

Trinity & Westridge

Monthly Newsletter
for Members & Friends



JANUARY 2026



Happy 2026 Church Family!

I absolutely love this time of year! The chaos of Christmas is passing yet the season of joy and love is still very much lingering in the air. The Christ child has been born, bringing all the potential of peace and hope into the year. This is also a time for us to reflect on what we have experienced in 2025 and create goals for our vision going into the new year. We are being invited into a time of new growth opportunities and change.

In 2025 we experienced quite a few moments of change that has brought vibrancy into our community. Personally, this past year has been life giving. We have gotten back into our rhythm of continuous service and reconnection to the community. From my perspective, this has been the

first year since Covid that I truly felt like I was back to a normal rhythm in terms of consistency, giving, serving, and participating actively in the community. I only had to be on zoom 6 times this year, which is incredible! We have explored different worship styles, have 2 successful Bible study groups, an active youth group, and our worship attendance is finding balance on Sunday mornings. Additionally, we were able to serve the community on a multitude of levels, spreading Gods love and care to people who need support in their current life journey. My heart is full!!

The best part? It's not over! 2025 tended to our foundation and provided nutrition to our hearts so that we could go into 2026 ready to face the future unafraid. Let's take a moment to remember the journey of the Magi. For by faith and astrology, they went on a long journey to find the messiah. They weren't sure what to expect or who to expect. There were various uncertainties and their journey was dangerous (to say the least). Their faith took them one step at a time until, alas, they found a toddler with his mother and were introduced to the child who was going to change the world for all of humanity. There is a lot we can endure when we remain loyal to our faith and rely on Gods love for us. Scripture tells us that, with God, that we can face the future unafraid, we can figure out the uncertainties as they come, and we can love our way through the growing pains. It's not easy, the magi's journey was certainly not easy, but it's doable and worth it beyond our own understanding.

Our church communities are going to experience some change this upcoming year in their own respective ways. Trinity will be going through some financial changes and structural changes with the hope of protecting the vitality of the church and giving as much as we can to help the children of God in the community. Westridge will be experiencing leadership change as our church council leadership transitions to add new voices to the council while giving a much deserved break to those who have been serving and doing what it takes to get our church through some of the biggest crises that Westridge has ever had to face. I am grateful for every single one of you because you are the ones who have gotten the parish to where it is now. Your service and generosity has planted seeds, produced fruit, and shared abundantly. Now, the seeds have been planted again and we have another opportunity to produce and bear more fruit, but the challenge is to maintain the soil while the fruit is growing. Yes, there will be growing pains ahead and moments where fear and negativity can creep in. However, in those moments, let us remember that our soil is full of love, encouragement, support, and affirmation. Let's get each other through the difficult steps of this journey and work together knowing that we have the same goal in our hearts - to love and serve God by going out into the world to create disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

Bring it on 2026, we are ready to see what God has in store for us in this new year!

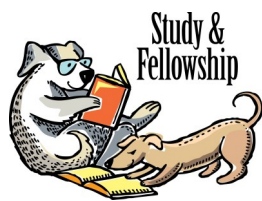
With love and hope,
Rev. Caitlin

Youth Group



Youth Group is every 1st Wednesday at Westridge and 3rd Wednesday at Trinity from 6-8pm 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 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!



✝ Rev. Dillon Hess,
 ✝ Chance Becker, Dec. 24
 ✝ Vernon Hepker, Dec. 27

Please offer PRAYERS for those in our church families (as 1-3-2026)

- ♦ **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, Judy West
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.

If you did not receive a call on Sunday, Dec. 28th a little after 8 am, please let me know so we can make sure I have a current phone number for you.

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!



Trinity Ad Board Minutes

Ad Board met on Tuesday, December 16th at 6:00pm. Present were Rev. Caitlin, Shannon Konken, Tracey Anderson, Kim Wilkerson, and Scott Wilkerson. Rev. Caitlin brought the meeting to order with a prayer. Minutes from the previous meeting were read and approved with no corrections.

Treasurers report: Shannon gave the treasurers report. She and Rev. Caitlin worked on the 2026 budget and presented it to ad board for approval. Discussion was had about putting together a finance team that would meet regularly to maintain budget, project costs and spending, and regularly report in future newsletters what is happening with the church finances to provide more open transparency. Shannon and the finance team are looking into the CD's that are currently in Trinity's name and are coming up with a plan to best utilize and reinvest those funds to gain the maximum benefits possible. Additionally, discussion was had about consolidating some of the accounts that are no longer being used and exploring options to transfer those funds into investment accounts because as of right now they are not in any interest bearing accounts. Scott made the motion to approve the budget to submit to the conference before the deadline, Tracey seconded, motion passed. A vote for the exploration and consolidation of accounts will be determined at the next meeting.

Pastors report: Rev. Caitlin gave her report. Christmas Eve service will be hosted by Westridge at 4 pm with the children's Christmas program.

Missions report: Missions team helped Madison public schools and the Madison food pantry by providing food to help families while on winter break. In collaboration with the Madison senior center, donations from community members, and Little Lyons coffee company, food was donated to the school for students to take home over break and gift certificates were handed out to students in need of a hot meal while school was not in session.

Trustees report: Kevin has been working on the basement north east entrance by the kitchen. The door has been replaced and the new window has been ordered. Once the weather cooperates again, final installment will occur to prevent future precipitation from getting into that room and prevent mold from settling in that room. Additionally, trustees are in the process of organizing fundraising efforts to raise money for the stained glass windows project. More information to come, but looking to have a taco buffet fundraiser in February for community with potential opportunity for silent auction.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm. Next meeting will be January 20th at 6:00pm - no meal prior to meeting.

Westridge News

Westridge Sunday Coffee Hour

January—February—March 2026



January 4	Lisa & Jen
January 11	Linda & Faye
January 18	Carol & Francie
January 25	Dohmens
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 met Monday, December 8 2025 at Perkins for the annual Christmas gathering. Lunch and fellowship was enjoyed by 9 ladies.

The next Ruth Circle meeting will be Tuesday, January 13 2026, 1:30 p.m. at the church. Sue will lead devotions and Peg will bring treats.

Westridge Church Council

December 4, 2025

Present: Dave and Sue Sieler, Wayne and Sue Andreasen, Dave Scarf, Deb Ussery. Lisa Heitman, John Heitman, Anthony and Lupe Ketelsen, Linda McMeekin, Crystal Ketelsen, Rev. Caitlin.

Sue Andreasen open the meeting, Rev. Caitlin led us in prayer.

Minutes were read and approved. The treasurer's report was handed out and we went over the report. Sue Sieler pointed out that the refrigerator went out at the parsonage. We will be reimbursed from Trinity for half of the cost of the refrigerator approximately \$800.00 We talked about the Conference Mission Shares and bills for the end of the year. It's approximately \$9000.00. Wayne Andreasen made a motion for Sue Sieler to take the money out of the rummage sale if needed to pay the Conference Mission Shares; it was seconded by Dave Scarf and Deb Ussery. Motion carried. The treasurer report is placed on file for audit.

The Budget for 2026 was presented and we went over it, a question of the calling post cost from \$392.50 to only \$100.00 The service we have now is billed by units used. The snow removal was also questioned and we are leaving it at \$800.00. A motion was made by Deb Ussery to approve the budget and it was seconded by Dave Sieler. Motion carried.

Pastor report: Youth registration is going out for a retreat Jan. 23rd and 24th with Elkhorn Hills Methodist Church. This is for middle and high school and its cost is \$40.00/person. Watch for the January lock in for all youth details will be coming. Rehearsal for the Christmas program is going amazing. Deb Ussery talked about the little pantry. The box in the church entry is for the church little pantry not the Norfolk pantry downtown. Deb also said they will be making new meals for the freezer.

Trustees reported on the parking lot. They had talked and got a quote for the parking lot to be asphalt, it would be from the north east corner of the church and around down to the street for \$26312.00 with 3 to 5 inches depending on the area. Rev. Caitlin said the grant application has been submitted so it will go towards the parking lot if we receive it. Trustees also report that the garbage pickup will be changed to Albracht Disposal; it will be picked up each week for \$29.00 a month.

SPPRC will be meeting January 14, 2026 at Westridge.

Ruth Circle will be meeting December 8th at Perkins at 11:30 a.m.

Memorial: We will be seeing the new Paraments in the next month.

We talked about getting a light for the back of the church to light the way to the back door.

The next meeting will be January 8th at 7:00 p.m. for the new Council of Westridge.

Respectful Church Council Secretary Peggy Fox



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