

“Open 24 Hours a Day”

Pastor David Eisenhuth

“Open 24 hours a day” is a sign that is commonplace these days. One can shop at Walmart, eat at a diner, and get gas all at 3 a.m. Since I am usually fast asleep at that time I am not sure who actually is at Walmart so early in the morning. I have thought of getting up to investigate, but the call of my pillow has been all too strong. Don’t count on meeting me at the produce section of our 24/7 supermarket any time soon before noon.

I was ordained in June of 1981. My first call was to Zion Lutheran Church, in Frackville, Pennsylvania. Frackville is yet today a small town. It being 1981, the idea of businesses staying open 24 hours a day was unheard of. Even the Dutch Kitchen closed at 11 p.m. Several people at Trinity who have traveled I-81 towards the Poconos or New York State told me they have eaten at this diner. It opened very early in the morning but at 11 o’clock, hangers-on were encouraged none too subtly to finish their coffee and go home. By midnight, the town was quiet.

One business, however, did stay open through the night. That was the Hess gas station at the corner of Main Street and Center Avenue, the intersection at the very heart of town. Zion’s parsonage was just a block away from the gas station, but direct view of it was blocked by several buildings. My bathroom window looked at in the general direction of the service station and I could see the illumination of florescent lights shining brightly even in the middle of the night. Whether it was a clear night, foggy, rainy, or snowy those florescent lights broke the darkness of the night sky.

I took comfort in knowing that something was alive and stirring not too far from my house. I particularly remember one night after I returned from the hospital offering comfort to a family that had been in a bad accident. I looked out the bathroom window toward the gas station and had a sense of God’s presence shining even in the midst of the darkness I had just encountered. It was a clear night and the brightness of the station lights gave an otherworldly glow to the sky.

I wonder if the Magi on their way to see the infant Jesus felt the same way. While we don’t know very much about them—the Bible does not even give their number—



we know the Christmas star played an important part in their story. Its appearance in the sky intrigued them. They may have been astrologers studying the stars and planets. They could have been interested in astrology, trying to interpret heavenly signs in relation to earth events. Maybe they were both. Whatever the case, the star sent them on a journey.

We don’t know where they came from, except scripture tells us they were from the East. It might have been as close as Persia or as distant as India or even China! Imagine, however, the difficulties they faced. They traversed unknown areas. They had to barter for provisions. The food was probably bad. Their campsites were often rudimentary. But most distressing of all was not knowing the destination. I cannot imagine leaving my home not knowing where I am going or how long I will be away.

Certainly doubt must have filled their minds at times. They may even have had a few arguments along the way. But the sole constant in their journey was a bright light that led the way. In their greatest moments of distress, that light shone out and guided them to the infant Jesus and his family.

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Update: Order of Saint Stephen Deacon

Peg Hardinge, Candidate OSSD

I want to take a moment to bring the congregation up to speed with my Order of Saint Stephen Deacon (OSSD) studies. Last week, Inge Dudda and I finished the Old Testament class that ran since September. While Inge has a few more classes until she completes her OSSD class requirements, I have only one class left: the New Testament, which begins January 8 and goes until the end of March. Folks, I have learned so much and the Bible's excitement and wonder have just burst afresh for me, again. It has been amazing how these classes have opened my eyes and helped me to make sense of things I thought I already knew. The Holy Spirit is completely responsible for that and I am beyond grateful.

If there are others interested in taking these classes to become a Lutheran deacon, just let me know and we can sit down and chat about what is involved. The requirements are manageable and a deacon can perform duties that are naturally a part of your wheelhouse or you can stretch yourself a bit and try adding some new skills and responsibilities. The activities you and Pastor Dave select will be up to you to choose. It's all good!

Lastly, I am asking for the congregation's prayerful support of both Inge and me. I also ask that you enter Saturday, May 5, 3 p.m. on your 2018 calendar. That will be the very first "Setting-Apart" ceremony/service held at Trinity, and Bishop Gohl will be presiding. It promises to be a wonderful afternoon and we will also share a fellowship meal afterward. There will be another candidate from Frederick who will be set-apart along with me. However, I will be the only Lutheran deacon west of the Blue Ridge Mountains until Inge joins me.

What does this mean for both me, personally and us, at Trinity? After the completion of all my classes, Bishop Gohl will interview me to get a feel for my preferences and personal skill set. At that time, Bishop Gohl and I will determine how I am best equipped to meet the needs of both the Synod and this, or another, congregation. If the Bishop and I mutually agree I am capable of filling in for pastors, as needed, the Bishop can call me to cover for a pastor who has vacated his or her pulpit for any reason: illness, retirement, passing, *et cetera*, anywhere in Western Maryland. We will also be able to officiate weddings, funerals, baptisms, and special events as our present pastor desires or has need.

After Bishop Gohl's recommendation and Trinity's presiding pastor determines if he/she desires to oversee a deacon, I must apply to the Church Council to serve, and it is up to the council whether or not they will issue a call to me. If the council does not desire to have a volunteer

deacon, I will be free to seek to serve elsewhere. Likewise, every time Trinity changes pastors, I must resign as deacon and reapply after a new interim or pastor comes on board. To maintain my status as OSSD, I must take responsibility for my requirements of continuing education.

Most frequently deacons are put to use within their own congregation doing whatever needs to be done from communion assistant to teaching, cleaning, paperwork, visitation, special programs . . . you name it. Some candidate deacons do not like being in front of people and speaking but they love to do home visitations. So, perhaps that, alone, would be what the bishop will approve for that person to do and nothing more. We are simply willing volunteers of our personal skills.

I chose to become a deacon so that I would have the skills and knowledge to do more. I desire to deliver messages whenever the need arises, officiate at weddings, funerals, *et cetera*, and to enhance my abilities to become certified as a chaplain one day. I am to the point of retirement and refuse to be staring at a future filled with nothing but game show TV! I have been looking forward to the years when I can make church my home away from home and I am entering the time of my life!

Just know this: deacons exist for the needs of our congregations, for sure, but also for the Synod and the greater church beyond these walls. Everything we do is from the heart and with tremendous love for our Lord and Savior.

Social Ministry News

Carol Brashears

Thanks to all who donated to our Christmas project at North Point Veterans' Home.

If you received a new coat for Christmas, or just realized that you have coats in your closet you are not wearing, please consider donating them to the Clothing Bank.

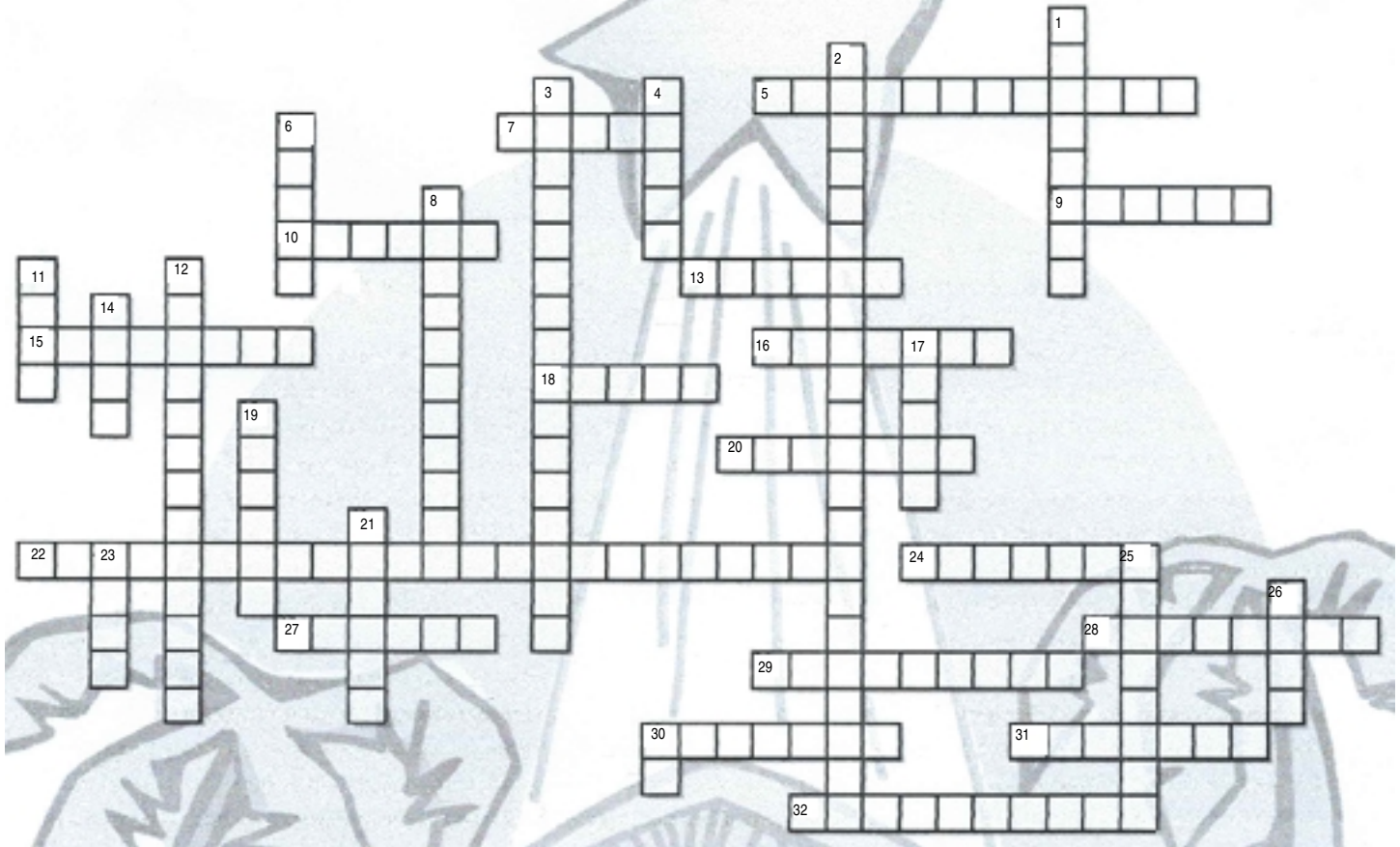
Social Ministry meets the first Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m. in the Parlor. We welcome those interested in our outreach programs to attend. Please note that we will be meeting Wednesday, January 10 (not January 3) to start the new year.



Crossword from TLC Outreach

June Habeck, TLC Outreach Ministry

Answers appear on page 4.



ACROSS

- 5 Where guests of TLC Outreach Ministry acquire coats, socks, and underwear (2 words)
- 7 1st name of one who transports and carries food to TLC Thursdays
- 9 One who helps Outreach Ministry in many and various ways (staff member's last name)
- 10 Pastor who responded to Gods' call, "Here I am Lord, send me." (last name)
- 13 One who transports and carries food to TLC on Wednesdays
- 15 The original stores that donated food weekly to TLC (two words)
- 16 Technology used by Food Pantry to observe when guests arrive in the waiting room
- 18 Man who donates stacks of unused plastic bags weekly (1st name)
- 20 One who works with the Clothing Bank teams Tuesdays and Thursday (Nancy's last name)
- 22 Business that issues Food Bank cards (3 words)
- 24 One who transports and carries food to TLC on Tuesdays (Mike's last name)
- 27 Who said, "Here I stand; I can do no other"? (last name)
- 28 Means "God with us"
- 29 Our new spiritual leader (last name)
- 30 Local wild kill that is a favorite meat choice for our guests
- 31 Is used for ID when a guest has no Food Bank card

- 32 The day when Jean Price, Dorinda Roof, and Kirklyn Kline work

DOWN

- 1 Works at the TLC Food Pantry by herself on Wednesdays (Judy's last name)
- 2 A facility near TLC that we support with food and gifts
- 3 State business that provides food for TLC Food Pantry (3 words)
- 4 Organizer and director/conductor of Hagerstown Choral Arts
- 6 Pastor Bettye called Outreach guests TLC's ____ congregation
- 8 God's gift to you and me at Christmas (2 words)
- 11 Supervisor of the TLC Outreach teams
- 12 Soul food for the faithful (2 words)
- 14 The ____ became flesh and dwelt among us
- 17 The TLC Food Pantry and Clothing Bank have been operating for nearly ____ decades
- 19 First action taken by guests at entering TLC (2 words)
- 21 Works in the Food Pantry with June Habeck on Thursdays (1st name)
- 23 One food at the TLC Food Pantry for which guests have a choice
- 25 Guests who have no refrigeration or means to cook
- 26 First name of a worker at the TLC Clothing Bank on Thursdays and the TLC Food Pantry on Tuesdays (last name is Purdham)
- 30 Works in the TLC Clothing Bank on Tuesdays with Barb Shearer, Eileen Andrews, and Nancy Krueger (1st name)

Volunteers Sought for Altar Guild

Inge Dudda and Sharon Michael

If you are looking for a way to help your church, but only have two hours (at most) on a weekend, please consider serving on the Altar Guild. Saturdays involve setting up for Sunday morning service including preparing communion and changing paraments (altar ornaments) when necessary. On Sunday mornings after service, we wash and store the vessels. Teams rotate weekly, so the commitment is only one weekend per month. We can work with your schedule based on your availability!

What a way to praise the Lord by fulfilling one of the most important duties—preparing God’s house for worship!

If you are interested in volunteering or in learning more, please contact Inge Dudda at (301)790-4995 or Sharon Michael at (301)730-9588.



Please Call Us If You Need Us!

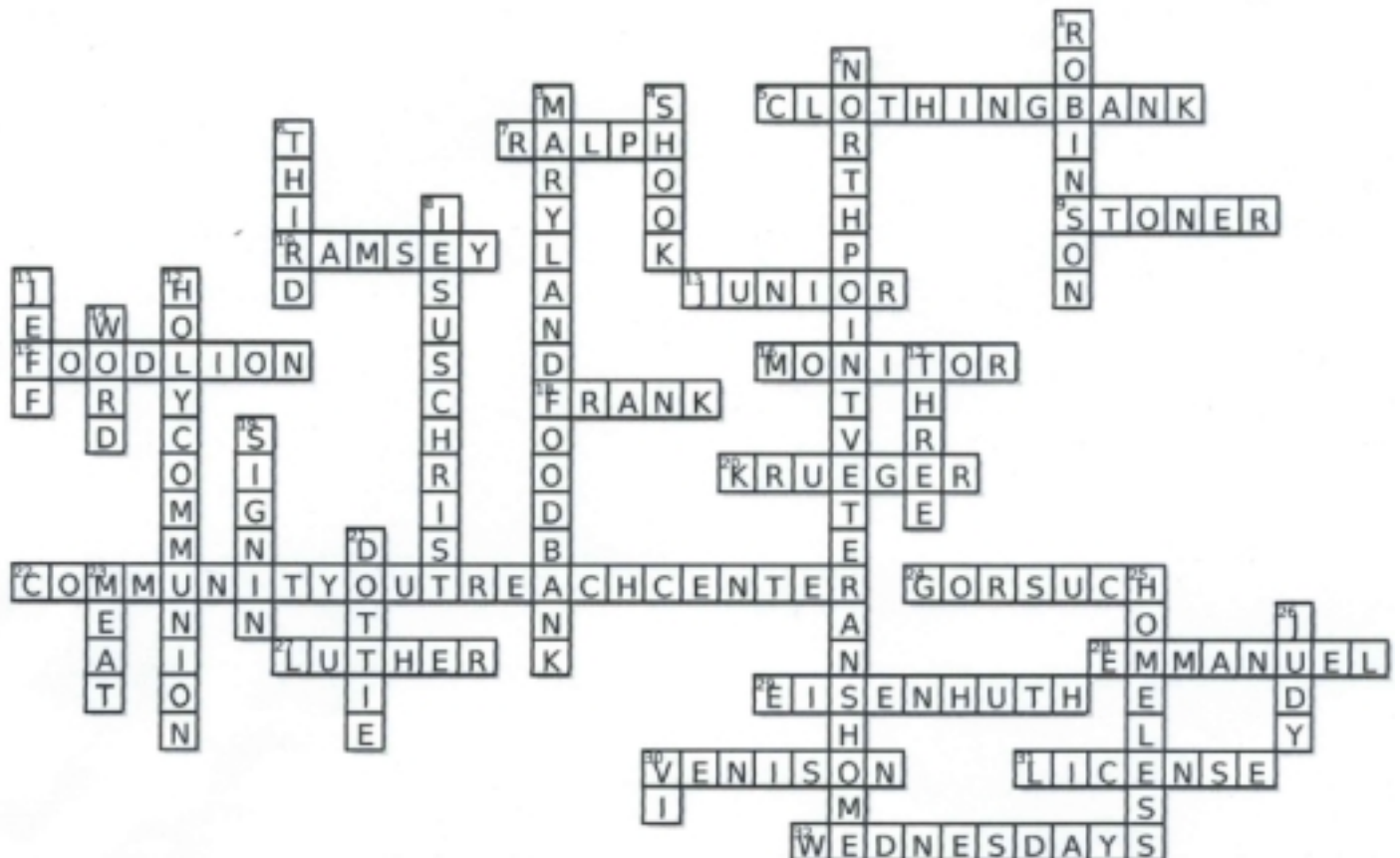
If you have a caregiving emergency, please call Pastor Greg or Pastor David on their cell phones. It’s okay to leave a message on the office phone—(301)733-2878—but should you have an immediate need, cell phones are the best way to contact them.

Pastor Greg’s cell is (301) 992-1305.

Pastor David’s cell is (410) 487-3960.

It’s okay to leave messages there, as they will be heard and addressed sooner. Thank you!

Answers to the Crossword





Continued from page 1

Light is a central theme of the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany cycle. The prophets predicted the coming of a great leader who would shine in the darkness of the world. Light shines over the Christmas crib. And we have that star guiding the Magi. Christmas is not meant to be a one-day-of-the-year event. We take the light with us and try to keep its light burning brightly.

One of the high points of Christmas Eve worship for me is watching the individual candles being lit. The flame starts at the Christmas Candle and is shared through the congregation until the church glows with that tender light. From one person to another, the small flame grows and grows. It is a reminder that Jesus shines forth in whatever circumstances we might find ourselves. It was the custom at one time to try to take the lit candle home. However, I doubt that worked very well. Now we extinguish them. But once kindled, the light cannot really be put out because it burns in our hearts with the knowledge that God has come in Jesus, our Christ.

On a personal note, I would like to tell you that I feel very welcome at Trinity Lutheran Church. From the staff to our leaders to all the people in the pews, I have a real sense that God has put us together for some great purpose. It remains for us to discern God's will. But as I said, we have a great light which will illuminate our journey together. That light is Jesus himself.

—Pastor David



* Under 10 years

** Over 75 years

- 1 Trudy Fox**
- 2 Julie Hammond
Andrew Higgins
- 3 Cinda Toms
- 4 Helen Ridenour**
Jeanne Riley
- 5 Bob Winebrenner
- 7 Inge Dudda**
Hunt Hardinge, III
- 8 Frederick Kreiger, III
Madysen Staley
- 10 Scott Minnich, Sr.
Avis Serafini**
- 13 John Mills
- 15 Kevin Brashears
Mike Markle
- 17 Donald Dayhoff**
- 18 Carol Brashears
- 19 Curt Dudda**
Deborah Kelso
- 23 Karen McCarthy
Kaylee Kline*
- 24 Virginia Martin
Laura Reed
- 25 Dan Dopson
- 26 George Lemen**
- 28 Cheryl Hershey
- 29 Karen Spessard
- 31 Cheyenne Little
Barbara Smith**



- 6 Chad & Carrie Brashears

Trinity Lutheran Church
15 Randolph Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Phone: (301)733-2878 www.tlchag.org

Sunday Worship at 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Sunday School for All Ages at 9:55 a.m.
Church Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

MAKING DISCIPLES FOR CHRIST

Food Pantry and Clothing Bank: (301)733-5651
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Washington County Literacy Council: (301)739-4208
Tuesday and Thursday: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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