



# RENEWED IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

## WINTER 2024-2025 EDITION

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### OUR MISSION

We learn and grow together in faith and God's love as we reach out to all people.

### **When it is broken asunder**

Siblings in Christ,  
 This is my last newsletter to the Renewed in Grace co-op, and I wanted to take a minute to thank you all for the few months of ministry for which I have been able to be with you. Each congregation has certain gifts and assets that will need to be evaluated and arranged for the best use for ministry going forward.

It is hard when relationships break-up, and the end of the co-op is no different than a long engagement that ends in a broken relationship rather than marriage. Both parties bear some responsibility for the break-up, and will take what has been learned over the last eight years to inform what kind of relationships will be formed in the future.

I will continue to hold both congregations in prayer as I move on to my new call in Lebanon. If you ever find yourself in the area, feel free to drop-in and say "Hi" to me at Salem Lutheran Church.

As I move on in ministry, I will no longer be available for pastoral acts, and hope you will find that your new interim pastor or regularly called pastor able to support your pastoral care needs.

May God watch over us while we are apart.

Your sister in Christ,  
 Pastor Liz Polanzke

# Letter to Trinity

Dear Barb and members of Trinity Lutheran Church.

On November 24, 2024, St. Peter's Lutheran Church held a special congregation meeting to vote on the recommendation from St. Peter's council to withdraw from the Renewed In Grace Cooperative ministry. After presentation of the recommendation and discussion, the vote of those members present was unanimous to withdraw from the cooperative ministry. Additional conversation confirmed St. Peter's desire to begin worshipping exclusively at St. Peter's in January 2025. This will give both congregations time to plan for that to occur.

According to our articles of agreement, we will notify Synod of this decision, and, this decision begins a 6-month period of separating the many areas that the two congregations have been sharing. It is St. Peter's intention during this transition to continue to live by the guidelines for the cooperative ministry which includes practicing kindness; being respectful of one another; praying for one another; speaking the truth and listening to one another in love; and supporting one another.

I pray that both congregations will continue to discern God's will for them and move forward trusting in God's abiding presence and love.

God's Peace be with you,  
Patrick Hawkins  
St. Peter's Council President

## Letter from the Presidents

Time is going by fast, and fall is quickly turning to winter. We thought we would catch everyone up on what has happened since the last newsletter came out.

- **Highspire UMC:** Co-op Council was in discussions with Highspire UMC to see if there was a way we could help or partner with them. They made the heartbreaking decision to close. Their last worship was on November 3 (All Saints Sunday) and the building is closed to the public as of November 7. Our prayers are with them as their members go forward.
- **Recommendations from the Consolidation Task Force:** The Consolidation Task Force put together eight recommendations for the two congregational councils to consider.

The recommendations were:

- That weekly worship be held only at Highspire beginning October 27, 2024, Reformation Sunday at 10 AM, followed by weekly fellowship.
- That the office be maintained at Trinity, forwarding all mail and phone calls to Trinity until the offices at the worship location are ready for moving to that location.
- That the congregations merge under Trinity Lutheran's Constitution with assistance from the Synod.
- That the treasurers of the congregations begin the process of combining funds and agree upon a software tracking system or engaging an outside bookkeeper with the intention of completing the process by Thanksgiving 2024.
- That the office consolidates the rosters of the congregations.
- Moving all service ministry to Highspire.
- The Council of Trinity engage the services of a realtor to obtain a property assessment for Trinity and begin to consider the options for regifting or selling the property.
- Weekly Christian Education be offered for adults and children with a projected start date of October 27, 2024, if all child protection policies are updated and requirements met, and teachers identified. ...continued on page 3

# Letter from the Presidents continued...

In a joint meeting on August 21, following spirited discussions the two councils approved the recommendations. Following this, both congregations had time to read and discuss the recommendations.

Based on the feedback from those discussions, St. Peter's Council voted to affirm the recommendations. Trinity's council, however, proposed that the co-op continue but without calling a pastor. Instead, they felt a chaplain would meet their needs better. Pastor Liz had made clear that when congregations seek a chaplain instead of a pastor, it is usually done when that congregation is preparing to close.

Following discussions, St. Peter's council discerned that Trinity has a vastly different vision of the future than St. Peter's does. As such, they recommended to their congregation that St. Peter's should leave the co-op.

St. Peter's voted on this at a special congregational meeting on November 24, 2024 (Christ the King Sunday). The vote of those members present was unanimous to withdraw from the cooperative ministry. Additional conversation confirmed St. Peter's desire to begin worshipping exclusively at St. Peter's in January 2025. This will give both congregations time to plan for that to occur. According to our articles of agreement, this decision begins a 6-month period of separating the many areas that the two congregations have been sharing.

Synod has been informed of St. Peter's decision. Pastor Jorgensen, the Director of Mission for Synod, has communicated that he will work with both congregations to help them determine their paths.

Since Co-op council is the body that is responsible for coordinating the joint efforts of the co-op, their focus now will be in coordinated the uncoupling of the Co-op. They will identify those areas where the congregations currently work jointly and will set a schedule of what decisions the two congregations will need to make to affect the separation.

When we began the journey which lead to forming Renewed in Grace, we didn't know what would happen and where we would go. We still don't know exactly what the future holds for our congregations. As the co-op ends, we hope that we can all remain siblings in Christ, encouraging and supporting each other in the future.

As we sometimes pray in worship:

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ. Amen

Patrick Hawkins, St. Peter's Council President  
Barbara Kain, Trinity Council President  
Matt Hunt, Co-op Council President

## Renewed in Grace Co-op Council

Matt Hunt, President 717-991-5106  
Stephanie Strauss, Secretary 717-319-6429  
Richard Deutsch 717-512-1136  
Jill Hawkins 717-571-6655  
Kane High 717-979-5980  
Mary Hunt 717-344-1393  
Matt Krovic 717-558-8584  
Doris Reynolds 717-579-8868

## St. Peter's

Patrick Hawkins, President 717-903-2987  
Richard Deutsch, Vice President 717-512-1136  
Helene Hoch, Secretary 717-343-8397  
Kane High, Treasurer 717-979-5980  
Grace Hoover 717-991-2573  
Justin Maynard 610-914-1901  
Shanna Mulford 717-329-0803  
Judy Souders 717-576-9574  
Stephanie Strauss 717-319-6429



## Trinity

Barb Kain, President 717-939-6825  
Doris Reynolds, Vice President 717-579-8868  
Judy Krovic, Secretary 717-571-5123  
Ron Kain, Treasurer 717-939-6825  
Bob Carillo 717-938-6653  
Bob Emrich 717-761-3661  
Jan Holwig 717-608-7220  
John Michtich 717-991-5444  
Richard Szekeres 717-919-4628

# Worship and Office Information

## Renewed in Grace Sunday Worship

(All services begin at 10:00 am unless otherwise noted)

- December 1: Trinity-First Sunday in Advent
- December 8: St. Peter's-Second Sunday in Advent
- December 15: Trinity-Third Sunday in Advent
- December 22: St. Peter's-Fourth Sunday in Advent
- December 24 Tuesday: St. Peter's-RIG Christmas Eve service at 7 pm
- December 25 Wednesday: St. Peter's-RIG Christmas Day service at 7 pm
- December 29: St. Peter's-Lessons and Carols



## Renewed in Grace Advent Offerings

- \*Wednesday, December 4, 6:30 pm @St. Peter's-**Holden Evening Prayer**
- \*Wednesday, December 11, 6:30 pm @St. Peter's-**Holden Evening Prayer**
- \*Wednesday, December 18, 6:30 pm @St. Peter's-**Holden Evening Prayer**



## Stay tuned for details for the following services:

- January 5
- January 12: Baptism of Our Lord
- January 19
- January 26
- February 2
- February 9
- February 16
- February 23



## Office Hours

**Pastor** - During the month of December, time with Pastor Liz is by appointment at this time. She may be reached by calling or texting her cell phone 717-654-2334 or by email [lpolanzke@gmail.com](mailto:lpolanzke@gmail.com)

## Secretary

Secretary office hours are TBD. Please contact Jan Holwig or leave a message at Trinity office phone 717-939-4998.

# Worship Information Continued...

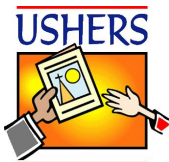
Worship Servers	Acolyte/Crucifer	Assistant	Lay Reader
12/1/2024	Judy Krovic	Judy Krovic	Ed Holwig
12/8/2024	Landon Keyser	Sally Schonewolf	
12/15/2024	Judy Krovic	Doris Reynolds	Doris Reynolds
12/22/2024	Brady Keyser	Patrick Hawkins	
12/29/2024	Brady Keyser	Sally Schonewolf	

\*Stay tuned for January & February Servers at a later date.



## Trinity Flower Sponsorships for 2025

Jan is starting to take names for sponsorships during the new year 2025. Please call Jan (717-608-7220) if you are able to sponsor altar flowers. The cost remains \$25. THANKS!



*If you would like to join Altar Guild or become an Usher for Renewed in Grace, talk with a member of either group!*

# Outreach News

## Monday Night Meals

Happy winter everyone. At **Monday Night Meals** we are now averaging about 200 servings a night. That's what happens when you are on television. Speaking about TV, most of you know that I had been nominated as one of 8 people entered in the **2024 WGAL 8 Who Care Award**. Unfortunately I did not win the \$2000 prize (this will sound like a failed Oscar winner) but it was such an amazing honor to even be among such well deserved people.

We continue to receive tremendous amount of support from so many people and organizations. Currently the Central Penn fitness people are collecting coats and offering them to our **Thankful Threads Closet**. We are surrounded by so many blessings and have so many things to be thankful for.

Our **Food Bank** has now been averaging 80+ families each time we are open. The Lower Swatara Lions Club generously offered their collections of goods from their food drive. It was a tremendous boost to our food bank.

Thank you to all for your support and donations.

The **Christmas store** we have open each Monday night is very popular. We might actually make a little profit. We are very grateful for all the contributions. I don't know about you but I got some spring cleaning done.

Blessings to all of you from Sally



Dear Renewed in Grace Members,

We continued to help our community members in need during the Fall season through Laundry Love and making sure their clothes are clean. We met on the second Thursday of each month, 6:30pm-8:30pm, at Boardwalk Laundromat across the street from St. Peter's in Highspire. We pay for the washing and drying of laundry for anyone who enters and accepts our help. We also direct anyone who needs new/used clothing to Thankful Threads. Sally opens shop on every Laundry Love night.

The number of people served and loads of laundry paid for are below for the fall months.

September 2024 - 17 people served, 78 loads

October 2024 - 23 people served, 102 loads

November 2024 - 20 people served, 82 loads

We appreciate your support of Laundry Love. Your generous donations make it possible for us to help people have clean clothes.

You can support us by donating online at the Renewed in Grace Co-op website, by including it with your offering and specifying "Laundry Love", or by adding your cash to our Laundry Love tub in church.

Thank you,

Grace Hoover, Randy Hoover, Judy Kunzman, Sally Schonewolf, Patrick Hawkins, and Jill Hawkins



# Outreach News Continued...

## Tree4Hope Corner



### Hope Academy Sponsors Needed

*Hope Academy Sponsors Needed* – Join our friends Jenn and David Hope-Tringali and Tree4Hope in their amazing work in Guatemala. As Renewed in Grace, we are sponsoring 2 students at Hope Academy, a STEAM academy for girls. Please consider signing up to sponsor a student at Hope Academy in Guatemala. **Both congregations have a sign-up sheet for 2024 in the narthex and sponsorships are still needed for the remainder of this year! You can also call or email the office to add your name to the sponsor sheet.** A one-month sponsorship is \$100. Contributions can be marked “Hope Academy sponsorship” and placed in the collection plate. If you are unsure which month(s) you signed up to sponsor, call the church office.

**ChicaBean Coffee-** We are now partnering with ChicaBean Specialty Coffee, which is an all-female run coffee bean grower and roaster in Guatemala. Unlike other coffee growing and roasting operations, these women are given a livable wage. By supporting ChicaBean, we will also be supporting ourselves and the various ministries that we do here at Renewed in Grace. Not only will we get something in return, but we will be helping ChicaBean stay in business so that they can continue to promote financial and personal independence for women in Guatemala. Tree4Hope will also receive a small donation when you purchase with our order form. THREE ministries will be helped through the simple act of buying coffee!



**To support Renewed in Grace and Tree4Hope through purchasing coffee, please try not to use the affiliate link, but rather give your orders to Pat Hawkins and he will place your order. Order forms are now available in the narthex/foyer of each church. If you have any questions about this program, please talk to Pat Hawkins.**



**Tree4Hope**, one of the Lower Susquehanna Synod global mission partners, is excited to have **begun the second school year 2024-2025 at Hope Academy in Pennsylvania!** This bilingual, STEAM based preschool program, grounded in the Lutheran tradition, is operating out of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Middletown. **This year's registration is full with 14 students (a class of 3-5 year olds) and 12 on the waiting list.** Plans for the 2025-2026 school year include expanding to two classes: a class of 3 year olds and a class of 4 year olds/Pre-K. There are opportunities to financially support this venture. Email Deacon David Hope-Tringali at [david@tree4hope.org](mailto:david@tree4hope.org) to learn more and help make a difference in the lives of young children in our community today!

# Outreach News Continued...

## PRAYER SHAWLS

Prayer shawls are stacked up on a table in the foyer of Trinity. If you know of someone (or even yourself) that is in special need of the comfort of a shawl and the prayers that go with it, please feel free to take one from the pile. If you are taking one to a friend, please check the sign-out book to be sure that person hasn't already received one from us. If they haven't, please sign the book and feel free to take a sheet that explains the prayer shawl to deliver along with it. These shawls are free of charge.



## HURRICANE RELIEF DONATIONS

Lutheran World Response is responding with help to needed areas of the two hurricanes that have hit our country. The LDR has strong relationships in the regions and is already at work on the ground. Gifts to LDR equip them to respond to those affected by hurricanes and related disasters, such as mudslides, severe storms and flooding. These gifts also empower them to respond to disasters whenever and wherever they strike. Gifts to "Hurricane Response" will be used in full (100%) to assist those affected by hurricanes, until the response is complete. Please prayerfully consider sending a check to Lutheran Disaster Response at:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ELCA Gift Processing Center

P.O. Box 1809

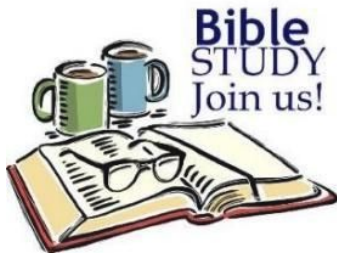
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

and write "where needed most" or "Hurricane Response" on your check's memo line.

THANK YOU for your consideration!



# Happenings



## All are Welcome Bible Study

The All are Welcome Bible Study continues to meet on Tuesday nights at 6:30pm via Zoom.

We are working our way through the Bible. We are currently reading the Book of 2 Kings. This winter, we will also read Romans, 1 Chronicles, and 1 Corinthians

We send out a weekly email with the Zoom link, as well as a brief summary of what we covered the previous week. To get the link for attending the Zoom session, or just to get on the weekly email list, please contact Matt and Mary Hunt at [allarewelcomebiblestudy@gmail.com](mailto:allarewelcomebiblestudy@gmail.com)

## Come As You Are Worship

As part of Renewed in Grace's continued attempt to share God's word, we continue to offer lay-lead online prayer services on the third Thursday of every month at 6:30pm. The services are streamed live through the Renewed in Grace YouTube channel.

We are calling these services, Come as You Are Worship, to help communicate that we want to invite and welcome everyone just as they are.

We are hoping through these services we can:

- Affirm for all that they are a beloved child of God.
- Through prayers, the hearing of God's Word, make everyone's burdens lighter, their hearts encouraged, and their souls refreshed.
- Continue to grow God's church in the world!

The schedule for the services is below.

1. December 19, 2024
2. January 16, 2025
3. February 20, 2025



If there are any questions about the service, contact Matt Hunt at [mionhunt@gmail.com](mailto:mionhunt@gmail.com)

# Happenings Continued...

## Trinity Congregational Meeting

Trinity's annual meeting will be held after the service on Sunday, December 15. At that time, we will vote for Council members and review the 2025 budget. Other very important topics relating to the future of our church will be discussed also.

PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND!

## Oktoberfest 2024

We had a great turnout for our 27th annual dance on Saturday, October 26 at the Chambers Hill Fire Co. social hall. 105 people (including 7 kids) enjoyed polka dancing and lots of delicious food, beer, sodas, coffee, prizes, and, of course, fellowship. Our committee wants to thank everyone for their donations of food, drinks, prizes, and EFFORT to make our dance look so effortless. Proceeds from our dance went to Monday Night Meals at St. Peter's and Thursday Night Meals at Trinity.

The participation was so great that we are "penciled in" for next year on Saturday, October 25, 2025. Mark your calendar!



## Soup and Bake Sale at Trinity

On Election Day, November 5, we once again had our soup and bake sale at Trinity. We started at 7 AM with 135 pints of soup (chicken corn, ham & bean, and beef/vegetable) and lots of baked goods and fudge. We were sold out of everything by 3:30 PM. Proceeds from this sale help to pay for communion supplies, candles, bulletins, and several of our Thursday Night Meal expenses. Thanks to everyone who cooked, baked, set up, sold our goodies, and cleaned up afterward. It was truly a group effort!



# Happenings Continued.....



## Lutheran Camping Corporation Upcoming Events

**Advent Day Apart at The Wittel Farm** - Saturday, December 7 @ 9:00 am - 2: pm **Canceled**

**Celebrating Wider Welcome! @ Kirchenwald** - Saturday, December 14 @ 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

**Advent/Christmas In The Barn at The Wittel Farm** - Sunday, December 22 @7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

**Winter Youth Retreat at Kirchenwald** - Friday-Sunday, January 3 - 5, 2025

**Chicken & Waffles @ Nawakwa** - Sunday, January 19, 2025 @ 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

**Winter Fun Day @ Kirchenwald** - Sundays, January 19 & February 16, 2025 @1:00-5:00 pm



Register for events at [LutheranCamping.org](http://LutheranCamping.org) or call 717-677-8211

Now accepting 2025 Summer staff applications!

## Winter Birthdays

### ST. PETER'S

#### December

6th Savannah Sutch  
18th Weston Hawkins  
    Rose Hoover  
24th Nancy Sheaffer  
26th Rita Pressler

#### January

4th Jeff Hoch  
5th Carole Orendorf  
8th Jade Lee  
9th Joelle Hoch  
10th John Pogasic  
30th Sheryl Keyser

#### February

1st Barbara Johnson  
18th Steve Strauss  
20th Geraldine Reider  
21st Beth Morgan  
22nd Carol Dell  
    Michael Cloninger  
24th Caity Hawkins  
26th Matthew Johnson



### TRINITY

#### December

2nd Bob Carrillo  
19th George Gabel  
21st Doris Reynolds

#### January

8th Peg Bowling  
    Leslie Martz  
18th Bob Emrich  
22nd Cheryl Hippensteel  
30th Nancy Paine

#### February

7th Mary Hunt  
12th Bonnie Ward  
    Zack Szekeres  
13th Ed Holwig  
21st Joan Hogentogler  
23rd Edie Carrillo  
27th Richard Martz

## Those Who Need Our Cards and Prayers

The following are those who cannot get to church because of physical problems, etc. Please remember them with a card, a visit, and/or your prayers. **Changes are in red.**

### Members in care facilities:

*John Brunner* - 600 Masonic Dr., Evergreen Area Hospice, Rm. 3820  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

*Doris Miller* - Middletown Home, 999 W. Hbg. Pike, Middletown, PA 17057

*Warren Nelson* - Inlet Coastal Resort Assisted Living, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576

*Geraldine Reider* - Brookdale Assisted Living, 3560 N. Progress Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17111

### Shut-ins

*Jacqueline Acri, Connie Barner, Joan Hogentogler, Rose Hoover, Ann Kline, Leslie & Lisa Listnizer, Joyce Stickle, Lynette Stough, Jeff Myers*



### RENEWED IN GRACE PRAYER CHAIN

*Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts*

*And your minds in Christ Jesus."*

If you have a prayer request for yourself, a family member, or a friend, please contact **Jill Hawkins, 717-571-6655, [jillhawkins5@msn.com](mailto:jillhawkins5@msn.com).**

Jill will start the request by calling it onto the prayer chain. Please remember that we accept requests for any person who needs prayer, member or non-member. Thank you.

# Christmas 2024 Decorations Orders

## St. Peter's Christmas Decorations Order Form 2024

Members of the Altar Guild request your help as they prepare to decorate our Sanctuary for the upcoming joyous Christmas Season by donating towards these decorations. If you would like to order, please fill out the order form below and either:

1. Place your order in the offering plate.
2. Call Helene Hoch (717-343-8397).
3. Mail the form to Helene – 49 E. Emaus Street, Middletown PA 17057
4. Mail the form to church – 240 Broad Street, PO Box 97, Highspire PA 17034



Please indicate the number beside each item you wish to donate and include your check payable to:

**St. Peter's Altar Guild.** The deadline for orders is December 10th .

Thank You!

- # \_\_\_\_\_ Red Poinsettias @ \$12.00 (asking for 30)
- # \_\_\_\_\_ White Poinsettias @ \$12.00 (asking for 12))
- # \_\_\_\_\_ Inside wreaths @ \$30.00 (need 4 wreaths)
- Pine Roping @ \$60.00
- Tree @ \$100.00

As a memorial to:

---

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To Honor:

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My/Our name as it should appear in the bulletin:

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**RENEWED IN GRACE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY**

**ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

240 BROAD STREET, P.O. BOX 97  
HIGHSPIRE, PA 17034

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

221 SOUTH SECOND STREET  
STEELTON, PA 17113

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

WINTER 2024-2025 EDITION  
RENEWED IN GRACE CO-OP  
NEWSLETTER



**RENEWED IN GRACE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY**

Pastor Elizabeth Polanzke

Worship with us on Sunday mornings in person or online.  
Worship times/locations are included in newsletter.

Phone: 717-939-3492 (Highspire)

717-939-4998 (Steelton)

Email: [stpeters240@verizon.net](mailto:stpeters240@verizon.net)

[trinitysteelton221@yahoo.com](mailto:trinitysteelton221@yahoo.com)

Online: [renewedingracecoop.org](http://renewedingracecoop.org) OR [trinitysteelton.org](http://trinitysteelton.org)

*St. Peter's Highspire and Trinity Steelton are located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Susquehannock peoples and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.*