

Trinity Spirit

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 22, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2026



BEHIND THE STORIES: *The Nativity*

More and more, as I think about and study the Bible, I look behind it and think about how and why the stories are told. Biblical stories are not written merely to chronicle historical facts. There are certainly a lot of facts in the Bible. Biblical scholars and other people of faith can debate the historical accuracy of biblical stories, but the stories themselves are not told simply to record what happened when. ***The facts are not the main thing. Instead, the Biblical stories were told, and written down, to teach us about God's relationship with us and to lead us deeper and deeper into faith.*** The details of the stories are meant to assist in that task.

When it comes to Jesus' birth, there are two different stories told in the Bible. The gospel writers Mark and John did not tell us anything about Jesus' birth. For them, the facts of Jesus' parentage and birth were not important, and if we only had their Gospels, we would know nothing about Jesus' birth. The two stories we have, in Matthew and Luke, are very different.

Traditionally, we combine these two stories into one to form our manger scenes and our Christmas programs, throwing shepherds and wise men, angels and stars all into one story. We do this because we have found meaning in each of the details, but in the Bible they are different. ***Here are some examples:***

MATTHEW:

- The wise men (the Magi) who are from outside of the People of Israel. (Mt 2:1-2, 9-12)
He is showing us that Jesus' birth is for all people, not just for Israel.
- Gives us the King Herod stories. (Mt 2:3-8) – ***Jesus (and God) does not use power the way earthly kings, like Herod, do. The powers of this world try to destroy Jesus rather than worship him.***
- The killing of the children of Bethlehem (Mt 2:16-18) – ***Matthew recognizes the suffering and evil in this world. Jesus is born into the midst of this suffering and grief. Rather than denying these realities, Jesus comes to give hope in the face of them.***

LUKE:

- The Journey to Bethlehem (Lk 2:1-4) – ***God can use the seculars powers of this world to bring about God's will.***
- The baby laid in the manger (Lk 2:6-7) – ***This foreshadows Jesus' concern for the poor and hungry. Jesus will feed the hungry, and give his body as bread for the world.***
- The shepherds (Lk 2:8-18) – ***He is showing us that Jesus' birth brings hope to the common people, the poor of the land.***

What other details of these stories do you treasure? Why do you think they are included and what meaning do they have for us? What about the stories about Egypt (Mt 2:13-15, 19-23)? Why does Matthew tell us about this, what does he want us to learn?

The stories of the Bible can be beautiful and challenging, they can be simple enough for children, and difficult enough that we wrestle with them throughout our lives. Through them, God continues to comfort and challenge us, and helps us to grow in our trust in God.

In Christ's Peace,

Pastor Robb





Ecumen

GRACED TRINITY WITH THEIR VOICES

The community group known as Ecumen made several stops at area churches on the morning of Sunday, December 7th, including Trinity! The congregation was blessed to hear the voices of these talented men who gather together from many different faith groups, sharing one voice—and God's love.



PLEASE NOTE

WINTER CANCELLATION POLICY

When West Bend Schools are CLOSED due to WEATHER CONDITIONS, the Trinity Office will also be CLOSED.

Any closures or cancellations due to inclement weather will be posted on the following local news channels: ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX.

After 75 years of playing—the past 11 at Trinity—Helene Schrankler Retires

Helene started taking piano lessons when she was just 5 years old. *Finding ways for Helene and her 2 siblings to have every opportunity available to them, Helene's mother traded eggs from their chickens to cover the cost of the lessons.* She would continue those lessons through high school when she was introduced to the organ.

Helene grew up in the Moravian Church (*established long before the Reformation*) which greatly impacted her life and developing love for the organ. Their emphasis on missionary work convinced her she wanted to follow that path herself. She entered Lakeland College with that ambition in mind while she continued her study of piano and organ. As a student she was presented an opportunity to accompany a local seminary choir. *Little did she know how that 'gig' would take her life journey on a path unforeseen.*

You see, one particular seminary student who sang in that choir swept Helene right off her feet! Instead of heading off to places unknown for missionary work, and sooner than her parents thought she should have, Helene married Rev. Jerry Schrankler in 1958. Jerry was truly Helene's biggest fan *and* promoter—*always volunteering her to play for various events at numerous places in addition to the churches they served together.* Helene also taught individual piano lessons in their home over the years—once having a total of 35 students at the same time!

Serving in the United Church of Christ, Rev. Jerry and Helene's ministry began in Marinette, then spanning to Manitowoc, Columbus, Chilton, Rosendale, Schwartzwald, Elkhart Lake, Black Creek, Ripon and Fond du Lac, before Jerry retired at age 84. At that time they moved to West Bend where he continued to serve as a volunteer pastor at Cedar Community—until his passing in 2023 at the age of 90. Helene has also shared her gifts at Cedar Community, playing the organ and participating in hand bell and chime choirs.

Before landing at Trinity, Helene had played in the Moravian Church, the UCC Church, the Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church. She continued to commute and play in Fond du lac the first summer after their move to West Bend. Then, just about the time the seasons were taking a serious turn and Helene did not look forward to the drive back and forth, one of Trinity's long time organists, Marlene Frey, announced her retirement. With Jerry's encouragement, *of course*, Helene was happy to find a place to share her gifts so close to home again! *She began playing the organ for Trinity in 2014.* Not being familiar with the Lutheran worship service at the time, she was relieved to discover that the liturgy was actually very similar. *And, to her absolute delight, finding that Trinity had the exact same organ she had been playing in Fond du lac for the previous 18 years was another example, she proclaims, of just how THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS!*



Helene Schrankler

Helene will wrap up her regular Saturday afternoon worship accompaniment on December 27th—with a time of recognition and celebration to follow. In her "retirement" she will continue to play at Cedar Community. Helene has very much enjoyed her years of organ paying here at Trinity and as a result, we have been abundantly blessed by her and her gifts. *When you see Helene in a pew instead of up in the balcony, please join us in thanking her for her dedicated service as we wish her new joys and continued blessings during her very well earned retirement.*

God bless you, Helene!

GRATEFUL FOR GIVING HEARTS

FROM ORGANIZER
DENISE KENWORTHY



I would like to thank everyone for your participation with the **Gingerbread House Giving Tree**. We sponsored five families, supplying multiple gifts for 25 people this year.

The **Gingerbread House** is a wonderful program that sponsored over 500 families. *It's a wonderful gift to be able to help others by sharing hope, joy, generosity and goodwill.*



Also, 65 pairs of PJ Bottoms were collected for the High School **Holiday Hope** Gift Bag ministry.

SPECIAL THANKS to Denise Kenworthy for her dedication and organization of the Giving Tree effort for families served through the **Gingerbread House**—and to Hazel Griffin for doing the same for the High School **Holiday Hope** Tree.

BREAKING THE CHAINS CHURCH PRISON MINISTRY

PROJECT CHRISTMAS GIFT BAGS!

FROM NATE SHUBAT

On Tuesday Dec 8th and Monday Dec 15th, members of the BTCC ministry team and volunteers met to pack Christmas bags for all the men at the Felmers Chaney Correctional Center (FCCC) and at the Kenosha Correctional Center (KCC).

Every man incarcerated at FCCC and KCC, regardless of whether or not they join us for worship and bible studies, received a gift bag before Christmas when we were there for our annual Christmas Caroling event. *Many of the men receive no other Christmas gifts or even a card.*

This year, our gift bags included: body wash, deodorant, beef sticks, peanut butter and crackers, crackers and cheese, protein bars, chips, candy, a Christmas card signed by our ministry team, and two blank cards to share with friends or loved ones. New this year, we were also able to include packets of instant coffee, 2 toothbrushes, and toothpaste due to generous new donors.

This work of sharing the love shown to us by Jesus with men in prison would not be possible without the generosity of the following churches, organizations, and individuals:

Martin Luther Church, Milwaukee
Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend
Reformation Lutheran, Milwaukee
First Lutheran, West Allis
Holy Cross Lutheran, Menomonee Falls
Marquette University Dental School
Thrivent Action Team Grants provided by
Outreach for Hope and Vicki Kuharske

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa
Trinity Lutheran, South Milwaukee
Hephatha Lutheran, Milwaukee
Ascension Lutheran, Milwaukee
St. Bartholomew's Church, Pewaukee
Other local dentists
Several other anonymous donors

Jesus was about love for the outcasts, the lost, the left behind and therefore, so are we.

Thank you for your support, Trinity!



INCREDIBLE EDIBLES THANK YOU!

Thanks to the efforts of 17 bakers, over 100 dozen cookies (that's 1200+ cookies) were baked and assembled into delicious cookie assortment boxes. **On our first weekend of sales, we raised \$743 to support Kaori and the Pine Lake Summer Camp.**

Thank you to everyone who purchased cookies—and a special shout out of thanks to our bakers:

Denise Kenworthy	Sue Walker
Cindy Tikusis	Cyndee Bruder,
Bonnie Opperman	Darci Ketter
Denise Riederer	Ardi Bergerud
Alyssa Brockman	Ruthann Dorn
Sue Milbrandt	Nicole Hull
Jean Kleist	Sandy Poenitsch
Lily Lance	Shirl Curreri
Hazel Griffin	

Thank you to Linda Amacher and Hazel Griffin who weighed and assembled the boxes.

Also, our appreciation to Pierce Griffin who applied for Thrivent Action Funds to purchase some ingredients for the bakers.

It takes a village!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

SHARING THE LOVE & PROMISE OF GOD WITH OUR YOUNGEST MEMBERS & FRIENDS

Children's Ministry
SUNDAYS | 9:30 AM

Have a child or grandchild, neighbor or friend age 3 years to 6th Grade? They are welcome to join us at anytime during the Children's Ministry school year! Here our kids learn the Bible studies in 5 different sensory ways: SEEit, MAKEit, MOVEit, TELLiT and TASTEit



We will start 2026 with our CHRIST THE KING rotation! —join us!

JAN 04 | Children's Ministry
CHRIST THE KING
ROTATION
BRING-A-FRIEND SUNDAY!

LITTLE LAMBS
6TH GRADE BRIDGE

JAN 11 | CHRIST THE KING
ROTATION
LITTLE LAMBS
6TH GRADE BRIDGE

JAN 18 | CHRIST THE KING
ROTATION
LITTLE LAMBS
6TH GRADE BRIDGE

JAN 25 | CHRIST THE KING
ROTATION
LITTLE LAMBS
6TH GRADE BRIDGE



ALL ABOUT YOUth

YOUTH SCHEDULES, EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

FROM ALYSSA BROCKMAN

In December we Focused on the 3 Kings. Kiddos learned about the long travel, following the star, to where Jesus was. They were able to smell Frankincense and Myrrh. In **MAKEit**, kiddos created pomander balls-oranges and lemons pressed with cloves. These were very fragrant to mimic the scent of Frankincense and Myrrh. In **TASTEit**, they also used their sense of smell and made cinnamon dough ornaments. They cut them out in the shape of gingerbread men...*ah-hem* Wisemen... and a star to retell the story with their families. They also decorated (and enjoyed) sugar cookies in the shape of a crown.



Following the Christmas program practice, kiddos enjoyed a time of fellowship together. They truly are a great group of friendships and enjoy all their extra time together. They ate, played, crafted, and enjoyed a movie together. I am continually moved by their sense of family with the other kiddos that they connect with only once a week.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



SENIOR HIGH FIRST SUNDAY

ALL 9TH - 12TH GRADE YOUTH
JANUARY 18 | 6-7:30 PM

Trinity's Senior High Ministry invites all folks in the 9th - 12th grades to gather together for: Sr High 1st Sunday (usually on the first Sunday of each month) and continuing throughout the year.

This is an opportunity to get together to share a light meal and take some time to renew yourself as a child of God.

- Connect or reconnect with friends
- Recenter yourself with a short, interactive worship experience
- Recharge your passion for compassion

LEADERS | Haley Kordosky & Tiffany Wilson trinitywbhsyouth.com



ALL ABOUT YOUth

YOUTH SCHEDULES, EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES



FOLLOWING IMMANUEL SERVING HAPPILY
4TH-6TH GRADE YOUTH MINISTRY

F.I.S.H. SNOW TUBING

NOTE DATE CHANGE
SUNDAY, JANUARY 11TH
NOON - 2:15 PM*
SUNBURST SKI HILL | KEWASKUM

All Trinity's 4th-6th graders are invited to join us on Sunday, January 11th at Sunburst Ski Hill in Kewaskum for Snow Tubing and fun!

—WATCH THE WEEKLY EMAIL FOR MORE DETAILS TO COME!



CONFIRMATION FAITH FOUNDATIONS

A JOURNEY OF FAITH FOR OUR 7TH & 8TH GRADERS

WEDNESDAYS | 6:30 - 8 PM

JAN 07 Apostles' Creed - PARABLES
SNACK: Joel

JAN 14 Apostles' Creed - PARABLES
SNACK: Anniken

JAN 21 Apostles' Creed - PARABLES
SNACK: Jazzy

JAN 28 Apostles' Creed - MIRACLES
SNACK: Ellis

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR
PALM/PASSION WEEKEND**

**Palm/Passion Weekend
is March 28/29**

The confirmation students will lead
ALL worship services that weekend
(4 PM Saturday / 9:30 AM Sunday).
Plan now to keep this weekend free.

*Please text me with any
questions or concerns
or if you have an interest
in getting involved
in Confirmation Ministry!*

*Thank you,
Nancy Hanvey*

**CONFIRMATION LEADER
(414) 364-4986**

LOCK-IN

CONFIRMATION LOCK-IN

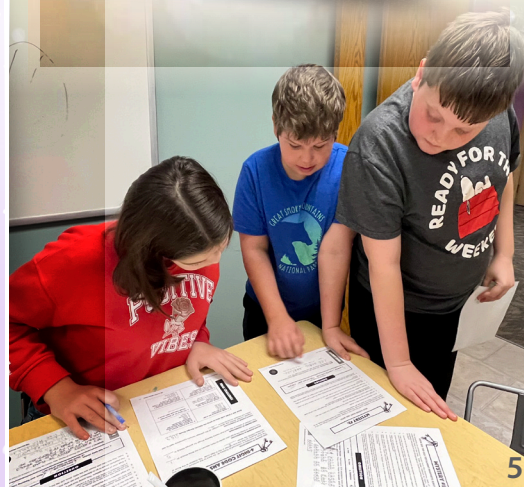
FRIDAY JANUARY 23 | 6:30 PM

ENDS 8 AM SATURDAY



F.I.S.H. CHRISTMAS ESCAPE ROOM

In December, Trinity's 4th-6th Grade youth went on a mission! Like most of God's unfolding story, the humble birth of our Lord was a big mystery to almost everyone at the time. Our F.I.S.H. kiddos were taken back to the time of Jesus to solve the mysteries of His birth by decoding the facts...so they could SEE THE LIGHT!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

'Twas the Night Before

The Christmas Program always fills me with so much joy for the season. Watching our kiddos share the story of Jesus' birth with their families and loved ones definitely brings a smile to my heart. A job well done, Kiddos! I am so proud of you. Go, and tell it on the mountain!



THANK YOU to my December volunteers

Heather Peters
Peter Nelson
Katie Flunker
Nancy Hanvey
John Kenworthy
Kristin Robinson
Brenda Dehler
Mia Hanvey
Morgan Doede
Joel Beier
Kennedy Butzler

Greg Griffin
Anne Brehemer
CarlEda Skinkis
Siena Scaffidi
Susie Kelnhofer
Nicole Hoffman
Dane McIntyre
Emma Parchim
Manny Jones,
Jayden Hanvey

Thank you!
Alyssa Brockman



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



**SUNDAY
JANUARY 25TH**

Trinity's **ANNUAL MEETING** will be held on **Sunday, January 25th, 2026** immediately following the 9:30 worship service. *And, immediately following the meeting, everyone is invited to stay for the **ANNUAL CHILI COOKOFF!*** This is a great time to visit with each other members and sample some of the finest chili in the country!

Last year's Chili Cookoff Champion, **Tom Bergerud** is looking for challengers! *To enter the cookoff look for sign up sheets in the Heritage Room, fill out the form below and drop it off at church - or watch for a SignUP Genius invitation. Chili Cookoff entries are limited to 12 (first come first served). A free-will offering will be taken for the meal.*

Come, be part of the **ANNUAL MEETING** and then give your taste buds a treat at the **CHILI COOKOFF!**

Who will be the champion this year!?!?



Sign me up for the **2026 CHILI COOKOFF COMPETITION!**

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

Participants should bring their chili in a crockpot so it can be kept at the right temperature and ready to serve after the annual meeting. Each Chili entry will be numbered and samples will be served in small cups for tasting. Members vote for their top 3 favorites. **GOOD LUCK!**



**MONDAY, JANUARY 26
7:00 PM**

A SAFE PLACE to share offers a place to safely share our concerns about the world. It is a **SAFE PLACE** because we gather not to condemn or berate, or even to convince—but to listen, understand and support.

We plan to meet on the last Monday of each month— **all are welcome to join us at any time!**



Bible Study

NEW, EARLIER TIME

**WEDNESDAYS | 5:30 PM
RESUMES JANUARY 7**

We resume Bible study by continuing our walk through the writings of **Matthew** with the help of a Bible Conversations guide book series entitled, *Together by Grace*. Although this is a series, it does not matter if you can make it every week, or just certain weeks that work in your schedule. **You are welcome to join in at any time! No pre-reading, no homework—come with a your questions, curiosities and open hearts.**



Questions: Text
Nancy Hanvey
414-364-4986

A BRIEF APPEAL FOR UNDERWEARNESS!

The following is from a nationwide survey conducted by JC Penney: *"Based on 1-on-1 interviews, there is an increased need for basic necessities - like underwear - especially during the winter months. Yet, these items are often the least requested and least likely to be donated, as few people think to donate these to charity and those in need are often too embarrassed to proactively seek out underwear."*

The survey also reported that 55% of children who did not have underwear and socks to wear wanted to skip school or refused to go to school because he or she was embarrassed at not having any. In addition, children may not have "extra" underwear that they can leave at school for "emergency" use.

We have been in touch with the West Bend School District nurses and all schools report a need for new underwear, female and male. **For girls, the most needed are girls sizes 4-8, but there is also some need for size 10, 12, 14 as well as women's size medium. The boys could use sizes 4-12, but they are more in need of the smaller sizes.**

Throughout the month of January Please consider supporting our children with a donation of new underwear which can be left in our **"Drop Your Drawers Here"** collection bin in the Heritage Room

Citizen Advocates
est. 1978

January 12

BINGO

MONDAY JAN 12, 2025
3:30 - 4:30pm

TRINITY LUTHERAN
Corner of 7th & Elm St
USE ALLEY ENTRANCE

Join us for a **FREE & FUN-FILLED**
afternoon of **BINGO with PRIZES!**

Sponsored by Citizen Advocates, this event is open to the
public—all ages and abilities are encouraged to attend!

Full Shelf Food Pantry
WEST BEND

ITEM OF THE MONTH

SOUP!

Sharing Comfort and Joy

THURSDAYS | 1 PM

The Trinity Comforters make blankets of warmth for people in need in and outside our community. Blankets are made from (*barely used and new*) flat cotton sheets. No sewing skills needed!

Join us on Thursday afternoons to create some comfort and joy with others—for others!

KAORI TURNS 13 YEARS OLD NEXT MONTH!

Kaori Rosalina Ramos Benito is a Compassion International child sponsored by the Trinity Congregation.

Kaori was born on February 10, 2013, she is about to turn 13 years old and lives in a very poor coastal community of Pueblo Joven Huascar-B (Peru) with her parents and 3 brothers.

Our **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY** offering goes toward sponsorship of Kaori, but your donations help us keep things on track.

Thank you for your prayers and support. Scan the QR code to donate toward Trinity's sponsorship of Kaori now.



ALUMINUM TAB COLLECTION HAPPENS ALL YEAR LONG!

Tabs saved from beverage cans make a difference for families being served by Children's Hospital in Milwaukee.
















Thank you for your continued support of this outreach effort!

WISHING YOU
Birthday
BLESSINGS





ON THE DAY YOU WERE BORN, GOD DANCED, ANGELS SANG AND THE STARS ALIGNED. WE HOPE THAT YOUR BIRTHDAY WILL BE A HAPPY CELEBRATION FILLED WITH BLESSINGS.

Heidi Chlupp	1/1
Evelyn Carey	1/2
Cynthia Stracka	1/2
Nataleigh Clark	1/3
Perry Ebersold	1/3
Anita Bayliff	1/4
Beverly Ritger	1/4
Kirsten DeLuka	1/5
Joann Naumann	1/5
Jason Bungert	1/7
Nancy Hanvey	1/8
Larsen Anderson	1/9
Lucas Doede	1/11
Danielle Paswaters	1/11
Alyssa Brockman	1/12
Diane Ferstadt	1/12
Delia Gunnare	1/12
Robert McClain	1/12
Tim Neumann	1/12
Penny Bergerud	1/13
Jory Granger	1/13
Chris Pamperin	1/14
Karen Demmon	1/15
Nathan Kenworthy	1/15
Delores Kilby	1/15
Mitchell Doede	1/16
Karissa Laatsch	1/17
Katie Flunker	1/18
Tom Bulin	1/19
Samantha George	1/21
Carol Peters	1/21
Vayda Falconer	1/23
Eadrick Lohr-Kougl	1/23
Elena Lohr-Kougl	1/23
Cheryl Hay	1/24
Vern Hasenstein	1/25
Dennis Lentz	1/25
Bonnie Oppermann	1/25
Karen Sparks	1/26
Tiffany Wilson	1/28
Joel Beier	1/29
Darrell Blair	1/29
David Clementi	1/29
Jeffrey Ketter	1/29
Sharon Larson	1/29

JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1  TRINITY OFFICE CLOSED 7 PM NA	2	3 LITURGICAL Worship 4 PM
4 CTP Worship 9:30 AM Children's Ministry	5 MUSIC THERAPY 1:30 PM	6  EPIPHANY 7 PM NA	7  Bible Study 5:30 PM CONFIRMATION 6:30 PM	8  COMFORTERS 1 PM 7 PM NA	9	10 LITURGICAL Worship 4 PM
11 CTP Worship 9:30 AM Children's Ministry  F.I.S.H. SNOW TUBING	12  BINGO 3:30 PM MUSIC THERAPY 1:30 PM	13 7 PM NA	14  Bible Study 5:30 PM CONFIRMATION 6:30 PM	15  COMFORTERS 1 PM COUNCIL 7 PM 7 PM NA	16	17 LITURGICAL Worship 4 PM
18 CTP Worship 9:30 AM Children's Ministry  SR HIGH 6 PM	18 MUSIC THERAPY 1:30 PM	20 7 PM NA	21  Bible Study 5:30 PM CONFIRMATION 6:30 PM	22  COMFORTERS 1 PM 7 PM NA	23  LOCK-IN CONFIRMATION	24 LITURGICAL Worship 4 PM
25 CTP Worship 9:30 AM Children's Ministry ANNUAL MEETING CHILI COOKOFF	26 A SAFE PLACE MUSIC THERAPY 1:30 PM	27 7 PM NA	28  Bible Study 5:30 PM CONFIRMATION 6:30 PM	29  COMFORTERS 1 PM 7 PM NA	30	31 LITURGICAL Worship 4 PM

Trinity | Contact Information

Trinity Lutheran Church |  ELCA |  Reconciling in Christ | 140 N. 7TH AVE | WEST BEND, WI 53095
 262-334-2125 | trinity@trinitywestbend.com | trinitywestbend.com  

Interim Pastor Robb Kosky | pastorrkosky@gmail.com

OFFICE HOURS | MON - THURS.....8:00 AM - 3:30 PM
 FRIDAYS8:00 AM - NOON

Sue Walker.....Parish Coordinator
swalker@trinitywestbend.com | 262-334-2125

Alyssa Brockman.....Children's Ministry Coordinator
trinitywestbendcm@gmail.com | 262-343-5557

Heather Peters.....Music Ministry Coordinator
peters.heatherj@gmail.com | 262-305-7338

Sandy Poenitsch.....Communication Coordinator
spoenitsch@trinitywestbend.com | 262-388-1616

Karen Sparks.....Financial Clerk
ksparks@trinitywestbend.com

Phil Wagner.....Facilities Manager
farmerwagner673@gmail.com | 262-355-5332

Congregation Council Members

Anita Bayliff, PRESIDENT MINISTRY SUPPORT
 John Kenworthy, VP OUTREACH & TECHNOLOGY
 Greg McMahon, TREASURER FINANCE
 Cheryl Scaffidi, SECRETARY WORSHIP & MUSIC
 Penny Bergerud COMMUNITY BUILDING
 Vern Hasenstein TECHNOLOGY
 Mike Kappler PROPERTY
 Todd Markgraf PROPERTY
 Patrick Budoff OUTREACH
 Renee Thacker FAITH DEVELOPMENT
 James Winkler STEWARDSHIP
 Lexi George YOUTH REP. | OUTREACH