

# Trinity Highlights

January 2026 Newsletter

309-346-1391 ~ [www.trinitypekin.com](http://www.trinitypekin.com)

Rev. Mark Drews, Pastor ~ 701-390-6073

## Stewardship Report:

General Fund Report:	November	Year to Date	Year to Date
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income	\$ 24,196	\$218,261	\$233,718
Expenses	<u>21,654</u>	<u>311,259</u>	<u>335,169</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus	2,542	(92,998)	(101,451)

Giving in November was in line with projections but remains \$15,457 less than projected for the year to date. Expenses were a bit less than budgeted in November and are \$23,910 lower than budgeted year to date.

The General Fund balance at the end of November was \$283,429.40.

Let us give thanks to the Lord for His continued blessings and pray that we may continue to be faithful stewards until the day of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..

Rob Fornoff  
Chairman - Board of Finance

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**Please Join Us** on Sunday, January 4 *after the Sunday School hour* to take down the Christmas decorations. With your help this shouldn't take much time. We appreciate all the volunteers that help with this!

**Voter's Assembly - Thursday, January 15 - 6:00 p.m.:** All communicant members of the congregation, 18 years of age and older, are encouraged to attend. This is an excellent time to be brought up-to-date on what is going on at Trinity.

**2026 Offering Envelopes:** 2026 offering envelopes are on the table in Room 10. If you don't have offering envelopes and would like some, please contact the church office.

**2026 Flower Chart:** The 2026 flower chart is up on the bulletin board in the hallway by the 4th Street entrance. Simply sign your name by the date you wish to donate flowers. A form will be sent to you when your date is near. Dates are chosen on a first come first serve basis.

# From the Pastor's Desk

*"At the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Lk 2:21).*

Dear Members of Trinity,

What's in a Name?

In Shakespeare's play, Juliet speaks longingly of changing Romeo's last name so that she could love him without their families' opposition. Changing his *name* wouldn't change who Romeo was: "That which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet," she reasons convincingly (William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Peter Holland [New York: Penguin Books, 2000], 2.2.43–44). If names don't make much difference, why should we make such a big deal about the name given to Jesus?

As it turns out, the Bible treats God's name as a big deal. When Moses asks God for his name, God identifies himself as "I Am," the one who exists, the Creator of the universe. When he gives the Ten Commandments, he further identifies himself as the one who brought his people out of slavery in Egypt, and he forbids his people from taking his name in vain. Luther rightly explains that this means "We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks" (Small Catechism, Second Commandment).

King David gives a good example of using the name of God properly when he opens and closes Psalm 8 with the words, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Ps 8:1, 9). Jesus shows what a big deal God's name is when he teaches his disciples how to pray. The First Petition in the prayer is "Hallowed be your name" (Mt 6:9). Once again, Luther's explanation is so helpful: "God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also. . . . God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it" (Small Catechism, Lord's Prayer, First Petition). God's name is not just the letters *G-O-D* or *L-O-R-D* or *J-E-S-U-S*. The letters we use as God's name are not the same letters that the original Hebrew or Greek texts of the Bible used. Those letters can change from one language to another. If God's name is simply the letters put together to make a sound, then we could agree with Juliet completely when she says, "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," or slightly modified, "That which we call Jesus by any other name would still be our Savior."

What we are celebrating today is not the letters *J-E-S-U-S*. What we are celebrating is the reality behind those letters. The name of Jesus is such a big deal because his name includes whatever he reveals about himself in the Bible, in whatever language. His name is kept holy when we believe what he says in the Bible, and when we live the way he teaches us to live.

One way we show that we believe what Jesus says about himself is by confessing our faith using the words of creeds like the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. These are short summaries of what the Bible teaches. The simplest creed of all is the name *Jesus* itself. As the angel Gabriel explains to Joseph, "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21).

All by itself, the one word *Jesus* means "he will save." What the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds spell out in more detail is right here in Jesus' name: This baby would grow up, live a sinless life in our place, then suffer under Pontius Pilate, be crucified, die, and be buried. But on the third day, he would rise again and later ascend back to heaven. All to save us from our sins. When the name *Jesus* is used in its biblical sense, it is the shortest possible confession of faith that he is our Savior. That is the bedrock upon which faith rests. That's why his name is such a big deal.

Speaking of bedrock, we now have some evidence of how important God's name has been throughout the centuries. In 1979, archaeologists were digging in some caves right outside the city walls of Jerusalem when they found two intriguing objects about the size and shape of cigarette filters. They were tiny silver sheets rolled up like scrolls, and they had been placed as precious objects next to their owners in their tombs. When the scrolls were carefully unrolled, Hebrew letters could be seen faintly scratched on the surfaces. These silver scrolls are one of the most significant discoveries ever made because they are "the earliest known artifacts from



the ancient world that document passages from the Hebrew Bible” (Gabriel Barkay, et al., “The Challenges of Ketef Hinnom: Using Advanced Technologies to Reclaim the Earliest Biblical Texts and Their Context,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66, no. 4 [December 2003]: 162–71; here, 163). And what was the passage that was scratched onto both scrolls? It was the Aaronic blessing, from the book of Numbers: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace”.

We now know, we have hard evidence, that these words brought comfort to God’s people living six centuries before Jesus was born. They are the comforting words that were chosen to accompany the dearly departed in their graves. They are an early confession of faith, an early creed, that the Lord is the one who saves his people from their sins. This creed is more than one word long, more than the word *Jesus*, but it confesses the same faith. It teaches the same truth about God being the Savior. The Lord is the one who blesses and keeps, is gracious, and gives peace to troubled sinners. Remember what Luther said about keeping God’s name holy? “God’s name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity,” particularly when it is taught that the Lord is the one who saves his people from their sins. The creed confessed by the Aaronic blessing is simply a longer way of saying the name of the Lord; God emphasizes this by saying immediately following these words of blessing, “So shall they put *my name* upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them” (v 27, emphasis added). The archaeologists dug in the dirt, down to the bedrock, and there they found the name of God that was put upon his people through the Aaronic benediction.

God continues to put his name on his people in the same way. These words regularly bring comfort to God’s people today at the end of church services. There is also another way that God puts his name on his people today. On this day celebrating the name of Jesus, we also celebrate the circumcision of Jesus: “At the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb” (Lk 2:21). We no longer practice circumcision as a churchly rite—it was one of the Old Testament worship laws that foreshadowed Jesus and his work. Now that Jesus has come, those laws are no longer binding on Christians. Concerning circumcision, however, the apostle Paul says,

“In him [Jesus] also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.” (Col 2:11–13)

Again and again, the Bible teaches that the Lord is the one who saves his people from their sins, which is the meaning of the name *Jesus*. Paul tells the Colossians that all who have been baptized have been buried with Christ, raised with Christ, and made alive with Christ. He tells the Galatians, “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ”. In Baptism, we not only confess the creed of Jesus’ name, that the Lord is the one who saves his people from their sins, but we also put on the name of Christ, and become *Christian*.

When Jesus was circumcised and named eight days after his birth, he gained an identity not for himself, but for us. He gave us the identity of being his saved people, because his name means that he saves his people. He gave us the identity of being God’s sons. As Paul tells the Galatians, “When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”. With this strong identity as God’s sons, we need never fear that we will lose our self-identity, even though we move to other cities, change jobs, or resolve to become different, better people for the new year. Wherever we are, and whatever we do for a living, we know that God is our Father; that Jesus, by his life, death, and resurrection, has saved us; and that we will spend eternity with him in heaven.

In Christ,

Pastor Mark R. Drews

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## Trinity's Service Volunteers - January 2026

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### ACOLYTES

01/04 9:00 a.m. Edith Spaeth  
01/11 9:00 a.m. Lexi Brown  
01/18 9:00 a.m. Ella Spaeth  
01/25 9:00 a.m. Lexi Brown

### BIBLE BREAKFAST HELPERS

Bible Breakfast helpers are needed for the month of January. Help is needed to pick-up donuts from Schnucks, make coffee and pour juice. Please contact the church office or sign-up during the Sunday School hour to help with this ministry.

### ALTAR GUILD

01/04 Lynn Brown / Debbie Fornoff  
01/18 Lauren Juergens / Melissa Deverman

### USHERS

01/04 9:00 a.m. Owen Miller, Dave Harms  
01/11 9:00 a.m. Chris Whitley, Rich Janson  
01/18 9:00 a.m. Dave Hrns, Mike Seidell  
01/25 9:00 a.m. Chris Whitley, Rich Janson

### ALTAR FLOWERS

01/04 *Open*  
01/11 *Open*  
01/18 *Open*  
01/25 Delores Gresham, *in memory of Bob Speck.*

### COMMUNION ASSISTANTS / READERS

01/04 Eric Spaeth  
01/18 Brad Juergens

### READERS

01/11 Matt Deverman  
01/25 Mike Seidell

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**Pennies for Life:** In celebration of life that God has given to each of us, the Peoria Area Lutherans for Life asks for your help. May each member thoughtfully consider donating to our Pennies for Life collection. This is an opportunity we hope you will use to express your thankfulness to our Heavenly Father by contributing a penny for each year of life that you have been granted. This special collection will be taken on Life Sunday, January 18, 2026. These donations will be used during 2026 to provide pro-life educational materials in our churches and schools and support for Peoria area pro-life organizations. Thank you in advance for your donation.

**LUTHERANS  
FOR LIFE**



**Did You Know?** At week 6, the baby's genitals begin to form. A baby is male or female from the very moment of conception. His or her sex is part of every cell that composes his or her body.

*"You knitted me together in my mother's womb."* Psalm 139:13  
God's knitting project is miraculous and Masterful.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."*

2 Corinthians 5:17



# January Birthdays & Anniversaries

## Birthdays

Jan. 3

Nicholas Prather

Jan. 5

Steven Seidell

Cori Spaeth

Jan. 9

Darren Upchurch

Jan. 10

Carol Spaeth

Cameron Speck

Connor Speck

Lindsey Watters

Jan. 11

Lannette Speck

Jan. 12

Kaydi Steele

Jan. 14

Michael Seidell

Jan. 15

Pennie Adkins

Jeff Hemp

Jan. 16

Jenna Owens

Jan. 17

Curtis Egli

Rylie Staker

Jan. 18

Lori Kincaid

Zander Seidell

Jan. 20

Pastor Mark Drews

Jan. 21

Sloan Grosch

Zelene Grosch

Jan. 26

Betty Robinson

Jan. 31

Seth Cooney

## Anniversaries

Jan. 1

Brad & Christi Juergens

Jan. 17

Michael & Jaymie Townzen

Jan. 24

Dave & Lynn Wyatt

*If your birthday or anniversary was omitted or a date is incorrect, please contact the church office so we can update our records.*

## November Sunday School Perfect Attendance

Haven Harms

Ella Spaeth

Franklin Spaeth

Mabel Spaeth

Oliver Spaeth

The following Sunday School students were awarded Perfect 10 Awards:

Haven Harms

Edith Spaeth

Ella Spaeth

Franklin Spaeth

Mabel Spaeth

Oliver Spaeth

Henry Stout



## 2026 Camp Cilca Events

- February - Act Like Men
- Woodcutter's Retreat
- March - Women's Retreat with Katie Schuermann
- April - Annual Banquet
- Spring Scrapbooking Retreat
- May - CID Campout
- May - July - Summer Programs
- August - Homecoming
- September - Whippoorwill Golf Outing
- October - GRIT Run
- November - Fall Work Day
- December - Joyful Hearts Christmas

Find out more at:  
[www..cilca.org](http://www..cilca.org)

*Camp Cilca exists to strengthen and foster faith in Jesus Christ and relationships with others in a unique outdoor setting.*





◀ December	January 2026					February ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3
4 9:00 AM WORSHIP/ COMMUNION 10:15 AM S.S. & BIBLE CLASS 11:30 AM TAKE DOWN CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS	5 2:30 PM CONFIRMATION	6 <i>Epiphany</i> 6 PM BOARDS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE - EVANGELISM	7 5 PM BELL CHOIR PRACTICE 6 PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	8 6 PM CHURCH COUNCIL	9	10
11 9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:15 AM S.S. & BIBLE CLASS	12 2:30 PM CONFIRMATION	13 6:30 PM GSLS BOARD	14 5 PM BELL CHOIR PRACTICE 6 PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	15 1:30 PM CONCORDIA 6 PM VOTER'S ASSEMBLY MEETING	16	17 HARMS FAMILY FELLOWSHIP HALL
18 9:00 AM WORSHIP/ COMMUNION 10:15 AM S.S. & BIBLE CLASS	19 2:30 PM CONFIRMATION	20 6 PM BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	21 5 PM BELL CHOIR PRACTICE 6 PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	22 6 PM BOARD OF TRUSTEES	23	24
25 9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:15 AM S.S. & BIBLE CLASS	26 2:30 PM CONFIRMATION	27	28 5 PM BELL CHOIR PRACTICE 6 PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	29 7 PM BOARD OF ELDERS	30	31



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

700 S. Fourth St.  
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Non-Profit Organization

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Pekin, IL

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**Take Down Christmas Decorations**

**Sunday, January 4**

*After the Sunday School hour*

**Voter's Assembly**

**Thursday, January 15**

**6:00 p.m.**

