



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
READING, PENNSYLVANIA
Second Sunday of Advent
December 7, 2025



*John the Baptist (Byzantine Icon, 14th c.)
Anonymous Byzantine painter*

In Matthew 3 John the Baptist appears as a desert prophet whose very body and voice prepare the way for Christ. This Byzantine icon renders John with gaunt features and a stern yet luminous gaze, visually embodying the severe mercy of repentance that still confronts the church at the edge of Advent.

WELCOME TO TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

FOUNDED IN 1751

*The Rev. Hans E.
Becklin*
SENIOR PASTOR

*Deaconess Deborah
Matern Graf*
DEACON FOR
FORMATION
AND SERVICE

*Dr. Cameron
Lee Wentz*
CANTOR

Matthew Mellen
DIRECTOR OF
TECHNOLOGY AND
COMMUNICATION

Rachel Gambone
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
COORDINATOR

Peter Graf
FINANCIAL
ADMINISTRATOR

Pam Wasmuth
BOOKKEEPER

John McKeon
PROPERTY MANAGER

Dave Troche
SEXTON



*The Rev. Fred S.
Opalinski*
PASTOR EMERITUS

*Karen S.
Eddinger*
MINISTER OF MUSIC
EMERITA



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY as we worship God through word and sacrament in this landmark building, home to our congregation since 1791. Our liturgy is rooted in tradition; all are welcome to participate as they feel comfortable.

TRINITY IS A VIBRANT CONGREGATION with members from around Berks County and beyond. If you are interested in learning more about membership, speak with a member of our staff.



DURING WORSHIP, we pray, sing, listen, chant, read, and move our bodies. Please silence your cell phone so as not to disturb this rich experience for yourself or others.

THE HIGHLIGHT OF OUR WORSHIP is receiving the Eucharist, the true Body and Blood of Christ. All who trust that Jesus is present in this holy meal are invited to receive Him with us today. Detailed instructions for communion can be found on page 19 of the bulletin.

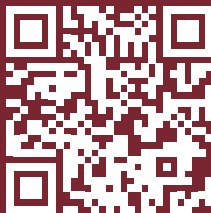


CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME in our worship! A changing table can be found in the all-gender restroom on the first floor. Our Meditation Room has space for nursing or a sensory break. Restrooms can be found on the first floor and are accessible by elevator. Our AED is mounted on the wall in the stairway next to the baptismal font.



WE WELCOME ALL LGBTQ+ people as full participants in our common life. We're proud to proclaim this publicly in our city and wider church as a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

OUR WORSHIP IS AN ACT OF OFFERING. By being here, we present ourselves and our time to God.



WE ALSO PRESENT our tithes and monetary offerings to God. During the offertory procession, they are brought forward along with the bread and wine used for the Eucharist.

WE NO LONGER pass an offering plate in the pew. However, an offering plate for cash or checks is available in the narthex. You can also share your offering electronically using this QR code.

The HOLY EUCHARIST AT 10:00 A.M.

Congregational words are in bold print.

PRELUDE

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

William Albright
(1944 - 1998)

*As the Introit begins,
please stand in body
or spirit and face the
processional cross.*

CHORAL INTROIT

Come Unto Us

Karen Marroli
(b. 1975)

Trinity Choir

Come unto us and fill us,
fill us with your light;
fill us with your hope;
fill us with your love;
fill us with your light.

APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

GATHERING HYMN

Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding

ELW 246

*Continue to follow
the processional cross,
turning as it
passes you.*

1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing! "Christ is near," we hear it say.
2 Wak-ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;
3 See the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, come with par - don down from heav'n.
4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is wrapped in fear,
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther and the Son

"Cast a - way the works of dark-ness, all you chil-dren of the day!"
Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling, shines up - on the morn-ing skies.
Let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all, to be for - giv'n;
he will shield us with his mer - cy and with words of love draw near.
with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it while un - end - ing a - ges run!

Text: Latin hymn,
1632;
tr. Edward Caswall,
1814-1878

Music: MERTON,
William H. Monk,
1823-1889

*In Advent instead
of being directed to
God the Father, this
prayer is directed to
God the Son, showing
us how Advent is
particularly focused
on the identity and
work of Jesus.*

Please be seated.

*Young people come
forward as the
congregation sings
a refrain, found on
page 18. During this
time, we learn about
the liturgy together.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to
prepare the way of your only Son.
By his coming nurture our growth
as people of repentance and peace;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior

and Lord, who lives and reigns with
you and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and forever.

Amen.

THE WONDERS OF WORSHIP

First Reading

READING

Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of
Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his
roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the
Lord.

His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,
but with righteousness he shall judge for
the poor and decide with equity for the
oppressed of the earth;

he shall strike the earth with the rod of his
mouth, and with the breath of his lips he
shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt around his
waist and faithfulness the belt around his
loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of
the asp, and the weaned child shall put its
hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge
of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand
as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall
inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be
glorious.

Word of God, word of life.

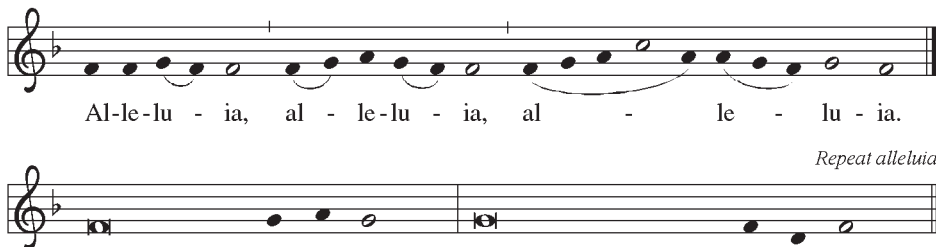
Thanks be to God.

*Please stand
in body or spirit to
welcome the Gospel.*

*The congregation
sings the Alleluia and
Proper Verse.*

*The Alleluia is
repeated after the
verse.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



**Prepare the way | of the Lord,
All flesh shall see the salva- | tion of God.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 3:1-12

**The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’ ”

Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who

warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON


Pastor Hans E. Becklin

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*


HYMN OF THE DAY

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

ELW 256




1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G.
Olearius,
1635-1711;
tr. Catherine
Winkworth,
1827-1878, alt.

Music: FREU DICH
SEHR,

*Trente quatre psaumes
de David,
Geneva, 1551*

APOSTLES' CREED

*Together, we confess
the faith of the
Church.*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*Please kneel
or be seated.*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

God of grace,
receive our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.
Amen.

*After a brief silence
each petition
concludes:*

*After the final
petition:*

IN OUR PRAYERS

IN IMMEDIATE NEED

- ♦ Peg Coleman
- ♦ Mary Drehs
- ♦ Darryl Jeffries
- ♦ Peggy Wentz

TRINITY HOUSEHOLDS

- ♦ Logan, Julia,
Mitch & Nicole
Barnett
- ♦ James & Amy
Barrett
- ♦ Paul, Tracie &
Mason Barrett
- ♦ Sarah, Wesley,
Christopher &
Rachel Bashore
- ♦ Richard & Connie
Bashore

ONGOING NEEDS

- ♦ Harry Feinauer
- ♦ Frances Frezeman
- ♦ Christine Motley
 - ♦ David Ruth
 - ♦ Walter Schur
 - ♦ David Strobel
 - ♦ Dar Unger
 - ♦ Rob Unger
- ♦ Danielle Andress
- ♦ Donnie Diesinger
- ♦ Christina
McMahon
- ♦ Hildegard Pohl
 - ♦ Yadar

*All may make the
sign of the cross, the
sign that is marked
at baptism, as the
presiding minister
begins.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts
are open, all desires known, and
from whom no secrets are hid:
Cleanse the thoughts of our
hearts by the inspiration of your

Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly
love you and worthily magnify
your holy name, through
Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence is kept for
reflection.*

Most merciful God,
**we confess that we are in bondage
to sin and cannot free ourselves.
We have sinned against you in
thought, word, and deed, by what
we have done and by what we have
left undone. We have not loved
you with our whole heart; we have
not loved our neighbors**

**as ourselves. For the sake of your
Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on
us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead
us, so that we may delight in your
will and walk in your ways, to the
glory of your holy name. Amen**

Almighty God, in his mercy, has
given his Son to die for us and, for
his sake, forgives us all our sins. As
a called and ordained minister of
the Church of Christ, and by his
authority, I therefore declare to

you the entire forgiveness
of all your sins,
in the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Please stand.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

*Please greet one
another and then
be seated.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*The offering, bread,
and wine are
brought forward
and the altar is set.*

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*

*The presider greets
the assembly and
invites all to give
thanks.*

OFFERTORY

Rejoice, Salvation Now Is Near

Camil Van Hulse
(1897 - 1988)

Trinity Choir

O come, O come, Emmanuel, thou Rod of Jesse, and ransom captive Israel,
and save them from the depths of hell.

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night. Make safe the way that leads to the light.

Rejoice, ye sons of Israel. No more in exile shall ye dwell.

Rejoice: salvation now is near. Rejoice: for God's Son shall soon appear.

This is the time appointed to meet the Lord's annointed.

With bowed heads now we render thanks, to the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

- based on Veni, Emmanuel

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Nourishing God,

you are water in the wilderness and
streams in the desert. Through this
meal, satisfy our parched places,

that we may rejoice and be for the
world signs of your kingdom come.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O God, creator of heaven and earth.
You rescued your covenant people, led them on all their journeys,
and taught them by the prophets.
You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but may have eternal life.

*During the Words of
Institution, the bread
and wine are elevated
for the congregation
to revere and adore
Christ's presence in
our midst.*

IN THE NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED,
OUR LORD JESUS TOOK BREAD,
AND GAVE THANKS; BROKE IT,
AND GAVE IT TO HIS DISCIPLES,
SAYING: TAKE AND EAT;
THIS IS MY BODY, GIVEN FOR YOU.
DO THIS FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

AGAIN, AFTER SUPPER,
HE TOOK THE CUP, GAVE THANKS,
AND GAVE IT FOR ALL TO DRINK,
SAYING: THIS CUP
IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD,
SHED FOR YOU AND FOR ALL PEOPLE
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.
DO THIS FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

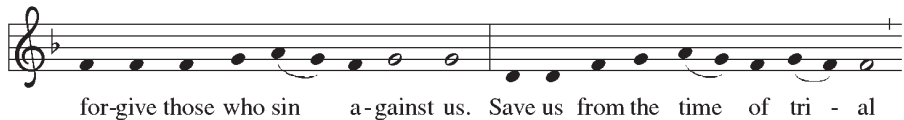
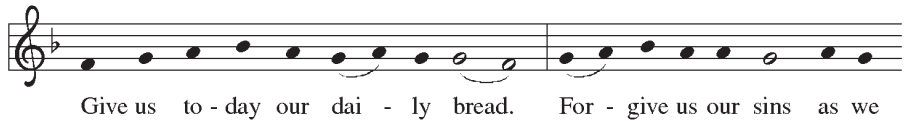


Pour out your Holy Spirit in this meal,
 and make us one in this community of faith
 and with your people throughout the world.
 Glory and praise to you, O God,
 Author of life,
 Word made flesh,
 Power of the Most High,
 now and forever.



LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.



*Silence is kept as the
bread is broken.
Please be seated.*

*Detailed instructions
for communion can
be found on page 19.*

*This hymn can be
found in the red
hymnal (ELW).*

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

LAMB OF GOD

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

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

Prepare the Royal Highway

ELW 264

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy
and gladness.

Send us forth, eager to share the

feast, welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the
name of Jesus.

Amen.

*As a sign of God's
blessing, you may
make the sign
of the cross.*

BLESSING

May God who comes among us,
Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.

Amen.

Face the processional
cross, turning as it
passes you.

SENDING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Verses 3 & 4)

ELW 257

Text: *Psalterium
Cantionum
Catholicarum*,
Köln, 1710;
tr. composite

Music: VENI,
EMMANUEL,
French processional,
15th cent.

Text: sts. 2. 6. 7 © 1997
Augsburg Fortress

3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's

Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,

Refrain
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe. Re-joice! Re-joice!
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.

Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Rorate Caeli

Melissa Dunphy
(b. 1980)



WONDERS OF WORSHIP SONG

I won-der. ____ I won-der. ____ The won-ders of wor-ship, what does it mean?

I won-der. ____ I won-der. ____ The won-ders of wor-ship, what does it mean?

Come and see! Come now and see!

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first two staves are vocal lines with lyrics. The third staff is a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: 'I won-der. ____ I won-der. ____ The won-ders of wor-ship, what does it mean?' and 'Come and see! Come now and see!'.

SOURCES AND PERMISSIONS

Liturgical components are from Sundays and Seasons © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies. Annual License #22196. Hymns reprinted under ONE LICENSE #A-727586.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30

In-person: 82

Online: 56

COMMUNION INSTRUCTIONS



All who trust that Jesus Christ is present in this holy meal are invited to receive communion.

Please follow the direction of the usher; if your pew is located on one of the side aisles, walk to the rear of the sanctuary. Two lines will form in the center aisle. The left line will commune at the left side of the altar rail; the right line will commune on the right side.



When you reach the front of the sanctuary, there are serving trays located on the tables. Please choose either an empty glass to receive wine, or, if you prefer, a prefilled glass in the center ring containing grape juice. After taking your cup, proceed to the rail. Fill in around the rail from the center to the ends. You may stand or kneel as is your preference.

The pastor will give you a piece of bread; eat it when you receive it. If you prefer a gluten free alternative, please inform the pastor.



Then, an assistant will come to offer wine from a pouring chalice. Please extend your glass to be filled with wine or indicate that you have grape juice. After drinking the wine or juice, you are welcome to remain in place for a moment of meditation.

After you finish your time of reflection, please return to your pew, depositing your empty glass in the trays located on the tables at the head of the side aisles.

LEADING OUR WORSHIP TODAY

PRESIDING MINISTER
ASSISTING MINISTER
CANTOR
LECTOR
COMMUNION ASSISTANT
ACOLYTE
GREETER

Pr. Hans E. Becklin
Hannah Long
Dr. Cameron Lee Wentz
Erica Hofmann
Virginia Biniek
Danielle Smith
Anita Dolak

USHERS
MEDIA TEAM

Jeff & Pam Wasmuth
Grace Norton-Ritz, Abbie Smith,
Jennifer Smith

ALTAR GUILD

Allison Kalbach, Amy Litvinov,
Cheryl Moody, Brooke Rosenbaum, Doris Strobel

WORSHIP PLANNERS

Program Staff

WORSHIP SPONSORS

These offerings help to defray the cost of altar flowers and the television broadcast.

ALTAR GUILD

In honor of altar guild members and all Trinity Volunteers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

9:00 AM

Trinity Together Sunday Forum - Hintz Room

10:00 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP - Nave

11:15 AM

COFFEE & CONVERSATION - Hintz Room

11:30 PM

MIXED ENSEMBLE REHEARSAL - Bard House

2:00 PM

COMMON GROUND WORSHIP AND MEAL

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8

1:00 PM

PROGRAM STAFF MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9

9:30 AM

STAFF MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

12:05 PM

MIDDAY WORSHIP - Chapel

7:30 PM

TRINITY CHOIR - Bard House

STEEPLE NOTES

Steeple Notes is our bi-monthly news publication which includes news about our church community, updates on ministries and outreach programs, and articles that foster spiritual growth and connection. Print editions are usually available in the Narthex. You may also read our digital edition by scanning this QR code.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

9:00 AM

Trinity Together Sunday Forum - Hintz Room

10:00 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP - Nave

11:15 AM

COFFEE & CONVERSATION - Hintz Room

11:30 PM

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE - Welcome Center

MIXED ENSEMBLE REHEARSAL - Bard House

2:00 PM

COMMON GROUND WORSHIP AND MEAL

3:30 PM

PRE-CONCERT PRESENTATION - Nave

4:00 PM

HGMC: RADIANCE OF THE RAINBOW - Nave

WONDERS OF WORSHIP: FIRST READING

