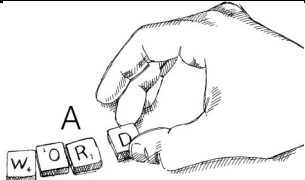


Trinity & Westridge

Monthly Newsletter
for Members & Friends

FEBRUARY

2026



from the
Pastor

Hello Church Family,

What a whirlwind 2026 has been already! We have hit the ground running and God's promise of new beginnings and possibilities for growth have already started indicating an exciting year ahead. However, even in the midst of the day to day business, I find myself reflecting on a verse from Psalm 46:10 - Be still and know that I am God. I invite you to take a moment and reflect with me on this passage.

God knows the chaos that occupies our day to day life. We have jobs, responsibilities, commitments, school activities, children and grandchildren's activities to attend, and then there is always house chores to add to the already never ending to do list. And that doesn't include the emotional or mental load that takes up space in our mind, body, and soul. What are we supposed to do? Let's do the unthinkable and stop...even just for a moment. Take a deep breath - find the ground - and recenter ourselves. In the stillness, think about what gives you energy. What fruit is being produced in your actions? How are you serving the Lord? Find the goodness in all the chaos. In the stillness, we are reminded Gods grace and blessings. We are able to focus our self awareness on Gods presence in our lives and give thanks for the experience of a new day and all of its potential.

As we enter into February, we begin our preparations for Lent, a time that specifically invites us to be still and know God. Throughout this season, let's use these moments of stillness to put into practice patience and grace. Patience with the pace of life's highs and lows. Grace in the growing edges of change. Patience when things aren't going the way we'd like them to. Grace when trying something new. May we use these spiritual gifts to hold steadfast in knowing that God is guiding us on a path filled with hope and promise. As it says in Hymn of Promise (one of my favorite hymns currently on repeat in my mind), "In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free. In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, un-revealed until its season, something God alone can see". I am looking forward to seeing what is revealed to us in our moments of stillness.

God's blessings to you all,
Pastor Caitlin



Youth Group

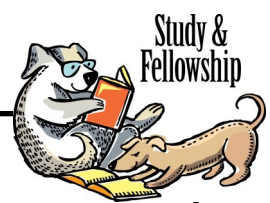


Youth Group is every 1st Wednesday at Westridge and 3rd Wednesday at Trinity from 6-8 pm with dinner provided. This is for children of all ages to come and have some fun while building a faith based community with their peers in a safe and nurturing environment. If you are willing to provide a meal for youth please sign up!! (20-25 people)

If you or someone you know (they do not need to be a member of Trinity or Westridge) would like to receive one on one care from a Stephen Minister, call the church office or Deb Ussery, 402-649-2330.



There was not enough interest for a fall **Stephen Minister** class, but we are hoping for a spring class - please let Deb know if you would be interested or have any questions.



Bible Study
 Monday—2 pm—at Westridge
 Thursday—4:30 pm—at Little Lyon Coffee Co.
 All are welcome to join this study!

Please remember to let Pastor Caitlin know if you are sick, hospitalized or otherwise in need of pastoral care. She wants to care for us in times of struggle, but she can't do that if she doesn't know! Share joys with her too!



✝ Shirley Summers, January 23

Please offer PRAYERS for those in our church families (as 1-31-2026)

- ♦ **Those in need of healing of the body, mind & spirit:**
T: George Tollman
W: Matt Werzyn, Reta Clark, Judy West
- ♦ **Those facing cancer:** W: _____ T: George Tollman
- ♦ **Those who are at home & in care facilities & all care givers:**
Home: W Sharon Carlow
Meadows: W Rev. Lee Peterson, Mavis Miller, Velda Long T Jerry McCallum
Heritage of Bel Air: W Leon Chapman
St. Joseph's, Norfolk: W Fran McAllister Madison House: W Betty Walz
Heritage of Fountain Point T Shirley Neidig, Phyllis Trine W Elaine Fuller



TRINITY UMC
 506 S. Main Street, Madison NE 68748
 (402) 454-2514
Worship: Sunday at 11 AM
The Grace Place: Welcoming all who seek his presence and grace. Come find God.

WESTRIDGE UMC
 2000 W. Norfolk Ave, Norfolk NE 68701
 (402) 371-9630
Worship: Sunday at 9 AM
Growing in Faith, in Love & in Community

Rev. Caitlin Bentzinger
 cell (402) 326-1131
 office (402) 454-2514
Parish Assistant:
 Crystal Ketelsen (402) 454-2514
Office Hours:
 Monday, Wednesday & Thursday:
 9am - noon & 1 pm - 4 pm
Parish Email:
 trinitywestridgeparish@gmail.com

Facebook: Trinity UMC & Westridge United Methodist Church
Websites: madisontrinityumc.org & norfolkwestridgeumc.org

Group Notification System

This is a reminder of our group notification system. We currently use Calling Post. The phone calls will come from the Parish Office number, 402-454-2514. Please add this to your contacts so you know who it is. The first time you get a call, you will need to opt in.

Thank you! Crystal



Free Little Pantry

Remember our mini pantry! It has seen a lot of action. With the cold/freezing weather here, please keep in mind to put items that can handle freezing temps- dry food and hygiene items please. Thank you for your support.

Church Cancellation

If church is cancelled the announcement will go out in the following ways:

- ◇ Calling Post* notification system
- ◇ Announcement on the Norfolk radio stations
- ◇ Facebook post

We try to make a decision as soon as we can, but we all know that the weather changes quickly at times.

Physical safety and spiritual safety are both concerns. We do not want to unwisely expose you to undue harm. God is with us always—and He understands that it isn't always possible to get to church.



The Dolly Parton's Imagination Library monthly book gifting program is here and running for the Madison School District area!! This program is brought to you by the Madison Trinity United Methodist Church, Missions Team and Dolly Parton!! Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children from birth to age 5, through funding shared by Dolly Parton and local community partners. Inspired by her father's inability to read and write Dolly started her Imagination Library in 1995 for the children within her home county. Today, her program spans 5 countries and gifts over 1 million free books each month to children around the world. "When I was growing up in the hills of East Tennessee, I knew my dream would come true. I know there are children in your community with their own dreams. They dream of becoming a doctor or an inventor or a minister. Who knows, maybe there is a little girl whose dream is to be a writer and singer. The seeds of these dreams are often found in books and the seeds you help plant in your community can grow across the world." -Dolly Parton By mailing high quality, age-appropriate books directly to their homes, she wanted children to be excited about books and to feel the magic that books can create. Moreover, she could insure that every child would have books, regardless of their family's income. How can you register your child? You can enroll your child on-line at imaginationlibrary.com, or through paper forms that will be soon to be found around town then mailed/returned to the church, or in person at Trinity United Methodist Church, 506 S Main St in Madison, NE. If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to reach out to the main program coordinator, Crystal Ketelsen at 402-454-2514.



TRINITY NEWS

Children's Church
10 am every Sunday
Come for Faith, Fellowship & Fun!

Dave Plugge's Celebration of
Life will be Saturday, May 23,
2026, 10:30 am at Trinity.



Trinity Ad Board Minutes

Ad Board met on Tuesday, January 20th at 6:00pm. Present were Rev. Caitlin, Shannon Konken, Tracey Anderson, Kim Wilkerson, Sherry Hake, Jan Hake and Kevin Pearson. Rev. Caitlin brought the meeting to order with a humorous devotion.

Minutes from the previous meeting were read and approved with no corrections.

Treasurers report: Shannon gave the treasurer's report; it was approved as read.

Old Business: The Elevator Room is done. Window & door in ack staircase room has been replaced. Upstairs choir loft has been converted into storage space to free up youth room for Wednesday Youth Group. Jan made a motion to add more shelving in Elevator Room for storage. Kim seconded the motion; motion carried. Cost of shelving & labor will be \$260. Jan moved to approve that amount, Kim seconded, motion carried. The shingles on the roof were replaced, under warranty, on January 20, 2026.

Pastors report: Preparation for Lend is in full swing. A Lenten worship schedule will be added to the church calendar in the parish newsletter.

Missions report: Meeting on April 15th, 5:30 pm to discuss reimbursement requests, donation projects, and quarterly giving.

Education: Meeting on February 11th at 7:15 pm to plan events throughout the remainder of the year.

SPPRC: At January 14th meeting discussed pastor's vacation, how leadership transitions are going in the parish and financial housekeeping. Next meeting April 18th, 6 pm at Westridge.

Community Service: Taco Buffet Fundraiser is postponed until April. Silent Auction will be held in February. This will more time for preparation, planning and publicity.

Trustees report: Backsplash in kitchen is fixed. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors need to be replaced. Kim moved to replace them, Tracy seconded, motion carried.

New Business: Jan moved to add Kevin Pearson and Kim Wilkerson to authorizers and signers of CD, General, Memorial Fund, Funder Fund, Farm (Dover) Account, Reit Farm Account and the safety deposit box. Tracy seconded the motion, motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:26pm. Next meeting will be February 17th at 6:00pm.

Westridge News

Westridge Sunday Coffee Hour

February—March 2026



February 1	Steph & Samantha
February 8	Rick & Mary
February 15	Mary Ann & Sharon
February 22	Sue, Crystal & Jerry
March 1	Shelly, Peg & Dave Scarf
March 8	Tina & Mike
March 15	Deb, Karen & Lavonne
March 22	Sue & Wayne
March 29	"Covered Dish"

Ruth Circle

Ruth Circle – January 2026

Ruth Circle met Tuesday, January 23, 2026 with 9 ladies present. Sue led devotions from the Upper Room, a discussion was has about "Those Feeling Forsaken By Loved Ones". Peggy served treats.

The next Ruth Circle meeting will be Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 1:30 p.m. at the church. Linda will lead devotions and LaVonne will bring treats. The United State is celebrating 250 years as a nation and it is George Washington birthday on the 22nd so we are going hear fun facts about our first president.



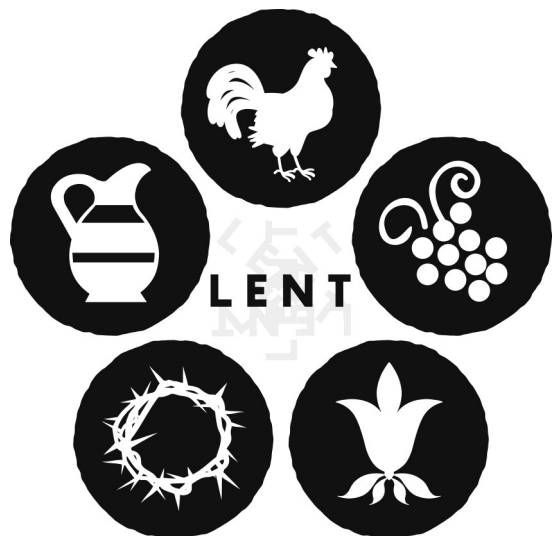
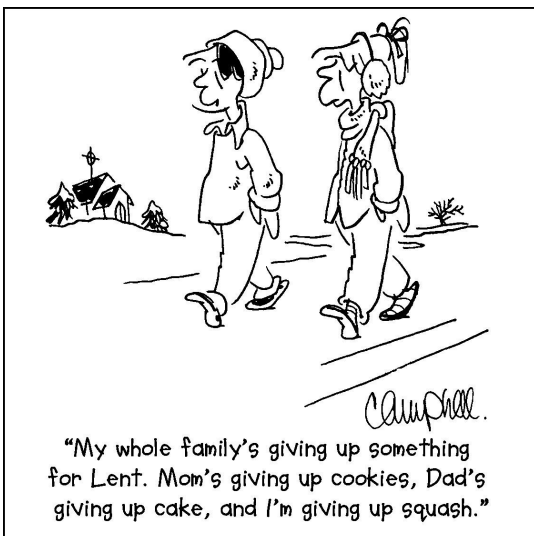
Start counting your steps on Ash Wednesday!

(February 18th)

We are doing it a bit different this time- we are starting in Bethlehem and walking where Jesus walked.

Each week we will announce in church and post on Facebook where we are. Steps can be turned in to Deb or Sam on Sunday mornings, or by text or email, or Facebook! Our goal is to follow Jesus' footsteps and end up in Jerusalem for a fun walk/run in September. You can turn in steps or distances.

Watch for a map of our steps on the back bulletin board at Westridge.



Attendees: Pastor Caitlin, Crystal Ketelsen, Linda McMeekin, Lisa Heitman, John Heitman, Deb Ussery, Sam Zoucha, Khloe Zoucha, Anthony Ketelsen, Sue Andreasen, Dave Scarf, Jerry Ketelsen

Linda McMeekin called the meeting to order; Pastor Caitlin opened with prayer.

Minutes from the December meeting were read; Sue Andreasen moved to approve the minutes with no corrections, Lisa Heitman seconded, motion carried.

Finance report was presented. Deb Ussery moved to add a income/expense line item for the Little Pantry at the church, John Heitman seconded the motion, motion carried. Finance report was then placed on file for audit.

Pastor Caitlin: Reported that the parish has 7 kids going to the Winter Retreat at Elkhorn UMC. Both churches are going through transition and fundraising. The parish has purchased *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2025-2028 Complete Set – Books and Online Access* to help us learn about our leadership positions & committees and to make sure we are following the *Book of Discipline*.

Children/Youth: Youth group had 9 attend on January 7; they learned about trust and sharing our faith. Sunday School has purchased a new book '5 Minute Bible Stories'. They will be starting immediately following church – kids need to get their snack and take it with them.

SPPRC: Met before Church Council. They discussed Pastor Caitlin's vacation time; rotating musicians; possibility of hiring a bookkeeper for Westridge. They voted to send the bookkeeper issue to Church Council for further discussion. Next meeting for SPPRC will be April 8, 2026 at 6 pm.

Trustees: Talked about the parking lot asphalt project. Price for the project is \$26,312. We have approximately 2/3 of the cost available/pledged. Waiting to hear back on grant applications. Anthony Ketelsen will look into solar motion lights for the west side of the church and shed. Trustees will be having regular meetings, next one is January 20, 2026 at 7 pm.

Memorials: Family of Dillon Hess chose window treatments in Pastor's office as their memorial. Memorial Committee does not have to be a separate committee, can operate within the Church Council. For now we will keep it separate.

Healthy Congregations: Freezer Fairy Meals will be done soon. The Mini Pantry is going well; the youth have adopted it as a service project. A list of suggested items for the Pantry will be available in the near future. Our "walk" this year will start on Ash Wednesday and will follow the path of Jesus' life. A map with pushpins will track our progress.

Ruth Circle: They have pledged \$2,500 to the parking lot project. Next meeting is February 10, 2026, 1:30 pm at the church.

New Business: Norfolk Daily News sent out an inquiry of running our ad in the Insight Edition. Khloe Zoucha moved to run the ad, Deb Ussery seconded, motion carried. Crystal Ketelsen will change Sunday School time on the ad to 10 am. The Target tax exempt number is the phone number. Pastor Caitlin presented the idea of hiring a bookkeeper for Westridge and this was discussed at length. Nothing was decided now but it will be an option to continue to look at. Sam Zoucha moved to authorize Lisa Heitman to pay bills with Sue Andreasen signing the checks, Anthony Ketelsen seconded. Motion carried.

Pastor Caitlin asked that we buy a computer for finance and other church business. Deb Ussery moved to research buying a computer to fit these needs, Sam Zoucha seconded. Motion carried.

Elkhorn Valley Bank needs to have more extensive documentation in order to change over authorized people on our account. We need to look in the safe deposit box to see if the Articles of Incorporation are there plus see what else is in it. Dave Scarf and Wayne Andreasen have keys to the box.

We need to change the address for Bank Statements, bills, etc. to the church address.

All checks will need 2 signatures effective as soon as we get the additional signers on the account.

Deb Ussery moved to add &/or keep the following signers to the bank account: Sue Andreasen, Dave Scarf, Anthony Ketelsen, Linda McMeekin, Sam (Samantha) Zoucha. John Heitman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Next meeting will be Thursday, February 19, 2026, 7 pm.

Submitted by Crystal Ketelsen, Church Council Secretary.