

TRINITY CHURCH TIDINGS

DECEMBER 2023

Trinity Lutheran Church & School
146 Reserve Road, West Seneca, New York 14224
Church: (716) 674-9188, School: (716) 674-5353



Rev. Nycholas Greig, Pastor, 674-9188 / C: (716) 336-1767
Mrs. Sarah Gabel / Mrs. Katie Willert, School Co-Principals, 674-5353

Church Website: trinitywestseneca.com
Church Office E-mail: trinitylutheranchurch146@verizon.net

WORSHIP TIMES

Saturday @ 5:00 pm

Sunday @ 10:30 am

“The Joyful Journey of Advent”

As we approach the end of the year, we find ourselves on the threshold of a special season in the Christian calendar—Advent. It is a time of reflection, anticipation, and preparation as we eagerly await the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word "adventus," meaning "coming" or "arrival." During this season, we not only commemorate the historical event of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem over two thousand years ago but also prepare our hearts for His promised second coming. Advent spans four weeks, with each week focusing on a specific theme—Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each theme corresponds to a candle on the Advent wreath, which we will light in succession throughout the season.

- **Week 1: Hope (November 27 - December 3)**

Hope is the foundation of Advent. As we light the first candle, we remember the hope that the prophets foretold—the coming of a Messiah who would bring salvation and restoration. It is a time to reflect on the promises of God and renew our trust in His faithfulness.

- **Week 2: Peace (December 4 - December 10)**

The second week of Advent directs our attention to peace. We reflect on the peace that Christ brings to our hearts and to the world. In a season often marked by busyness, Advent calls us to find moments of stillness and experience the peace that transcends understanding.

- **Week 3: Joy (December 11 - December 17)**

As we light the third candle, our focus shifts to joy. The joy of the shepherds, the angels, and the magi as they witnessed the fulfillment of God's promises in the birth of Jesus. This week encourages us to embrace the joy that comes from knowing our Savior and sharing His love with others.

- **Week 4: Love (December 18 - December 24)**

The final week of Advent centers on love. God's love for us was demonstrated in the gift of His Son. As we light the fourth candle, let us reflect on the profound love that compelled God to enter our world and the love we are called to share with one another.

This Advent season, let us embark on a joyful journey of faith and anticipation. May our hearts be filled with hope, peace, joy, and love as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



God's Blessings,

Pastor Nyck Greig

Holiday Worship Schedule

<i>December 17th @ 10:30am:</i>	<i>Sunday School Christmas Pageant & Service</i>
<i>December 24th</i>	<u>NO 10:30am Worship Service</u>
<i>December 24th @ 5:00pm:</i>	<i>Family Christmas Eve Service w/ Communion</i>
<i>December 24th @ 9:00pm:</i>	<i>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service w/ Communion</i>
<i>December 25th @ 10:00am</i>	<i>Christmas Day Service</i>



Cookie Walk December 9 & 10



Calling all bakers and cookie tasters ... it's time for a cookie walk! This fundraiser will support the youth attending the February 2024 Youth Quake event in PA. We would love your help by baking a plate /container of cookies. You can bring them in with you to church or drop them off earlier in the week (Monday-Thursday 8am-3pm). Please use disposable containers. We will have 2 walks, one Saturday evening and one Sunday morning, both following the worship service. Come and fill a tray and sample the goodness from all of our talented bakers. The youth group appreciates your support!



We will once again be sponsoring an Angel Tree for the young men and women at the Renaissance House Campus. Please watch for the Angel Tree to be put up in the church entry. Pick an angel tag and purchase the item listed. The due date for all gifts will be **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH**. Please place the item in a gift bag only (not wrapped) with the angel tag attached. Thank you!

Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 10 at 1:30pm

All youth and adults are invited to join us on Dec. 10 to go caroling to some of our shut-ins. We will meet at the church at 1:30pm to begin our journey. Please sign up in the narthex or youth can let Mark Willert know so we can arrange to have enough drivers. Whole families are a bonus! What a wonderful chance to brighten someone's Christmas by singing about Jesus' coming!



Sunday School Pageant

Our Sunday School children will be leading worship with their annual Christmas pageant on **December 17th at the 10:30am service**. Please join us!



Parents Night Out Saturday, December 2, 2023 5:00pm - 9:00pm

On Saturday, December 2nd Trinity's Youth Group will host a babysitting fundraiser for their February Youth Quake retreat. Potty-trained children ages 3 and up may register for a fun-filled evening at the school which will include games, pizza dinner, crafts, and the movie, The Star. Enjoy this 4 hours of peaceful shopping or a special date night! \$25 per child. To register, email Christine Harris at charris@trinitywny.org by Nov. 30th.



Recycle Greeting Cards

If you'd like to recycle your holiday or special occasion cards, please save them and place in my message box at church. Cut off the front cover of your card (NO personal writing allowed on the flip side). NO Hallmark, Disney or American Greetings cards are accepted. They will be sent to St. Jude's Ranch for Children. Thank you.

~ Linda Rowsell

Trinity School News

Happy (almost) Advent!

We are starting to plan for Advent over at the school. Please consider joining us as we celebrate the coming of our Savior!

- **Family Advent Evening - November 29th at 6:00pm** - See Mark Willert for details
- **Grades 1-8 Christmas Celebration Concert - December 20th at 7:00pm** in the church
- **Grades 1+2 Christmas Pageant, with PreK+K singing - December 22nd at 9:20am** in the church

Fall Highlights

We have had so many fun activities going on at school this fall! Here are some of the highlights:

- **Lego Club** for grades 1-3 finished up. They created rooms in mansions, marble mazes, and fairy tale scenes.
- **Grandparents Day** was a hit! We had about 125 grandparents/special adults in the building. The grandparents had snacks with their grandchildren and did several cooperative activities. The special morning finished up with a wonderful chapel service full of singing and instruments. We also had Denise Chapman-Acosta here to lead our message time with a story and praise dance reminding us of how we are “connected” in Christ. We thank God for the gift of grandparents!
- **Pumpkin Day** was on 10/31. The kids had a great time decorating pumpkins, playing games, and having classroom parties. The preschoolers treated everyone to a costume parade.
- **Kelkenberg Farm** was a blast. Students in grades K-2 enjoyed their field trip. They saw many animals and picked pumpkins.
- **Buffalo Science Museum and the West Seneca Food Pantry** were visited by students in grades 3+4. The students really enjoyed the hands-on exhibits in the museum. At the Food Pantry they were able to help sort and stock non-perishable items.
- The school has been collecting items for the **West Seneca Food Pantry** since the start of the year. We have A LOT of food gathered to take to the pantry before Christmas.

Thank you, God, for such a fun and busy fall season!



Lego Club



Grandparents Day

Giving Tuesday

November 28th, the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, is known as "Giving Tuesday" - a chance for all of us to be generous and share the treasures that God has given us. Please consider donating to Trinity Christian School. You can go to our Facebook page on the 28th for a digital link, or mail your gift directly. Thank you for your support!

Anxiety in the Classroom

Did you know that about 1 in 3 elementary students struggle with anxiety? Anxiety has increased dramatically in children since the Covid 19 pandemic. At Trinity we see so many students struggling to handle anxiety. The teachers had a professional development day on November 9th to learn new strategies to help students deal with anxiety, both at school and home. Mrs. Willert and Mrs. Gabel will also hold a parent night in January to discuss anxiety in children and teach parents strategies that may be useful at home.



Bible Study News

Wednesday Morning Bible Study New Topic Coming in January 2024 “A Survey of Church History”

Many committed, knowledgeable believers still know little about the history of the church. As a result, they're missing a testament to God's steadfastness over the centuries. Now, a monumental new teaching series sheds crucial light on church history, demonstrating God's promise to build and preserve his church so that “the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Join us on Wednesday mornings at 10:30am beginning on January 3, 2024 as we watch a video series from Dr. W. Robert Godfrey as he takes believers through the history of the church covering theology, apologetics, notable church fathers, and much more.

Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study New Study Starting January 2024 “You and Me Forever”

Marriage is Great, But it's not Forever. This seven session Bible study series, based on the book *You and Me Forever* from best-selling author Francis Chan and Lisa Chan, will challenge you to view your marriage like never before. These seven inspiring videos will help you dive deeper into the content of the book as you explore themes like:

- It's until death do us part. Then comes eternal rewards or regrets depending on how we spent our lives.
- While we cannot allow lesser things to destroy our marriages, we also cannot allow marriage to distract us from greater things.
- A jealous God asks us to pursue Him first and most. Then life makes sense, and everything falls into its proper place.
- Love, laughter, and intimacy were all created to be enjoyed. So there is a way to love family deeply without ignoring heaven.
- It all comes down to our focus.

Jesus was right. We have it all backwards. *The way to have a great marriage is by not focusing on marriage.* All are welcome to join us on Sunday mornings at 9:15am beginning January 7, 2024.

*Thank
You!*

Thank you to Dave Sirgey and those who helped him on the church altar plaster repair project. Not only did Dave learn a new skill, but he saved the congregation the cost of having a contractor do the job! We are blessed to have so much talent in our congregation and the willingness to use it. Also, thank you to the crew who replaced light bulbs and put door stops on the entry doors.

67th Annual

Christmas Candlelight Vespers Sunday, December 3rd at 5:00pm At First Trinity Lutheran Church (1570 Niagara Falls Blvd.)



All are invited! Enjoy Christmas carols old and new with choirs and orchestra. Featuring guest organist Jacob Weber of St. Louis. Pre-service music begins at 4:30pm. For the benefit of Valparaiso University Guild and the Music Conservatory at First Trinity, Holy Cross and St. John Lutheran churches.

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone who donated gift filled shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. We were able to collect 50 boxes this year. Please continue to pray for the children who will receive these boxes.



2024 Altar Flowers & Candles

The 2024 sign-up charts are on the bulletin board in the church coatroom. Sign up for your special occasion today!

Flowers: \$10 per vase and you get to take them home after the Sunday service! We are asking that 2 families sign up for each week. Payments should be placed in the **Church Office's message center** - make checks payable to **“Trinity Lutheran Church” (memo: Altar Flowers)**.

Altar Candles: \$25 per month (per family). Two families should sign-up each month to cover the total cost. Checks should be made payable to: **“Trinity Lutheran Church”** and placed in the Church Office message center.

**Please make sure to include your name and *
special intentions on the sign-up sheets.*

Gift Bags For Elderwood Residents

The children in Trinity's 3-5 grade Sunday School are corresponding once a month with the residents at Elderwood, West Seneca. For Christmas they are putting together gift bags for them. If you can help out by donating the following items, it would be greatly appreciated: **packs of Kleenex, chapstick, lotion, pens, puzzle books (large print), cute ornament.**

We will be collecting items **through December 5th**. There will be a box in the narthex to place your donations in. Thank you!

YOUTH SCOOP

Youth Gym Night

For our youth night on November 15, we played “sardines” in the church building! What is sardines you may ask ... it's similar to hide and seek but when you find the person you have to hide with them! And depending where the first person hid, it can get a little squished! Our devotion was about how we are like fall leaves and how God shines through us showing our true colors and that we are are fearfully and wonderfully made! *Psalm 139:14.*

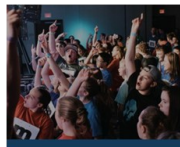
Our next Youth Gym Night is on **December 6 at 6:30pm-8:00pm.** Students can bring a wrapped white elephant gift if they'd like. Simply, something that is sitting around their house that they don't want anymore. An item that may still have value or would just be hilarious to see someone's reaction as they open it.



Lasertron Fun

Six kids went to Lasertron November 12 and had a blast (pun intended). Everyone was a winner and much fun was had by all!

QUAKE
YOUTH ENCOUNTERING THE GOSPEL



Youth Quake Retreat

Students may still sign up for the Pittsburgh event February 9-11, 2024. Since the time frame for the early-bird registration discount has passed, the cost is now \$260 per person, which covers transportation, room, food and programming. We have two boys and two girls signed up already. Stephanie Greig and Mark Willart will be the chaperones. See Mark Willert if you are interested.

Youth Needed to Babysit!

We are in need of youth volunteers to babysit for our Parents Night Out fundraiser on December 2. Volunteers would need to be dropped off at 5:00pm and picked back up at 9:00pm. Let Ms. Harris know if you can volunteer (Email charris@trinitywny.org) This is a fundraiser for our Trinity youth who want to attend retreats, but any youth can help out. It will be fun! Thank you Christine Harris for organizing!



At the end of October, our Confirmation students did such a fantastic job packing care boxes for our Trinity college students. The Confirmation families collected the goods over 5 weeks and the students also wrote encouraging notes and Bible verses. Thanks to Christine Harris for organizing and Thrivent for sponsoring!

Trunk or Treat Fun!

November 26 saw our annual event that's been held since 2006. The turn-out was so great that we only had 7 open parking spots left! Families listened to Christian music as they circled the parking lot, and then they came inside the school gym to hear the gospel message.



Trinity Lutheran Church's History - Part 2

1850-1853: Taking Further Steps

After the signing of the constitution, further steps were taken to assure the continuation of the young congregation. Two deacons, Michael Lebert and Carl Kromphardt, were elected to serve until a pastor could be called. In January of 1850, a second meeting was held to elect three trustees whose duty it was to file papers of incorporation with the town clerk's office, which was accomplished on February 12, 1850. Those men were Godfried Grotke, Adam Koch, and Michael Escherich. In November of 1851, Trinity's congregation extended a call to Ernest Buerger, as its first pastor. At the time, he was pastor of First Trinity in Buffalo. Accepting the call, he moved out to the country and purchase a small plot of land on the east side of Orchard Park Road about a quarter mile south of what is now the five corners. He erected a log building which served as a home, schoolhouse and place of worship. In 1853, Pastor Buerger was instrumental in Trinity's joining the Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States, now known as the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

1849-1859: Came Through Early Struggles

During the first decade of their existence, Trinity's Congregation grew from 12 to approximately 35 families. The pastor performed 223 baptisms, confirmed 75 children and married 47 couples. There were 49 burials, 35 of which were children below the age of 13, giving a hint of the high mortality rate at that time. In 1851 a two-acre lot was purchased for \$75. The building, which was completed in less than four months, cost \$232.85. Most of the labor and materials were donated by the members. Only one carpenter was hired to supervise the actual construction. The founding pastor, Ernest Buerger, who also had served as school principal and teacher, accepted a call in October 1858 to serve in Washington, D.C. His son Paul Theodore Buerger then became the principal and served until 1861. Pastor L. Dulutz from First Trinity cared for the congregation until a new pastor was installed in May 1860.

Naples Daily News
NEOPOLITAN

FAITH & VALUES

Earth Angels

Stephen Ministers Offer Emotional and Spiritual Support in Times of Trouble

by Beth Francis
emfrancis@naplesnews.com

Mary Larrabee's life was a mess. Her marriage had just ended in divorce, she underwent two major surgeries, and then her grown son was murdered.

"As a friend of mine put it, the manure truck just kept backing up and dumping on me," Larrabee said.

Then she heard about Stephen Ministry at her church.

The ministry matches specially trained members of a congregation with people going through a tough time. Nationwide, more than 10,000 churches representing more than 150 different Christian denominations offer Stephen Ministry.

"It enriches the church to have this consistent outreach available to anyone in the community who needs help."

Larrabee was matched with Stephen Minister Kathy Ames, a fellow member of North Naples United Methodist Church, and the two met once a week for more than a year.



"I'm stronger and I know how precious every day is," says Mary Larrabee, right, who was helped with a life crisis by her Stephen Minister Kathy Ames. "She would hold my hand and let me spill out my heart. I call her my earth angel."

"She would hold my hand and let me spill out my heart," Larrabee said of Ames. "I call her my earth angel. She really helped me through a hard time in my life. She didn't give me specific advice as much as she just listened to me and validated my pain."

Now that the formal Stephen Ministry relationship has ended, the two remain friends.

"I will always be grateful to her for all of her prayers and all that she did to help me," Larrabee said.

Stephen Ministry began in St. Louis in 1975 when the Rev. Kenneth Haugk, a pastor and clinical psychologist, found he was unable to meet the needs of all the people in his congregation. He trained nine laypeople in his church to assist him in providing Christian care to people who needed encouragement.

It went so well that Haugk began training Stephen Ministers in other congregations. That, in turn, led to the establishment of the Stephen Se-

ries Leader's Training Course, which trains pastors and lay leaders to go back to their congregations and train others to become Stephen Ministers.

"We train the trainers," said Joel Bretscher, Director of Communications at the Stephen Ministries headquarters in St. Louis. "We train the Stephen Leaders who then go home to train the Stephen Ministers in the congregation." Stephen Ministers then provide one-to-one emotional and spiritual care to people in need.

The name Stephen comes from St. Stephen, who was the first layperson commissioned by the Apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need, Bretscher said.

"Ordained pastors often find there are more needs for care than they can provide, so Stephen Ministers are there to supplement, but not replace, pastoral care," Bretscher said.

In Stephen Ministry, women are matched with women and men are

Continued from page 7

Naples Daily News

Earth Angels—Stephen Ministers Offer Emotional and Spiritual Support in Times of Trouble

matched with men. It is also important to note that Stephen Ministers are available to care for anyone in the community who is hurting, not just church members, said Becky Jarrell, Director of Congregational Care at North Naples United Methodist Church.

“We are here for anyone experiencing a life crisis, whether it’s death, divorce, illness, relocation, financial difficulty or whatever the need,” Jarrell said. “It enriches the church to have this consistent outreach available to anyone in the community who needs help.”

“It’s a wonderful thing to see God working in people’s lives.”

Over the past eight years, North Naples United Methodist Church has trained more than 60 people to become Stephen Ministers, she said.

At Community Congregational

Church in Naples, there are more than 20 active Stephen Ministers, said Gini Reinhold, Director of Congregational Care.

“The Stephen Minister is there to walk with you throughout your crisis and to help you see that, with God’s love, you will be okay,” Reinhold said.

Stephen Ministers go through 50 hours of training and commit to serving for two years. Most choose to serve much longer after they find they get as much out of the ministry as they give, Reinhold said.

“It’s a wonderful thing to see God working in people’s lives,” she said. “There’s something special about knowing that God has put you in a certain place at a certain time to help a certain person. Stephen Ministers grow a lot as a result.”

Patty Lengemann knows what it’s like to be on both sides of the fence. She had her own Stephen Minister about five years ago when she went through a divorce.

“I know how wonderful it is to give and receive,” Lengemann said.

“My Stephen Minister gave me the courage to start over again. Now I want to give something back.”

“The Stephen Minister is there to walk with you through your crisis and to help you see that, with God’s love, you will be okay.”

Lengemann, a member at Community Congregational, has had two care receivers since she became a Stephen Minister.

“So far, I’ve been matched with people going through the same kind of pain I experienced, so I’m able to identify with what they’re going through,” she said. “I’m able to share my experience with them and help them to see that, when God closes one door, he opens another.”

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Altar Guild Meeting Tuesday, December 5 at 7:00pm

There will be a meeting for all Altar Guild members on December 5 at 7:00pm in the church narthex. Refreshments will be served.

New members are always welcome!!! Are you interested in joining the Altar Guild or would like to know more information about what we do? If so, please plan to attend this meeting or you can contact Ruth Zawadzki or Gerry Swart.

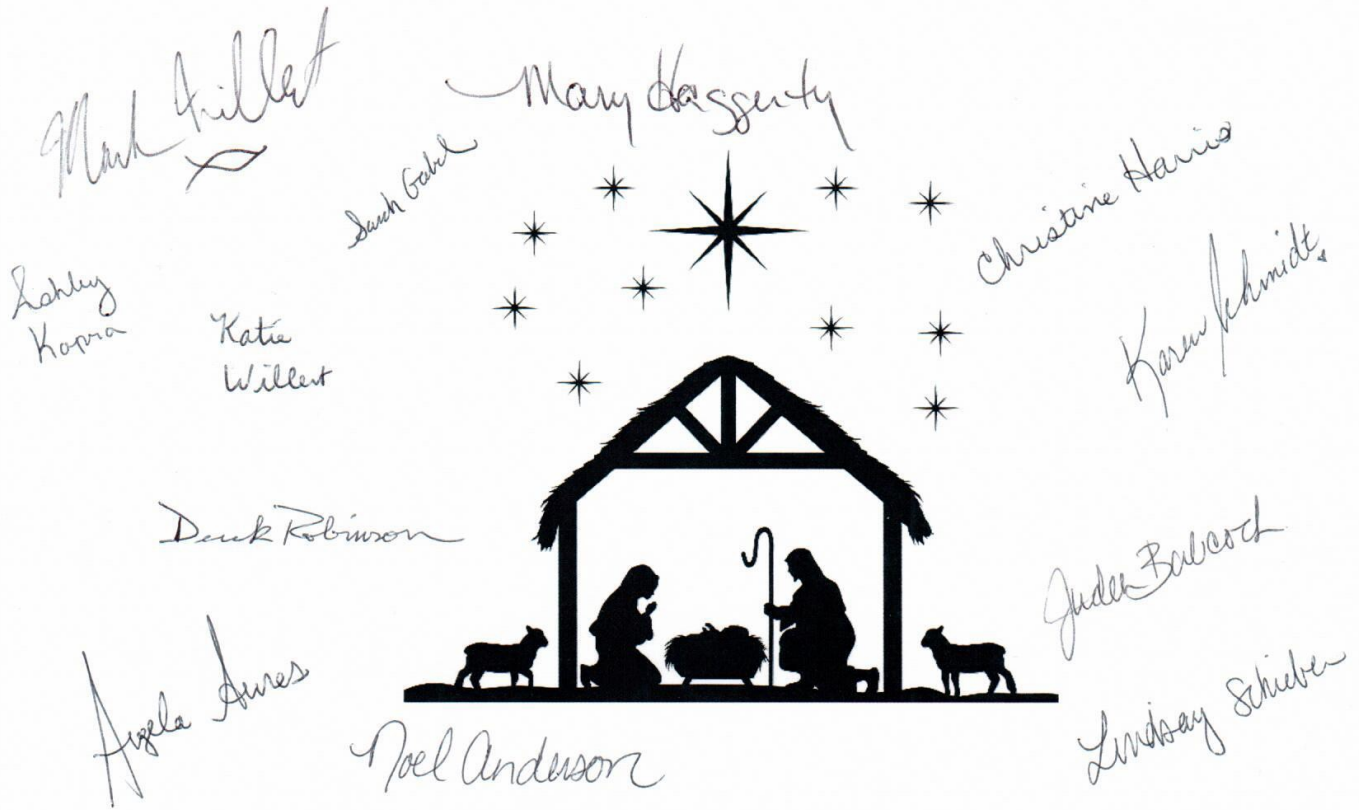
To My Trinity Family,

I want to thank all the drivers, conductors and Captain Dan on the “Roswell Express” who took me for radiation treatments. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Also, a thank you to all at Trinity for your prayers and encouragement. I have no medical results yet, but I will keep you posted. God bless you all!

~ Fred Schultz



Do you have someone that you would like to add onto **Trinity’s prayer chain**? If so, please contact Judy Schmidt at judyschmidt349@roadrunner.com / (716) 926-9054 with your request.



MID-WEEK ADVENT WORSHIP



**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2023, 7:00 PM
PRESENTED BY THE STUDENTS OF TRINITY LUTHERAN SCHOOL**

Happy Birthday

12/1	Logan Cosandier	12/11	Peter Schueler	12/20	Karen McCoy
12/2	Michele Baun	12/12	Bradley Ringle	12/21	Sandra Gertis
12/3	Helen Boldt Luci Zarbo	12/13	Nancy Stevens	12/22	Kevin Kot Lisa Cislo
12/5	Jonah LoVullo	12/14	Anna Eising	12/23	Noel Anderson Chris Kotowski
12/6	Delaney Colson	12/16	Vince Zarbo Gianna Conti	12/28	Judith Boersch Carolyn Lehsten
12/7	Joan Sullivan Justin Smith Emma Hope	12/17	Noell McKernan Katelyn Barnas	12/29	Nick Gatto
12/8	Steve Makosy	12/18	Tristan Sullivan Branson Gabel Gavin Courteau	12/30	Eve LoVullo Cecilia Colson
12/9	Matthew Wrobel	12/19	Jerry Meissner Evan McCoy	12/31	Donna Yox
12/10	Aliza Haas Hannah Haas				

Happy Anniversary

12/23	Dan & Joan Sullivan	12/27	Brian & Ellen Makey
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Town of West Seneca News

Living Nativity: Ebenezer UCC (630 Main St., West Seneca) will hold a Christmas Concert and Living Nativity on Sunday, December 17 at 6pm and 6:30pm. All are welcome to come and celebrate the season in a beautiful way ... first with music and second with children and animals (including a live camel).

Free Trees, Lights & Stands: West Seneca Police are offering free Christmas trees, lights, and stands to West Seneca citizens. The give away, sponsored by Home Depot, will be December 10 near the skating rink behind Police Headquarters/Community Center/Library complex on Union Rd. Come early – the trees are usually all given away in the first hour. Check WS Police website or face book page for starting time.

Families In Need: The Lions Club of WS is looking for needy families they can help at Christmas time. Contact www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/WestSenecaLionsClub/ or 716-241-8570; email WestSenecaLions@gmail.com

Memorial Plaques

You can remember deceased loved ones who were members of Trinity in a special way by purchasing a small engraved tab plaque to go on our Memorial Plaque located in the church’s fellowship area. They’re only \$25! Order forms can be obtained from the church office. **Order deadline for this quarter will be January 7th.**

Ministers: The People of Trinity Church & School

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
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Youth & Family Coordinator	Mark Willert	608-8907 / mwillert@thinktrinitychristian.com
Church Office Administrator	Teresa Lynch	674-9188 / trinitylutheranchurch146@verizon.net
School Office Administrator	Judeen Babcock	674-5353 / jbabcock@thinktrinitychristian.com