

My faith is a house. (That's the metaphor for this column.) My faith is a house.

I've lived in this house my whole life. I was born in it. I learned to crawl and walk and talk in it. I know it from the views from the carpet up to my perspectives on it right now from 6 ft tall. I have my favorite rooms. I have my favorite pastimes. I have siblings and cousins and guests in my house.

In fact, my parents lived in this house. And their parents lived in this house. The past several generations lived in this house. I don't know exactly when this house was built. But I know that they took pride in this house being well-built. And I know that they would be proud to know that generations later, the house is still standing and sheltering their descendants.

But now the water softener is leaking. (A hypothetical metaphor). What do I do to fix it? Do I know what to do?

Or maybe I'd like to rewire the old electrical because eventually it wears out and needs to be updated. Would I know where to go for such things?

This metaphor - my faith is a house - takes me far. Whenever I start a Bible study series and am doing some introductions to our goals together, I usually tap this metaphor. Because for many people, they are living in their parent's house. They own it. It functions perfectly well for their needs. For the lucky ones, they go through much, if not all, of their life with no major fixes needed. But we are human, after all. And odds are that someday, something in this house will fail on us, and repairs will need to be made.

And that's okay. It happens. For me, speaking now about real houses, there's a light switch in the hall in my house that needs to be fixed. As I am now, I am still very inexperienced and intimidated by the thought of handling electrical work myself, so I will probably have someone else do it who knows their stuff, either a friend or a professional, but someone who knows what they're doing. Once I watch them, I might catch on. I might start doing some studying myself. I might be comfortable to start working on my own. And... I might gain confidence and realize that I'm fully capable. I might buy some tools. I might build a shelf. I might really enjoy working on my house and taking ownership over how my house works and knowing where things are at and where the studs in the walls are and how this wall got knocked out back in the day and they had to put up a support beam to keep the house up and all of these interesting details that help me understand my house more.

Is it a requirement that I have that level of understanding in order to live in my house? Of course not. Many people live in houses who do not understand how they work. But it sure comes in handy. It sure helps to know when something is wrong and how to address the issue.

Now... back to the metaphorical... my faith is a house...

I observe that for many of us, we are in fact living in the house that was built by our ancestors generations ago. Many families have come and gone that have carried our faith and delivered it to us. Many of us were raised in that faith, that house. It is now our faith, our house to live in. But how well do we really know it? Or do we just know that it works and does what it is supposed to do?

Here's why I love doing Bible study with groups:

I feel like in studying the Bible, we are watching our house being built. We are not the ones with the floor plan. We are not the ones running the backhoe. The crafting and the construction are God's responsibility after all. But God might hand us a hammer and say, "Wanna help?" That's the level of ownership that totally excites me.

I feel like, in studying the Bible, we see the foundation being poured for our house. We know what our house, our faith, looks like and feels like to actually live in, but to see the foundation being poured for it, it gives us a new understanding of how it began, the size of it, the place it occupies in the world around it. That's the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. I call that the foundation.

I feel like, in studying the Bible, we're watching the framing of the house. We're seeing what's inside the walls, what's holding up the entire structure, what's housing the wiring, the insulation, the studs. We can see the size of the rooms, how much space they can hold when they're finished. We start to identify the function of certain rooms versus others, the kitchen, the living room, the bathroom, the bedroom. That's the Writings, the story of the Kingdom of Israel and Judah, how they rose and how they fell and why they did both. I call that the frame.

I feel like, in studying the Bible, we're working on the drywall. (Disclaimer - I don't enjoy working on drywall. I think it's boring. I think it's dusty. Do I have a lot of experience there? No.). That's the prophets. They're confusing, frustrating, repetitive, and a bit of a chore to get through in many cases. But they are a defining element in our faith. We need them. I call that the drywall.

I feel like, in studying the Bible, when we finally get to Jesus, the gospels, now our house is built, and now we do the exciting work of moving in. Jesus and his story is familiar to us. It is our actual LIVING in the house. It's the payoff of all the work that has been done in the building and the construction. I call that the living.

I feel like, in studying the Bible, we're installing the curtains, hanging the pictures on the walls, putting the silverware into the drawers. We're making our house a home. That's the letters in the New Testament. They take the work that has been done in the building of the house and they give us furniture to sit in. The New Testament is a commentary on what life in this house looks like and how to best live in it. I call that the furnishings.

As a Pastor, metaphorically, I am a general contractor, someone who is studied and practiced with all the skills necessary to work on a house like this. I know the insides of this house. And what I love most of all is leading people through a tour of their house, the house they've lived in their whole life, and showing them how it's working, helping them to take ownership in new ways and appreciate how their house is built.

I feel like that is when a house becomes a home. When our faith is functioning well, God is dwelling within us, and we are living our lives through God's grace. We have a home base for living our lives. We have a shelter to weather the storms of life.

You're invited. To know your house better.

I regret that for many people, their experience of Bible study has not been life-giving. The church has not always known what to do with the Bible, strangely enough. But this approach has given life to many people. I have the privilege of being a guide in this way. You're invited to look again at your Bible and get to know your house better. Join us.

Peace,
Pastor Panning

Trinity Lutheran Church Minutes

April 15, 2020

I. Call to order

Chairperson, Tim Garrison called to order the regular meeting of the Trinity Lutheran Church Council on April 15, 2020 via online streaming due to the Covid virus.. Members in attendance were Tim Garrison, Adam Wollenburg, Brian Smidt, Lana Hager, Cindy Wollenburg, Jane Stokebrand, Chuck Holtmeier, Larry Pieper, Arlyn Parde and Pastor Panning. Pastors Panning led the group in devotions.

Reports

- a) Secretary's Report: A copy of the March minutes was reviewed. There was a motion by Cindy and a second by Arlyn to approve the minutes. Motion carried.
- b) Treasurer's Report: A copy of the monthly treasurer's report indicated a balance of \$32,654.23.
- c) Investments Report: The current balance is \$39,540.57.
- d) Memorial Report: Brian Smidt reported a balance of \$18,179.09.
- e) Suggestion Box: None.
- f) Committee Reports
- g) Pastor's Report: See included.
 - 1. Spiritual Life and Growth
 - a) Social Committee: Nothing new to report.
 - b) Worship Committee: Joint services for Trinity Lutheran and First Lutheran are being held via live streaming due to Covid 19 virus.
 - c) An online Bible Study is being considered.
 - c) Evangelical/ Stewardship: Nothing new to report.
 - 2. Youth Development
 - a) Parish Ed/VBS: Jane Stokebrand reported Bible School has been tabled, as of now, due to Covid 19 virus. One confirmation class was held to date via live streaming with 3 students able to attend. First Communion has been postponed due to Covid 19 virus.
 - b) Youth Group Committee: Nothing new to report.
 - c) Confirmation: Pastor Panning reported that the confirmation class has resumed via live streaming.
 - 3. Care, Management and Overview
 - a) Property: Arlyn reported that Chuck has hauled in dirt to fill in the ruts in the church lawn caused by the vehicle needed to repair the bell tower. Arlyn will look into prices for lawn service for the church. Darcy Baker is continuing to work on cleaning the parsonage. Church clean up day is postponed until further notice. Arlyn has cleaned the parsonage garage, fixed the lock on the parsonage, and installed a new toilet paper dispenser in the parsonage. Due to lack of use there has been some, back up of sewer gas in the church. It is recommended to routinely flush the toilets and run water down the floor drain to diminish this problem.

II. Old Business :

- 1. Constitutional Update: The latest update to the constitution of Trinity Lutheran Church in DeWitt was approved by the Nebraska Synod at the March meeting.

III. New Business:

1. Consideration of purchasing additional chairs for the fellowship hall is being tabled.
2. The Call Committee has received the paper copies of the Congregational Survey, but the survey continues to be available on line. Arlyn reported that committee is expected to call a zoom meeting sometime soon.
3. Sunday services will continue to be streamed online until it is safe to gather in the respective churches. There was a suggestion by Adam to investigate the purchase of a camera and microphone to enhance the online services. The expected cost would probably be less than \$500. Jane will follow up with the Roy and Peggy Scherling family to see how streaming is working for them.

The chairman, Tim, adjourned the meeting. In conclusion, Pastor Panning led the group in praying the Lord's Prayer..

Reminders: None

Respectfully submitted,

Church Council Secretary, Jane Stokebrand

Treasurer's Report April 30, 2020			
	Bank Balance as of 03/31/20		\$32,654.23
		<u>Income</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>
	Offering	\$6,335.80	
	Other Deposits	\$1.26	
	Total Income		\$6,337.06
		<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>
01-00	Pastor Salary	\$1,875.00	
01-01	Financial Secretary Salary	\$206.24	
01-02	Secretary Salary	\$392.51	\$392.51
01-04	Custodial Salary	\$490.62	
01-05	Payroll Taxes	\$651.52	\$651.52
02-00	Mileage	\$288.19	
02-03	Culligan	\$50.00	
02-06	Pastor Housing	\$562.50	
02-07	Pastor Social Security	\$186.47	
02-08	Pastor Portico	\$390.97	
02-09	Pastor Health/Dental/Vision	\$316.83	
04-03	Copies from Copy Machine	\$151.34	
04-04	Office Equipment	\$136.57	
05-00	Village Utilities Church	\$181.04	
05-01	Village Utilities Parsonage	\$104.12	
05-02	Natural Gas Church	\$487.73	
05-03	Natural Gas Parsonage	\$57.88	
06-04	Vanco E-giving Fees	\$53.60	
08-00	Telephone Church	\$175.48	
09-06	Worship	\$8.02	
09-07	Professional Expenses	\$5.27	
11-00	Church Maintenance	\$46.81	
11-03	Lawn and Landscape	\$112.00	
	Total Expenses		\$6,930.71
	Previous Months Checks that Cleared		\$3,490.19
	Available Cash as of 04/30/20		\$28,570.39
	Outstanding Checks		\$1,044.03
	Reconciled to Balance on Bank Statement 04/30/20		\$29,614.42
		<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>
	Other Accounts:		<u>Account Balance</u>
	Benevolence (Savings Account)	\$175.00	\$0.00
	Capital Improvement Fund (Savings Account)	\$10.00	\$0.00
	ICVF Grant Funds Deposited 9/1/19 TLC General fund		
09-00	Care-A-Lot		\$0.00
09-02	Confirmation (Mentor)		\$0.00
09-02	Confirmation (Liz)		\$0.00
			\$0.00



Worship Committee will meet... TBD

WELCA board will meet... TBD

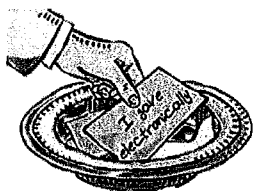
Hope Circle will meet... TBD

Church Council will meet...TBD

Shalom Circle will meet... TBD



All members of the Congregation will be asked to remember the home bound and those in need of visitation during your month assigned. Service List Leaders and Circle Chairperson are responsible for contacting facilities to set up visitation dates and/or times for playing bingo or other planned activities. **June – Service Group 4**



**ELECTRONIC
GIVING**

Just as you rely upon receiving income on a regular basis, Trinity Lutheran relies on your regular contributions. Trinity Lutheran appreciates the efforts of congregation members to make consistent donations throughout the year. To assist you, the church provides a convenient electronic giving option for setting up regular contributions. To donate, visit the church website at www.trinitylutherandewitt.com, locate the link to our online giving page and follow the instructions.



Date	Attendance	General Offering	Benevolence Offering	Property Offering	E-giving Offering
4/26	-	\$1035.00	-	-	-
5/3	-	\$2425.00	\$125.00	\$5.00	\$598.82
5/10	-	\$640.00	-	\$5.00	\$930.60
5/17	-	\$795.00	\$10.00	-	\$382.82
5/24	-	\$246.00	-	-	\$737.68



PASTOR TRAVIS PANNING

Trinity/DeWitt: 683-3225

First/Wilber: 821-2846

Cell Phone: 239-5291

Email: pastorpanning@gmail.com

OFFICE HOURS:

Wednesday/Friday 9am-12noon at Trinity/DeWitt

Thursday/Saturday 2pm-5pm at First/Wilber

SECRETARY - JENN UHER

Church: 683-3225

Email: tlcdewitt209@gmail.com

Cell: 402-245-8198

OFFICE HOURS

Monday 5pm-6:30pm

Wednesday 10am-12noon

(Updated Hours will be posted on Office Door)

JUNE 2020

<u>SUNDAY</u>	<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>
	1 Brent Rahe	2 Bonnie Jo Schuerman	3	4	5 Keyton Reck Leah Thomsen	6 Kenni Woerner
7	8 Dee Schuerman	9 Cara Heller	10 Sloane Holtmeier Brian Schmidt	11 Linda Schuerman	12	13 Susan Miller
14 Gordon Schuerman	15	15 Delva Smith	16	17 Joel Kaelin	18 Steve Garrison	19
20	21 Bev Plihal	22 Brandon Johnson	23 Karen Schmidt	24 Dennis Rahe Larry Wattjes	25 Drey Heller Matt Sobotka	25
26	27 Lyle Dunn Wanda Jahnke	28	28 Eunice Mahloch	29 Matt Uher	30 Judy Hatcliff Easton Thomsen Monroe Thomsen	

PLEASE KEEP Brian & Mandy Smidt and family as they grieve their loss, Don Wollenburg, Brian Stokebrand & Family, Roman Dunn (great grandson of Jan & Alan Dunn), Jim Burger, Jack Garrison, and Tina Groathouse in your prayers.

Trinity Members -

At our last council meeting it was decided to keep doing the services the same as we have been with drive in and Zoom services at least until we have our next council meeting which will be June 17th and then make a decision on the next month. First Lutheran in Wilber asked if we would host for the time being until they find a place to have Sunday services. So, for now we will have them at Trinity in DeWitt starting at 9:30. If Wilber wants to hold their own service, we will inform everyone of the new schedule. Also, this Sunday we will be having communion, we purchased individually packaged wafers and juice cups that we will pass out as you arrive, and Pastor Panning will conduct communion. – Tim Garrison, Council Chairman

Worship Services will continue to be "Live Stream" in addition to Drive in Services ...

Pastor Panning will start the Live Stream about 15 minutes early as to allow people time to "come in and sit down." The stream can be found on Facebook on either the First Lutheran or Trinity Lutheran pages or You can join on Zoom... This is a recurring meeting, Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/5131704161>, Meeting ID: 513 170 4161... Password: 961555

ZOOM Bible studies on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Same meeting ID and password as Sunday worship.

The job openings for Financial Secretary/Secretary will close on June 1. The job descriptions can be found on our website or facebook page. If you are interested in either of these positions, please contact Tim Garrison.

The June Calendar and June Service Leaders are NOT included in the newsletter as all Services are Drive in and Live Stream for now. Questions? Contact Pastor Panning, Tim Garrison or Jenn Uher or check our Facebook page or Website for further details.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY TBD

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY TBD

PLEASE CONSIDER USING E-GIVING as we still need everyone's financial support to pay our monthly bills. If you require assistance in setting this up, please talk to Pastor Panning. Go to www.trinitylutherandewitt.com, and click the green OFFERING button and follow the instructions.

Hope Circle – No Report

Lutheran Men in Mission – No Report

Shalom Circle – No report

WELCA – No Report

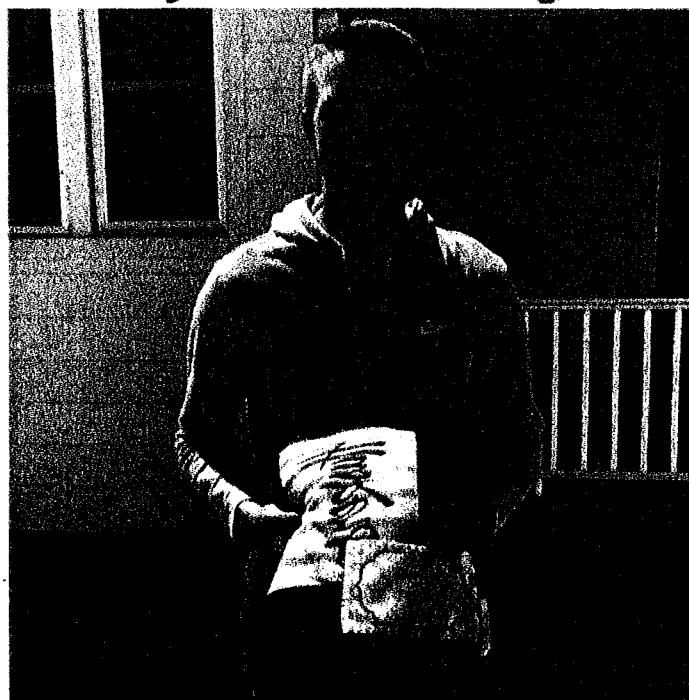
Trinity Lutheran Church 2020 Seniors with their blankets made by Shalom Circle.
The fleece was purchased using Thrivent Choice Dollars. Congratulations and
God's Blessings always to Dominic, Jordan Krayten and Madison!



Jordan Muehling



Dominic Smith



Krayten Uher



Madison Kirchoff

KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS...

SERVICEMEN

SSG – Brock Johnson

Deployment Address:

Darin Bartlett

332 AEW/ECS

Unit 61804

APO AE 09321

Darin Bartlett Family

209 W. 6th

Knob Noster, MO 65336

Bartlett_Riley@yahoo.com

(Mary Garrison's Son)

Please continue to keep these members in your prayers:

Janice Buhr

Villa at Flowing Springs

2211 Sunset Dr. #225

Beatrice, NE 68310

Beryl Beerenstrauch

Clark Jeary

8401 S. 33rd Street, Apt. 320

Lincoln, NE 68516

Eileen Damkroger

103 N Juniper

DeWitt, NE 68341

Herb Rehm

Wilber Care Center

611 N Main

Wilber, NE 68465

Richard Wollenburg

Heritage Crossings

501 N 13th St.

Geneva, NE 68361