) commune at Trinity.

We do want everyone to commune with us. So that everything may be done decently and in good order (1 Corinthians 14:40), we ask for the opportunity to verify that we are united in our beliefs based on God's Word, and then to celebrate that unity publicly in the Sacrament. If you would like to learn more, please speak to Pastor. Thank you for your understanding of our belief and practice.





Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 2026

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship! In our service, we receive God's grace through his Word and sacraments. As he works to strengthen our faith in Jesus, we respond to his goodness with our prayers, praise, and offerings. We are glad to be here and glad that you have joined us today!

- Restrooms are located in the main hallway, narthex, and back classrooms.
- If you wish to step out of the service to calm your child, please feel welcome to use the Fellowship Hall or the Toddler Sunday School Room (located in the back-corner classroom of the building, connected to the Fellowship Hall). Both of these rooms have televisions showing the worship service. Also, please do not hesitate to ask an usher or any member if you need help locating anything. We want to make you feel welcome.

Serving the Lord and Serving Us: Pastor Michael Seifert

WE COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

MUSICAL INTRODUCTION

This is an opportunity to quiet your mind and heart and prepare for the joy of worshipping your God.

OPENING HYMN: 255, Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty



The musical score is written for a single melodic line in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music, each with corresponding lyrics underneath. The lyrics are arranged in five columns, with the first column containing five numbered lines (1-5) and the subsequent columns containing the main body of the hymn text. The music is a simple, hymn-like melody with a final double bar line at the end of the sixth staff.

1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty;
2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee;
3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant - ed;
4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick - en;
5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee;

Zi - on, let me en - ter there, Where my
Come thou al - so un - to me. Where we
Here thy seed is du - ly sown. Let my
Let me keep thy gift di - vine, How - so -
Let thy will be done in - deed. May I

soul in joy - ful du - ty Waits for him who
find thee and a - dore thee, There a heav'n on
soul, where it is plant - ed, Bring forth pre - cious
e'er temp - ta - tions thick - en; May thy Word still
un - dis - turbed draw near thee While thou dost thy

an - swers prayer. Oh, how bless - ed is this
earth must be. To my heart, oh, en - ter
sheaves a - lone, So that all I hear may
o'er me shine As my guid - ing star through
peo - ple feed. Here of life the foun - tain

place, Filled with sol - ace, light, and grace!
thou; Let it be thy tem - ple now!
be Fruit - ful un - to life in me.
life, As my com - fort in all strife.
flows; Here is balm for all our woes.

Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1672–1737, abr.; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Tune: UNSER HERRSCHER (87 87 77) Joachim Neander, 1650–80, alt.

Stand

INVOCATION

Minister: The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

LORD HAVE MERCY

Kyrie

M: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: Christ, have mercy.

M: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

(Continued on Next Page)

M: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:

C: Amen.

M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

O LORD, OUR LORD

C: O Lord, our Lord, how glo - rious is your name in
all the earth. Al - might - y God, mer - ci - ful Fa - ther,
you crown our life with your love. You take a - way our sin;
you com - fort our spir - it; you make us pure and
ho - ly in your sight. You did not spare your on - ly Son,
but gave him up for us all. O Lord, our Lord,
how glo - rious is your name in all the earth.

(Continued on Next Page)

O Son of God, e - ter - nal Word of the Fa - ther,
 you came to live with us; you made your Fa - ther known;
 you washed us from our sins in your own blood. You are the
 King of glo - ry; you are the Lord! O Lord, our Lord,
 how glo - rious is your name in all the earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your Word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy and to bring forth fruits in faith and hope and love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Be Seated

THE WORD

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 55:6-11

⁶ Seek the Lord while he may be found!

Call on him while he is near!

⁷ Let the wicked man abandon his way.

Let an evil man abandon his thoughts.

Let him turn to the Lord,

and he will show him mercy.

Let him turn to our God,

because he will abundantly pardon.

⁸ Certainly my plans are not your plans,
and your ways are not my ways, declares the Lord.

⁹ Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so my ways are higher than your ways,
and my plans are higher than your plans.

¹⁰ Just as the rain and the snow come down from the sky
and do not return there
unless they first water the earth, make it give birth, and cause it to sprout,
so that it gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

¹¹ in the same way my word that goes out from my mouth
will not return to me empty.

Rather, it will accomplish whatever I please,
and it will succeed in the purpose for which I sent it.

PSALM: 65

Refrain sung together, Psalm said responsively

Refrain



M: Praise awaits you, O God,

C: you call forth songs of joy.

M: You care for the land and water it;

C: you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

M: The streams of God are filled with water

C: to provide the people with grain.

Refrain

M: You crown the year with your bounty,

C: and your carts overflow with abundance.

M: The grasslands of the desert overflow;

C: the hills are clothed with gladness.

M: The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;

C: they shout for joy and sing.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son*

and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning,*

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain

Refrain Tune: Marty Haugen. © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago, IL, www.giamusic.com. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Second Lesson

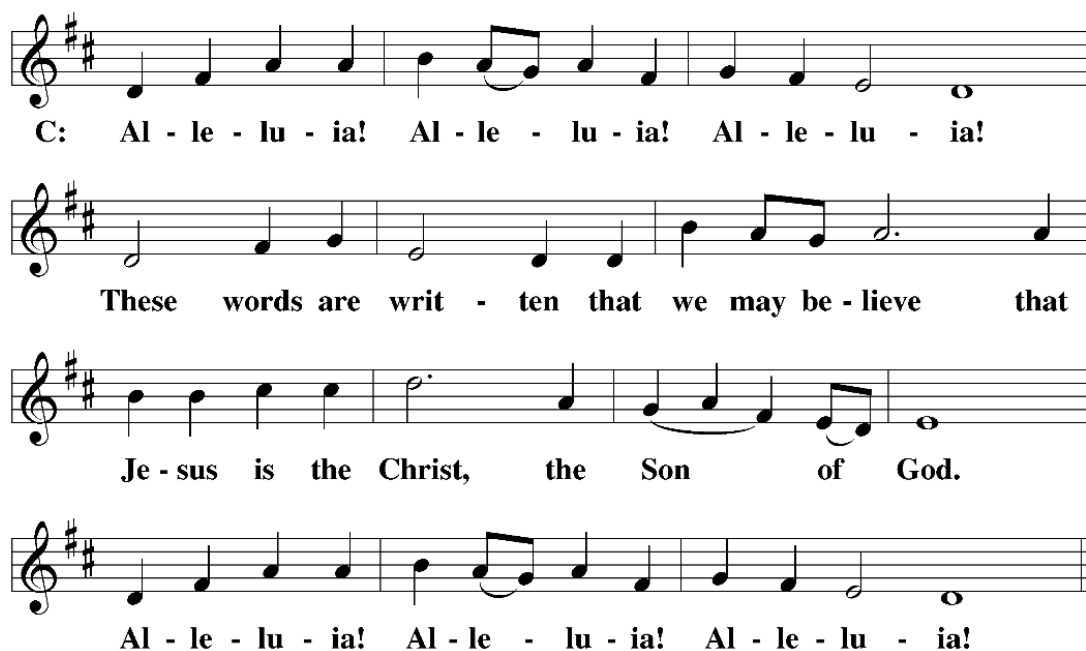
1 Corinthians 3:5-11

⁵What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are ministers through whom you believed, and each served as the Lord gave him his role. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷So then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but it is God who causes the growth. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters are united, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹For God is the one whom we serve as coworkers, and you are God's field, God's building.

¹⁰In keeping with the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder, I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. But let each person be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹In fact, no one can lay any other foundation than the one that has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.

VERSE OF THE DAY:

M: Alleluia. The Word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.
Alleluia. (*Deuteronomy 30:14*)



C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

These words are writ - ten that we may be - lieve that

Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Stand

GOSPEL AND SERMON TEXT

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

M: The Gospel of St Matthew, Chapter 13

C: Glory be to you, O Lord!

13 That same day Jesus left the house and was sitting by the sea. ²A large crowd gathered around him. So he stepped into a boat and sat down, while all the people stood on the shore. ³He told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen, a sower went out to sow. ⁴As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. Immediately the seed sprang up, because the soil was not deep. ⁶But when the sun rose, the seed was scorched. Because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked it. ⁸But some seed fell on good ground and produced grain: some one hundred times, some sixty, and some thirty times more than was sown. ⁹Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.”...

... ¹⁸“So listen carefully to the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the Evil One comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the seed that was sown along the path. ²⁰The seed that was sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹yet he is not deeply rooted and does not endure. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. ²²The seed that was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worry of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it produces no fruit. ²³But the seed that was sown on the good ground is the one who continues to hear and understand the word. Indeed he continues to produce fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times more than was sown.”

M: The Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be Seated

Hymn of The Day: 324, Almighty God, Your Word is Cast



1 Al - might - y God, your Word is cast Like
2 Let not the foe of Christ and man This
3 Let not the world's de - ceit - ful cares The
4 When - e'er the pre - cious seed is sown, Life -



seed in - to the ground; Now let the dew of
ho - ly seed re - move, But give it root in
ris - ing plant de - stroy, But let it yield a
giv - ing grace be - stow That all whose souls the



heav'n de - scend And right - eous fruits a - bound.
ev - 'ry heart To bring forth fruits of love.
hun - dred - fold The fruits of peace and joy.
truth re - ceive Its sav - ing pow'r may know.

Text: John Cawood, 1775–1852, abr., alt.

Tune: DUNDEE (CM) *The CL Psalms of David*, Edinburgh, 1615.

SERMON

Verse: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Theme: God's Not Stingy with His Seed

Stand

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and became fully human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

BE SEATED

OFFERING

Please take a moment to sign the friendship register found in your pew.

The members of Trinity make joyful offerings to support this church's ministry. A portion of our offerings is also used for the training of future pastors and teachers, and the worldwide mission work carried out by our fellowship, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Our guests are under no obligation to give, but any gifts freely given are welcome and will be put to work in service to God's kingdom.

Stand

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Eternal God and Father, we give you thanks for the blessings we share as members of your holy Church, for your gracious Word and sacraments, for opportunities to worship and to grow in faith and knowledge, for occasions to serve and be served, for fellowship with believers in our congregation and in our synod.

C: Help us to rejoice in these blessings, dear Lord, and to use them faithfully.

M: Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, you give grace to your people by calling us to be your witnesses in the world. Open our eyes to see the great and noble mission that lies before us. In the hurting eyes of the lonely, in the pained eyes of the sick, and in the searching eyes of the lost, help us to see your face, O Jesus, and to serve others as we would serve you.

C: Awaken us to the opportunities you give to proclaim your message of love.

M: Holy Spirit, giver of life, through Word and sacrament bestow on us the wisdom and power we need to witness clearly and to act boldly. Help us to speak the truth in love, to give the reason for the hope we have, and to conduct ourselves with gentleness and respect.

C: Set our hearts on fire as we work and witness for Christ.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we pray for a family member, an acquaintance, a neighbor, or a friend who does not believe in you, or whose faith is weak or troubled.

Silent prayer.

M: Bless the Church with men and women who are willing to proclaim your Word in places where we cannot go. Keep them and their loved ones in your care, and let nothing hinder their work. By the power of the gospel, restore their spirits each day, so that they do not lose heart as they serve us and others.

C: Move us to support them with our sincere prayers and generous offerings.

Special prayers.

M: Wherever your Word is proclaimed, O Lord, grant it success. Let your kingdom come to us and others, so that we and many more might join the assembly of saints and angels to sing your praise forever.

C: Savior of all, hear our prayer and help us in our mission. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he empowered his Church to be witnesses of Christ to the ends of the earth. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory forever and ever.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

You are my God, and I will ex - alt you.

I will give you thanks, for you have be - come my sal -

va - tion. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

The musical score is written on six staves in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are as follows: Staff 1: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Staff 2: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Staff 3: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Staff 4: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Staff 5: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Staff 6: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter).

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this (+) is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this (+) is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD

C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us your peace. A - men.

The musical score is written on five staves in C major, 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics printed below each staff. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature 'C:'. The lyrics are: 'O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us your peace. A - men.' The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some phrases ending in a half note or a whole note. The final staff ends with a double bar line.

Be Seated

DISTRIBUTION

Hymn: 310, I Come, O Savior, to Your Table (Verses 1-5)



1 I come, O Sav - ior, to your ta - ble, For weak and
2 Oh, grant that I in man - ner wor - thy May now trust
3 Un - wor - thy though I am, O Sav - ior, Be - cause I
4 Oh, let me loathe all sin for - ev - er As death and
5 Your heart is filled with fer - vent yearn - ing That sin - ners



wea - ry is my soul; O Je - sus, you a - lone are
sole - ly in your Word, And, con - scious of the sins be -
have a sin - ful heart, Yet you your lamb will ban - ish
poi - son to my soul, That I through will - ful sin - ning
may sal - va - tion see Who, Lord, to you in faith are

Refrain



a - ble To sat - is - fy and make me whole.
fore me, Look on - ly un - to you, O Lord.
nev - er, Nor will your faith - ful - ness de - part. Lord, may your
nev - er May see your judg - ment take its toll!
turn - ing; So let me, too, come trust - ing - ly.



bod - y and your blood Be for my soul the high - est good!

Stand

THANK THE LORD



C: Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-news his prom-is - es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia!

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: Amen.

Be Seated

Closing Hymn: 323, Almighty Father, Bless the Word



The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, using mostly quarter and half notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with two verses indicated by a '1' and '2' at the beginning of the first line.

1 Al - mighty - y Fa - ther, bless the Word Which through your
2 We praise you for the means of grace As home-ward

grace we now have heard. Oh, may the pre - cious seed
now our steps we trace. Grant, Lord, that we who wor -

take root, Spring up, and bear a - bun - dant fruit.
shipped here May all at last in heav'n ap - pear.

Text: Scandinavian hymn; tr. *The Lutheran Hymnary*, Decorah, 1913, alt.

Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH (LM) *Trente quatre Pseaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551.

Trinity Lutheran Church

12345 Cotton Mill Drive, Woodbridge, VA

Find us online at www.TrinityofWoodbridge.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/trinityofwoodbridge

Call Meeting TODAY: We'll have our call meeting today after service.

Christmas Program Director Needed Our Sunday school's annual Christmas program needs a new director! This would involve attending one planning meeting and leading rehearsals for half an hour every Sunday morning during November and early December. If you're interested, please chat with Rachel Kovaciny or email her at hamlettthedame@gmail.com

VBS Wish List Please see the bulletin board in the narthex for items that you could donate or loan for Vacation Bible School. Thanks for seeing how you can help out!

VBS Volunteer Training Meeting - July 22 There will be a training meeting for all VBS volunteers (teens and adults) who will be helping on-site the mornings of VBS. The training meeting is set for Wednesday, July 22 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at Trinity. Supper will be provided and starts before the meeting at 6. Questions: contact Erika at 617-821-3126 or erika.ohlendorf@gmail.com

Vacation Bible School Registration is OPEN. Registration is now open for this year's VBS, which will be held July 27-31 from 9:00-11:30 am. Come join us for Tropical Trek VBS and be guided by our Savior, Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life!. We look forward to sharing God's Word, singing songs, making crafts, playing games, and of course, having some awesome snacks together! VBS is for kids ages 4 to those entering 6th grade. Kids entering 7th grade and older may volunteer as helpers. Adult volunteers are needed as well! Please contact Erika Ohlendorf (erika.ohlendorf@gmail.com) with questions. Register your child here: <https://vbsmate.com/events/TrinityofWoodbridge/31882>



Wine and Word Bible Study – July 16th The Wine and Word Bible Study is **studying the book of EXODUS** and meets at the home of Bruce and Dawn Knox. Their home is located just 5 minutes from the church in Old Bridge Estates. We meet the 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 7-8:30 pm. Those who wish can bring a bottle of wine (or other drink of choice) and a small bite appetizer. Come and join us whether you drink wine or not! Contact Dawn at 703-615-9320 or dawn.f.knox@gmail.com to RSVP.

Trinity's Book Club invites you to join them at 9:30 am on Saturday, August 29, at Cuppi Coffee in Dumfries. We'll be discussing *The Sweet Life* by Suzanne Woods Fisher. Come enjoy coffee, snacks, and fun bookish conversation!

Volunteers Needed to provide snacks for our Sunday School and Fellowship Hour! If you're able to bless our community with simple treats, please sign up on the sheet posted on the Sunday School bulletin board located in the large fellowship and adult Sunday School room. Your contributions help make our time together even more welcoming and enjoyable—thank you for supporting our fellowship!

Ushers and Usher Assistants Needed A sign-up sheet is sent via email through Sign-up Genius. You are welcome to fill in as many Sundays as you are available. If you would like to become part of the regular rotation of ushers, or even just fill in once in a while when needed, please speak to Worship Elder Steven Douglas. If you have any questions or are not getting the emails for Sign-Up Genius, please email worship@trinityofwoodbridge.org. You can also scan this code to sign up:



Trinity's Little Free Library is one of our church's most effective tools for reaching out to our neighborhood. Many families in the area around Trinity regularly visit our LFL for books and shelf-stable food items, especially those who are experiencing food scarcity. Particularly useful are canned or boxed foods that do not require additional ingredients besides water to prepare. Books are always welcome, too, of course! If the shelves happen to be full, there is a donation bin for overflow items in the Fellowship Hall beside the door to the hallway.

Small Choir Trinity's choir sings about once a month during worship. Anyone is welcome to join! We'll sing hymns from our hymnal, Christian Worship. If you are interested in joining, please let Bev Ohlendorf know.

Lord's Supper Available to All Members If you are a confirmed member of Trinity, Pastor would be happy to commune you at home, or anywhere else you would like to meet. Just contact him with a date, time, and place, and he will make it work.



The World's Worst Excuse

<https://wels.net/family-devotion/fd20260629/>

He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?” “Do not be angry, my lord,” Aaron answered. “You know how prone these people are to evil. They said to me, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’ So I told them, ‘Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.’ Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!” Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, “Whoever is for the LORD, come to me.” And all the Levites rallied to him. Exodus 32:21-26

Have you ever been caught doing something wrong and tried to come up with an excuse really fast? Maybe a broken lamp. A missing cookie. A messy bedroom. Sometimes when we know we did something wrong, we try to think of a reason why it wasn’t really our fault.

Back when schoolwork was done in notebooks and worksheets, the excuse frequently made fun of was the silly, sad lie claiming, “My dog ate my homework.” Most people knew that excuse wasn’t true. But excuses aren’t just for homework. We all make excuses when we don’t want to admit we did something wrong.

When we are young, we may not realize just how wrong our excuses sound. As we age, maybe we get a little wiser in the ways of this sinful world, but still our excuses all fall flat. Because we have a sinful nature, we face a lifetime of struggle with our natural tendency to excuse or minimize our sins. “It wasn’t me. She started it.” “Everybody else was doing it.” “I didn’t mean to.”

How easily these excuses still come to us.

Consider what took place in Exodus 32. Moses came down the mountain with two stone tablets engraved by God himself. On them were written the Ten Commandments. God told Moses what the children of Israel had done while he was meeting with God. The children of Israel had made a golden calf and worshipped it as if the idol had led them out of Egypt.

That sin, like all our sin, is obvious to our all-knowing God. God had done so much for his people, so they would know he loved them and would protect them: the plagues, the Passover, the parting of the sea, a visible presence in cloud by day and fire by night. But still they built an idol and worshiped it. When caught in this sin, how does Aaron, the brother of Moses respond? He blamed others. He minimized the sin and came up with the sad, silly lie: “I threw it in the fire and out came this calf!”

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Can you imagine that? Aaron wanted Moses to believe that he tossed some gold into a fire and—poof!—a golden calf just appeared all by itself. It was a pretty ridiculous excuse.

Moses knew from his own life how dangerous it is to make excuses and minimize sin. When the people sinned—and when we sin—God didn't stop being their God. Instead of answering our excuses, God, in love, gave us the only answer for our sin. God used Moses to call them back. God had promised the people the perfect substitute who would shed his blood so God's people would go free. Jesus came to be the only answer for our sin. He is our sinless sacrifice. We don't need excuses, but honesty. Confess our sins and hear God's forgiveness for us in Jesus. Share it and speak it to one another.

No excuses, just honesty from our holy and loving God.

Questions to Consider:

- When is the last time you heard the words, "I forgive you"?
- When is the last time you said the words, "I forgive you"?
- Why can it sometimes be hard to say, "I was wrong" or "I'm sorry"? What are some of the ways we are reminded of God's forgiveness in our worship service?
- Is the fact that God knows all things about us sometimes scary, sometimes comforting, or both? Why?
- Can you recall and talk about with the whole family when being honest and admitting fault right away would have been far better than making excuses?
- God had shown his love in vivid ways to the children of Israel. What are some of the ways you know God has shown his love to you that you can be sure of God's forgiveness?

It is the mission of



to glorify God

by growing in His Word and by going with His Word

to Woodbridge and to the world.



Trinity Lutheran Church is part of a group of nearly 1,300 churches called the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod or WELS. The WELS is a world-wide church with congregations serving in all fifty of the United States, as well as in Mexico and Canada. The WELS also serves over 26 foreign countries through world mission work. We are united in faith and teaching with the other churches of the WELS as well as the members of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, consisting of 21 confessional Lutheran church bodies throughout the world.