

Trinity Highlights

September 2026 Newsletter

309-346-1391 ~ www.trinitypekin.com

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

Stewardship Report:

General Fund Report:	July <u>Actual</u>	Year to Date <u>Actual</u>	Year to Date <u>Budget</u>
Income	\$ 14,324	\$ 127,191	\$139,216
Expenses	<u>23,709</u>	<u>177,437</u>	<u>189,140</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus	(9,385)	(50,246)	(49,924)

Giving in July was significantly lower than what was projected and is \$12,000+ lower year to date. Expenses were a bit lower than budget and are close to \$12,000 lower year to date.

The General Fund balance at the end of July was \$259,329.73.

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



Join us

Sunday, September 20 at 9:00 a.m.

for a special service to
commemorate Trinity's
85th Anniversary!

*"For the Lord is good;
His steadfast love endures forever,
and His faithfulness to all generations."*
Psalm 100:5

Trinity's Wiener Roast

Friday, September 25

6:00 p.m.

Hot dogs, buns, chips, drinks and table service
will be provided.

Items to Bring: Please bring a dish to share,
lawn chairs and wiener sticks. There is a sign-
up sheet on the bulletin board so we can plan on
how much food to have on hand.



Trinity's Service Volunteers - September 2026

ACOLYTES

09/06 9:00 a.m. *Open*
09/13 9:00 a.m. Lexi Brown
09/20 9:00 a.m. Ella Spaeth
09/27 9:00 a.m. Edith Spaeth

BIBLE BREAKFAST HELPERS

Pick-Up Donuts:

09/06 *Open*
09/13 *Open*
09/20 *Open*
09/27 *Open*

Prep Donuts, Make Coffee, Pour Juice:

09/06 *Open*
09/13 *Open*
09/20 *Open*
09/27 *Open*

ALTAR GUILD

09/06 Melissa Deverman / Debbie Fornoff
09/20 *Open* / Cori Spaeth

USHERS

09/06 9:00 a.m. Dave Harms, Mike Seidell
09/13 9:00 a.m. Chris Whitley, Owen Miller
09/20 9:00 a.m. Dave Harms, Mike Seidell
09/27 9:00 a.m. Chris Whitley, Owen Miller

ALTAR FLOWERS

09/06 *Open*
09/13 Bob Lutz, *in honor of several family birthdays!*
09/20 *Open*
09/27 *Open*

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS / READERS

09/06 Rob Fornoff
09/20 Brad Juergens

READERS

09/13 Matt Deverman
09/27 Mike Seidell



Did You Know?

In 2001 a well-intentioned but misguided 21-year-old woman named Abby Johnson began working as a volunteer for Planned Parenthood in Texas, thinking she was going to help women with their health care. By 2007 she had advanced to Clinic Director. In fact, she was named Planned Parenthood's Director of the Year in 2008, but after being called on to assist in a surgical abortion in her clinic she came to a fuller understanding of what a surgical abortion actually is, she was sickened by it, she ended her employment there and became a committed anti-abortion / pro-life activist. Perhaps you saw the 2019 film *Unplanned* about her experience with our nation's largest abortion provider and how she was assisted in her decision to quit by a Christian sidewalk counseling group she had opposed while she was clinic director. While that film is well worth viewing, Abby now has begun another pro-life organization named *And Then There Were None* which reaches out to abortion clinic workers and assists them in quitting as she did! So far, she claims to have assisted more than 700 abortion clinic workers to leave their jobs and find new occupations, and she has a new documentary film coming out soon called *Unthinkable* that recounts the stories of these workers and their experiences in the abortion industry. You can learn more about this new documentary by going to www.abortionworker.com.

From the Pastor's Desk

Cross Eyes: The Apostles' Creed

"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." 1 Corinthians 15:14

Dear Members of Messiah,

As kids, we all probably tried crossing our eyes just to see if we could do it—and then tried to see ourselves in the mirror, which was actually the more difficult part. We did it for fun, but being cross-eyed can actually be a condition that doctors try to correct.

We began last month a series of sermons looking at the Six Chief Parts of the catechism, and we're considering how each of these crucial teachings of the Christian faith is centered in Jesus' death on the cross. Last week: the Ten Commandments. This week: the second Chief Part, the Creed. In this sense, "cross eyes" are no malady, but the way to see clearly the Holy Trinity, the one true God, whom we confess in the Apostles' Creed. With Eyes That See the Cross of Christ—Cross Eyes—I Believe in God the Father Almighty^[1] and in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit.

We believe and behold with the cross eyes of faith—and confess with our mouth—the truth of the three-in-one God, the Father who created and sustains the universe, the Son who redeems the world, and the Holy Spirit who empowers the world for living a life of holiness, faithful to and deriving from the grace of God the Father, the sacrifice of his Son, and the power of his Spirit. As we bear that testimony, that confession of what we believe, we see evidence all around us that this God, the Three in One and One in Three, continues to be intimately and personally active in our lives and in our world, and we bear witness to and confess the truth of his divine nature.

Optometrists measure 20/20 vision to be ideal, but not all vision is equal. Some vision is blurry and inaccurate. A very common condition of blurred vision—most of us eventually have it—is called myopia or nearsightedness. For those of us with this malady, distant objects are blurry and out of focus, while nearby objects are seen clearly. With the widespread use of contacts, we don't have to fess up publicly, but lots of you know what myopia is all about.

Another condition is hyperopia, or farsightedness. In this condition, distant objects appear clearer than those nearby. Close objects look blurry. A few folks have this early on. Later in life, nearly every adult suffers a different condition but with similar effect. That's when you get reading glasses.

A third condition is strabismus. The eyes don't align properly, causing one or both eyes to turn inward, outward, upward, or downward. This impacts depth perception. This is that malady we commonly call being cross-eyed.

All these and other eye problems distort what we see and confuse our perception of the world and the things that we encounter. We thank God for spectacles, contact lenses, and laser surgery that can help correct these conditions so that our vision is restored to 20/20 and everything in the world clears up and comes into focus.

More serious are the distortions that prevent people from seeing God clearly. Some people read Scripture and come away with a myopic view of God. When he's in our face, he's clear for most of us and his works are profound. Maybe we've just heard good news in his Word, and it jives with some good experience we've had recently. Or maybe we've just heard a warning from God's Law, and we silently agree we've broken it. On the other hand, when God seems to move farther away, it's more difficult to discern his work. We've experienced tragedy, and we wonder if he's really out there.

Other people read the exact same Bible and come away with a hyperopic view of God. His work is clear, they think, when he's kept far away in the distance. They'll say "Praise the Lord!" about a theoretical God up there in the sky who rained down a certain blessing they've just received. But a personal, near-to-us God is unfathomable for them. They don't want him to speak directly to them condemning their sin. Or maybe their own broken relationships make it hard for them to believe God truly wants to be intimate, to love them.

Still others read the same passage and come away with a view of God that's distorted because their perception of the character of God is confused and the seeming contradictions are too much for them. It's a difficult thing to view God as eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, gracious and loving, forgiving and righteous as the Gospel pictures him and yet also bring into focus the God who is holy, set apart, and just, in adherence to the Law and his punishment of sin.

This God is sometimes in focus because he's near and sometimes in focus as he's further away. And sometimes he defies focus because we're not sure what we're looking for or what we're seeing. You know this distinction as we remind ourselves of the two Latin terms *Deus absconditus*, the God who hides himself, and *Deus revelatus*, which means the revealed God, a term thought to be coined by the sainted Martin Luther in the Heidelberg Theses of 1518.

The Creed helps us understand that this is Elohim, the plural God of the Old Testament, who at creation speaks to himself in the plural when he says, "Let us make man" (Gen 1:26, emphasis added). But because we are so far removed from this event, when we speak in the First Article of the Creed about "God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," he may seem to us to be very distant. Jesus tells us that God must be approached in spirit and truth (Jn 4:24). Which begs the question "What about the Spirit?"—the Third Person of the Trinity, whom we confess in the Third Article of the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Spirit." Complex things defy focus and often appear fuzzy, even unknowable.

This perception of the faraway God and the complexity of the Trinity cannot be brought into focus without seeing him through the Second Article. That is where we begin to develop cross eyes.

Sometimes the challenge is to know where to focus so that objects in the foreground and objects in the background are both in focus. That is the genius of the Creed. In the Second Article, directly in the middle of the confession, is the testimony of Jesus. The testimony of our Lord rightly proclaimed has the cross at the center. To understand and accurately perceive and discern the reality of our God is through cross eyes. These cross eyes introduce us to Immanuel, the close-in God, who is with us, neither leaving nor forsaking us.

Paul understands this as he writes to the people of God in the church at Corinth. They've begun to have their vision obscured by all the conflicting philosophies and false religions surrounding them in this ancient metropolis: "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (vv 1–4).

The apostle reminds them to cling to, to stand on, the Gospel, the good news that he proclaimed to them because it is the Gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus, who was crucified and died on the cross to take away our sin, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day.

That should sound familiar. The text even says that all of this is in accordance with the Scriptures. What we behold through these cross eyes is not an idle fairy tale. This is the truth. Paul reminds us that Cephas saw the resurrected Lord Jesus, as did the Twelve and the five hundred, as well as James and all the apostles. The resurrected Christ also appeared to Paul himself as one untimely born. That could mean as one whose seeing was out of focus until he was able to view the world through cross eyes.

Paul reminds the saints in Corinth of how diligently he worked on the proclamation of the Gospel, the Good News, by the grace of God and how they believed. Understand that bringing the world, both the physical and the spiritual world, into focus requires that we understand and believe the basic foundational things, and that is the essence of the Lutheran faith and the Apostles' Creed.

God the Father, Creator of all things, made us perfect and endowed us with the capacity to keep all things in full focus. We could clearly see the Father in the heavenly distance and at the same time see the physical creation with clarity. Then sin broke in and put our view out of focus. It is Jesus who comes to cover our sin and pay the price for our iniquity by his suffering and death on the cross. Yes, it is Jesus who rose from the dead and is coming again in glory to judge the entire world, both living and dead. And it is the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth about Christ (Jn 15:26; 16:13–14) and creates faith in us. In other words, the Holy Spirit gives us the capacity to view the world through cross eyes, which brings all things back into focus.

There are any number of old heresies that are proclaimed even in this day and are designed by the enemy to cloud our focus once again, to uncross our eyes so that God gets blurred once more. The temptation is to view the Godhead through the eyes of intellect or emotion. These heresies say that Jesus cannot be God because that would insult our intellectual sensibilities—for God cannot be his own Son. It must be that Jesus became God at his baptism but prior to that was only man. It gets even more blurry, because then God has to depart from Jesus at the point of death, so that God did not die on the cross. Some even say that because the word *Trinity* is not in the Bible, it must not be true.

The early church fathers in their apologetics took on ^[1]these old heresies. Luther himself wrote against the heresies of his day. There's nothing new under the sun. All the old heresies come back as if new but are really old, tired, worn devices of the enemy to blind us and separate us from the truth.

The Scriptures bear out the importance of remembering the foundational truths we received at first. This is the very simple, yet at the same time profound, true doctrine of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Athanasian Creed says it this way: "We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance. For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another. But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal" (*LSB*, p 319).

Our intellect will never embrace this. Our natural hearts can never receive it. Our carnal minds will never accept it. We can never believe until and unless we are guided by faith to view God through cross eyes that look through the sacrifice of Jesus to behold the glory of the Father revealed and the power of the Holy Spirit.

I encourage you to find your hymnal or catechism. Knock the dust off it. Open to the portion written on the Creed and get a refresher. I also encourage you to get to church a little early next Sunday and find a quiet corner in the sanctuary. Open to the Athanasian Creed and read what the orthodox early church fathers had to say as they viewed that very nature of God through Calvary's grace-given cross eyes.

In Christ,

Pastor Mark R. Drews

Camp Cilca News

Camp Cilca Whippoorwill Golf Outing Friday, September 11 at Hickory Point, Forsyth, IL

Check in begins at 11:00 a.m. and shotgun start at 12:30. Due to the generosity of the Lutheran Legacy Foundation, much of the cost of the outing has been underwritten. While \$70.00 will cover your basic cost (golf, cart, dinner), you are free to give more with the knowledge that it will go to the long term benefit of Camp Cilca. Proceeds collected from sponsors and players will all go directly to Camp Cilca and the Cilca Endowment Fund. Make check payable to: Lutheran Golf Fundraiser, Grace Lutheran Church, P. O. Box 493, Paris, IL 61944 Contact Pastor Dan Smith at 217-466-1215 to register.

Annual CID LLL Fall Retreat: The topic for this year's Annual Fall Retreat of CID LLL District is "Life Issues." We will have the Biblical Perspective, CID LCMS Perspective, and the Illinois Right to Life Perspective. We will be discussing the preborn issues, as well as end of life issues. This will be Saturday, September 12, at Camp Cilca with doors opening at 8:30 a.m. Retreat will be from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Registration is \$25.00 which includes lunch; deadline is September 7. Mail registration to: Deloris Blessman, 24204 CR 1850N, Topeka, IL 61567. For more information contact Deloris at delorisblessman@yahoo.com or 309-361-1461.



The Work of Christ in the Midst of Tragedy - 25th Anniversary of 9/11

St. Paul's Lutheran Church - 227 E. Market St. - Havana, IL 62622

September 17, 2026 - 6:30 p.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Havana, IL welcomes Pastor Wrede as he recounts serving at Ground Zero on September 11, 2001 and ministering to victims and first responders at the World Trade Center. Anyone is welcome to attend.

A Dollar for Missions News: This year five projects have been approved and three have already been completed. Dollar for Missions has assisted in the funding of Hispanic ministry in Beardstown, paid for a beautiful aluminum sign for Wittenberg Student Center at Illinois State, and has provided funds for Immanuel – Charleston to revamp its student library. The two remaining projects include new flooring for the Wittenberg Student Center sanctuary and fellowship hall, and providing technology equipment and instruction materials for Central IL Deaf Outreach.

*Save
the
Date*

**75 & Over Dinner
Saturday, October 24
12:00 p.m.**

*Letters will be sent out and more
information will follow.*

September Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

September 1
Zoey Portillo
Laura Schmidt

September 4
Lauren Freehill
Jared Timian

September 5
Beth Abbott

September 6
Delores Shafer

September 8
Jeff Weisert

September 12
Avelyn Addison
Jodi Erickson
Matthew Juergens
Bob Lutz
Katilyn Stout

September 14
Shawn Mason
Dick Nash

September 19
Benjamin Vollmer

September 22
Melissa Deverman
Anthony Erickson

September 25
Oliver Spaeth

September 26
Jason Timian

September 27
Chris Whitley

September 28
Emersyn Juergens

September 29
Nocona Dan9iels

September 30
Heather Durham

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

**Bell Choir
& Choir Rehearsal**
Bell & Choir rehearsals will begin on **Wednesday, September 9.** The Bell Choir practices at 5:00 p.m. and the Choir rehearses at 6:00 p.m. Come join us to sing praises to our Lord!

Anniversaries

September 5
Andrew & Sara Staker

September 7
Bill & Sonia Heren
Janet & Todd Zevnik

September 10
Zach & Courtney Juergens

September 20
Anthony & Jodi Erickson

September 22
Eric & Fashia Eubanks
Dave & Theresa McDonough

September 28
Bret & Carol Maloney

July Sunday School Perfect Attendance

Haven Harms
Edith Spaeth
Franklin Spaeth
Mabel Spaeth
Oliver Spaeth

Confirmation will begin
Wednesday, September 9 at 3:30
p.m.

Voter's Assembly **Sunday, September 20** *During the Sunday School Hour*

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. There will still be Sunday School for the children to attend.

◀ August	September 2026						October ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
Trinity Lutheran Church	1941 - 2026 Celebrating 85 Years!	1 6 PM BOARDS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE - EVANGELISM	2	3 6 PM CHURCH COUNCIL	4	5	
6 9:00 AM WORSHIP/ COMMUNION 10:15 AM S.S. & BIBLE CLASS	7 <i>Labor Day</i>	8 6:30 PM GSLS BOARD	9 3:30 PM CONFIRMATION 5 PM BELL CHOIR PRACTICE 6 PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	10 1:30 PM CONCORDIA	11	12	
13 9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:15 AM S.S. & BIBLE CLASS	14	15 6 PM BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	16 3:30 PM CONFIRMATION 5 PM BELL CHOIR PRACTICE 6 PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	17 6 PM BOARD OF TRUSTEES	18	19	
20 9:00 AM WORSHIP/ COMMUNION 10:15 AM VOTER'S ASSEMBLY MEETING	21	22	23 3:30 PM CONFIRMATION 5 PM BELL CHOIR PRACTICE 6 PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	24 6 PM BOARD OF ELDERS	25 6 PM WIENER ROAST	26	
27 9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:15 AM S.S. & BIBLE CLASS	28	29	30 3:30 PM CONFIRMATION 5 PM BELL CHOIR PRACTICE 6 PM CHOIR REHEARSAL	Welcome Fall! 			



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

700 S. Fourth St.
Pekin, IL 61554

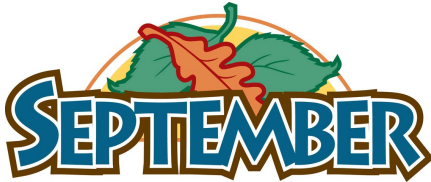
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Pekin, IL

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(Return Service Requested)



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