

# THE TIMOTHIAN

NEWSLETTTER for ST. TIMOTHY EVANGELICAL

LUTHERAN CHURCH of GRAND ISLAND

1453 Staley Road, Grand Island, NY 14072

Our Pastor: The Rev. Adam Arends

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716-773-9249



## January, 2026

Great things are happening at St. Timothy's! Here's what's inside:

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## From the Pastor's Desk

“Eureka!”      “Oh! That’s it!”      “I see it now.”      “I get it!”      “There’s a way!”

### Epiphany!

As a camp counselor there were moments in between the schedule of the day, like waiting for lunch, or if you finished an activity early, that we would need to fill some time. With the younger kids this usually meant singing a silly song or making a bracelet. With the older kids, one of our favorite time-filers was what we called “five minute mysteries.” These were little riddles where a counselor would describe a situation and the campers would ask yes-or-no questions to arrive at a conclusion. One of my standards went something like this:

*Every day, Mr. Thompson wakes up on the 25<sup>th</sup> floor of his building where he lives, walks to the elevator, presses the lobby button, takes it down, and goes to work. Then after he returns home at the end of the day, he goes into the elevator, presses the button for floor 23, gets off at that floor, and takes the stairs the rest of the way to floor 25, where he lives. Why does he do this?*

One of the great joys of life is noticing when one of the campers arrived at the correct solution. The look of relief and amazement at that moment of epiphany was such a joy to be a part of. Any good teacher I've ever met can give you a similar story of recognizing epiphanies when their student “gets it.”

Epiphany means a sudden realization, and it can also mean “to show, to appear, to be revealed.” This is true for answers and solutions that can suddenly seem so obvious. It was also true for the Magi who saw the sudden revealing of a new star in the sky, a new light giving clarity in pointing to the true light that had appeared in the world when Christ was born. And it is true for us each year as we celebrate Jesus' birth on Christmas Eve, but even more importantly when we take that revelatory joy with us into the new year. In the time of year when we have the least sunlight, it is often the light of Christ that gives us the hope to continue.

This January, I pray that we may keep our eyes and minds open to what is being revealed, even in difficult times: that faith, hope, and love abide; that the true light of Christ continues to shine; that Emmanuel, God with us, was born in Bethlehem and his light continues to shine in, through, and all around us.

May we celebrate the little epiphanies every time we get them!

Peace,  
*Pastor Adam*

p.s. *Let me know if you solve the riddle!*

*Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*

Isaiah 60:3, NRSV



# Altar Guild Notes: January, 2026

January. Shiny new calendars await in our home and workplaces.

Ready for us to note events and obligations of the new year.

But we have one more Sunday in the Christmas season and one more festival to celebrate before anything changes in church!

Enjoy the trees & poinsettias another week!

The Feast of Epiphany of our Lord, January 6th, concludes the Christmas season. The Magi have arrived by following a star!

Jesus' divine nature is revealed. They worship Jesus with gifts symbolizing His kingship (gold), divinity (frankincense), and future sacrifice (myrrh).

Powerful. Insightful. These wise men will now spread the "Good News" to proclaim Jesus' glory to all nations. The three kings with their gifts are depicted on the pulpit frontal following the star towards the nativity scene on the altar frontal.



The second Sunday seems subdued as all the decorations are gone. The paraments have changed, but another white set is in place.

We skip a few years ahead in Jesus' life to celebrate Baptism of our Lord. Adult Jesus is baptized in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. There, an even bigger public revelation; God proclaims Jesus His beloved son and anoints Him with the Holy Spirit (descending dove). Jesus goes on from there with His followers, made manifest to be a light for the nations.

Time after Epiphany continues for the last two Sundays this month. It is the short green season. We listen as the light of Christ is revealed in stories of Jesus' public ministry. Our green paraments signify this season.

As His followers, it is our turn to leave church every Sunday prepared to bring Christ light to the world.

Keep Jesus in your heart.

Your sister in Christ,

*Deborah*

## An Epiphany Blessing of the Home

Epiphany tradition can include the blessing of the home for the new year. Use chalk to mark the outside lintel (molding above) your front door: 20+C+M+B+26. The CMB stands for Christus mansionem benedicat, “May Christ bless this home”. Some say that the CMB stands for the names of the Magi; Casper, Melchior, Balthazar. Process through every room bearing a candle. Then use them for your New Years Day dinner!

Here is a prayer you can use when you mark your door: O God, the One and Eternal Light, You guided the Magi to Your Son from afar and revealed Him to them as King of Kings. And they, believing, paid Him homage and offered gifts. Be pleased to impart your blessing upon this home, as we indeed accept the light of your revelation in our home. Grant that our home may be a place of acceptance to all, and that we might more perfectly reflect Your light to the world. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Messages From the Co-Presidents

Years ago, I remember Pastor Scarafia would urge us to remember, “Advent is more about preparing your heart for Christmas, than preparing your house.”

Preparation, good news, expectation, joy

yes to the manger

yes to love enfleshed

yes to the one incarnate for others

yes to the wholeness of God

In expectation.

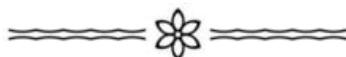
These were the words beginning this year’s preparation of Advent. How amazing, we would meet the newest member of our congregation, Rozelle Justice Auwae, daughter of Romeo and Raquel, baptized on December 7, preparing her for life! That day we sang of justice, and read in our Psalm of “You who alone do wondrous deeds.” That was also the day I met Ben and Serenity, two young people visiting with us, yearning for words of love and encouragement, reaching out for community. I believe this is a common theme in our world today. As our Advent continued, Pastor asked us “where do we put our attention?” Are we open to hearing the voice of God, do we consider how we use our gifts. Do we pay too much attention to the wrong gifts at Christmas?

Then, for me came one of the highlights of the Season. The children’s Once Upon a Manger Paper Bag Pageant. Illness left us with fewer children than expected, which was a “gift” for all of us, as we were not only allowed to, but required to find the child in all of us! The birth of the Christ Child celebrated with amazing joy, loud laughter, inclusion of all creatures, younger and less young. Indeed, celebrating THE gift for all of us. Celebrating the Christ Child with a “moo, oink, baa.” And on Christmas Eve, we heard again, and again, the persistent, piercing truth of faith. God always shows up... looking not for the “house in order,” but the open heart.

My brother's favorite song was In The Bleak Midwinter. I remember always thinking this lyric and tune from the late 1800's sounded so somber, almost minor in tone.... until I heard my brother sing it at a Christmas Eve Service when I was in high school. It was so soft and tender, so sincere and every word came from his heart. Nothing had changed, but me. When we sang it this Christmas Eve, I was thinking, what can I give Him, give my heart. God Bless us, everyone.

Love and Hugs,  
Shari Miller

*God always shows up... looking not for  
the "house in order," but the open heart.*



Merry Christmas.

We celebrated the birth of Christ at the end of December. Many things vie for our time reflecting on the reason for the Christmas season.

December is always a very busy time of the year with all the holiday activities. Our church family was also very busy. We welcomed a new family to our church, Romeo, Raquel, and Rozelle. We then baptized Rozelle. We celebrated Joan Buchanan's life and her passage to heaven. The Christmas play this year wasn't just for the young but included many volunteers from our church family. It is always important to remind and teach the story. We worshiped Christmas Eve with a full house and our choir blessed us with their talent. The alter guild had our church looking festive. They do an amazing job. The new banners looked great. There are so many moving parts to make each Sundays service a success. Thanks to everyone who does all the behind-the-scenes planning, prep, and post work.

The annual breakfast with Santa was a success. The kids met Santa, sang some carols, made crafts, and enjoyed breakfast in our festive rooms. Much thanks for the help from both the childcare and church to make it another successful outreach event. This is one of a few events to introduce our community to our church and childcare and enjoy some fellowship with food. We also hosted the Grand Island Community Chorus' holiday concert.

As Ronan reminded us, many of us have an abundance compared to many others in our world. The small Christmas tree in the narthex has ornaments that allow us to share some of our abundance with those who struggle meeting basic needs. It feels good to give a gift to those in need at this time of the year when the marketing folks attempt to tell us we need the next new gadget.

I wish our church and childcare family a happy New Year.

*Paul Yaeger*



# Child Care Center News for January 2026!

Hello, Church Family!

As we welcome the new year, we are grateful for the opportunity to reflect on all that was accomplished over the past year and to look ahead with excitement and hope. This past year, we completed many meaningful projects around the center, including fresh paint and new colors in all of our classrooms, upgraded lighting by the playground, and new classroom furniture made possible through a generous grant. These improvements help create a warm, engaging, and safe environment for our children each day.

We are also incredibly proud of our dedicated staff. Many team members are currently pursuing CDA (Child Development Association) certifications, attending college, and continuing their education. Their commitment to professional growth strengthens our program and ensures we are providing high-quality, nurturing care for every child and family we serve.

We recently wrapped up our annual Breakfast with Santa fundraiser, and we would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who donated, volunteered, or attended. Your generosity and support mean so much to us and play an important role in helping our center continue to grow and thrive.

As we look ahead, we are excited for what this year holds. We look forward to this year being even more successful than the last, filled with continued growth, new opportunities, and meaningful experiences. Together, we will continue building a safe, nurturing, and faith-centered environment where children feel supported, encouraged, and loved.

Thank you!  
*Athena Torain*  
Center Director



# Worship Information



Worship continues at 9:30 AM each Sunday. All are welcome! You can also watch us on our livestream at [www.sttimothygrandisland.com](http://www.sttimothygrandisland.com). Sunday School for age 3 through 4th grade is held during the 9:30 AM service. Our upcoming service for Ash Wednesday will be on February 18th at 7 PM. We hope you can join us!

## News and Upcoming Events

### Bible Study

A new Bible Study will start January 15th and run Thursdays at 1 PM through Lent.



### Congregational Meeting and Potluck Brunch



Please plan to join us on Sunday, February 1st after the 9:30 AM service for our annual congregational meeting, and bring a breakfast or lunch dish to pass as you're able. At this meeting, we'll receive reports from our auditors and committees on the past year and what is to come.

### Congregational Directory

If you would like an updated congregational directory, please pick up a hard copy in the Narthex. Electronic copies are also available by request through the church office.

### Winter Weather Closure Information

In the event of unsafe winter weather, please check your email, Channel 2, or Channel 7 for our closure notices. Services will be held via Zoom or YouTube instead.



### Bottle Junction Donations

We are grateful for all your bottle and can donations through our account at Bottle Junction! All those cents really do add up. Thank you!

### Thrivent Choice Dollars and Birthday Bonus

With the end of the year comes the time to designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars; this opportunity closes on March 31st. Thrivent also has a new birthday program where an additional \$25 in Choice Dollars will be on your account during your birthday month and will disappear if not designated by the end of that month. We very much appreciate the additional support!

### Stella Niagara Center of Renewal Retreats

For upcoming program and retreat offerings, visit <https://www.stellaniagararetreats.org/Retreats>. Offerings include Finding Hope in the Thin Places to an Ash Wednesday retreat.

# Missions

## Grand Island Neighbors Foundation

Between the Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service collection and the generosity of parishioners from St. Timothy, Trinity, and St. Martin, over \$2,500 was collected for the Neighbors Foundation to purchase turkeys, holiday food, and everyday food assistance for a growing number of families in need on the Island. Thanks be to God! The Neighbors Foundation passes along their deep gratitude for enabling them to do this work and serve our community.



## ELCA Good Gifts and World Hunger

A huge thank you to all for your generous donations for ELCA Good Gifts and World Hunger,



helping neighbors globally with economic wellbeing, food security, and opportunities for a better life they otherwise would not have had. St. Timothy has collected \$978 with at least \$150 given directly online, for a total of \$1,128! Among the items purchased are two flocks of chicks, four hives of bees, a rooster, four pigs, five goats, a water filter, school fees and uniform for a girl, food for a refugee family for a week, a fruit tree farm, and a share of a fish farm.

## Breakfast with Santa

Thank you for your support of our Child Care Center's Breakfast with Santa fundraiser! We really appreciate all the help from volunteers and those who donated, purchased tickets, and spread the word!

## Undie Sunday

St. Timothy will once again be joining the Rotary Club of Grand Island in their Undie Sunday collection this year to provide essential clothing items to the shelterless served by the Niagara Community Mission and other local missions. As with most winters, the emphasis is on warm socks, but they could also use new youth and adult t-shirts, leggings, and underwear for men, women, and children. The red hamper will be available for collection from January 24th through February 8th this year. Thanks for helping provide warmth, comfort, and dignity to our neighbors in need.

## ROTARY CLUB OF GRAND ISLAND

UNDIE  
SUNDAY

JANUARY 24<sup>TH</sup>-FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup>

1

2

# Last Month's Memories



Breakfast with Santa and our Christmas Play were both a blast!  
Thanks to everyone who participated!





A huge thanks to the Altar Guild for making the sanctuary truly special for Christmas once again this year! Thanks also to everyone who purchased poinsettias to grace our sanctuary.

## With Appreciation

As we look back at this year, we are filled with gratitude for each and every one of you—you are a part of what makes St. Timothy the community that it is. The love and support that each person has for each other, expressed in so many different ways, is a testament to the strength and beauty of this community. We are church together.

We are so appreciative of the many people who have given their time and talents with generous hearts and enthusiasm throughout the year: the Altar Guild, Council, Finance Committee, Property Committee, Sunday School Teachers, Ushers, Counters, Worship Assistants, Music and Worship Committee, Prayer Chain, musicians, those who help with maintenance, hospitality, lawn mowing, event planning and volunteering, baking, decorating, cleaning, trimming hedges, pulling weeds, managing recycling, running errands, researching, consulting companies, overseeing projects, helping in our child care center, making baptismal blankets, putting together gifts of appreciation for Mothers Day and Fathers Day, baking bread for Communion, organizing, and stepping in for whatever needs to be done. You are all a blessing and we are grateful to have so many hands making the work of the church and the upkeep of our property lighter work.

Thank you to all as well for your generous contributions towards each of our missions collections: Undie Sunday for the Community Missions of Niagara Frontier and Homeless Task Force of Tonawanda; the Refugee Partnership; the Ride for Roswell; the Make-A-Wish Foundation; baskets for Lutheran Charities and our Child Care Center; school supplies and paper towels; baby items for families in poverty through Harvest House; Thankofferings to support the ministries of the Women of the ELCA; and financial support for the ministries of the Grand Island Neighbors Foundation and for ELCA World Hunger and Good Gifts to provide greater food security and economic wellbeing to neighbors near and far. Each of these really does make a difference in the lives of others, and we are grateful to be able to support these essential ministries through your gifts.

And last but not least, we are always grateful for your continued financial contributions, which have allowed our ministry to thrive, grow, and adapt; for the special collections that have enabled us to have a newly resurfaced parking lot and to cover property maintenance work; and for the many off-the-books item donations.

Your generosity—of heart, hands, and finances—makes everything at St. Timothy possible. Thank you! We look forward to another great year spent with you in worship, fellowship, and ministry.

A large, stylized, handwritten "Thank you" in black ink, with the "T" and "y" being particularly large and the "a" and "n" having long, sweeping loops.



## Prayer Chain

Here at St. Timothy, we believe that prayer is powerful and can be incredibly helpful in our lives and in the lives of others. Our prayer chain allows you to ask others in our church community to pray for your friends and loved ones in their times of need.

If you would like to add someone to the prayer chain, you can call us at 773-4400, email us at [communications@sttimothygrandisland@gmail.com](mailto:communications@sttimothygrandisland@gmail.com), or contact Pastor Adam. You can also fill out the prayer chain request sheet in the Narthex at the table next to the Sanctuary entrance. Please include an address where we can send cards to those in our prayers.

We hold the following people in our prayers: The family of Gregory Trietley; Erik LaVassuer; Kalene Best; Marge Skinner; Charris Kiener; Paul Schwandt; Adelaide Benninger & family; Terri; Michael Briggs; Rob Cornelius; Phyllis Hall; Rick Burns; Mike Seguin; Matt Rowe; Esmaeil & Fariba; Dana; Jerry & Sharon; Eliana & Lilly; Jay; Dan; Michelle Ramsey; Mike & Tina Cutini; Diane & Brian Lind; Aiden Haynes; Vanessa; Logan McKenzie; Karen Wiswall; Ronald Olson; Janet Upham; Deborah Piotrowski; Mike Gueli; Lynda Reeves; Josh; Myles; Alex; Kathy Wright; Colin; Gary; Brenda; Margaret Miller; Marlene; Randy; Betty; Riley; Joe Morley; Richard E; Edna; Gloria; Marianne Caroll; Danny Penque; Robin Bengalio Richard; Joanne M.; Sylvia & Joe Smith; Lorraine Pfohl; and Cheryl Rosati.

Please note that we no longer remove people unless we have heard of their improvement or their passing. Updates are always appreciated and can be directed to the office by paper note, email, or phone ([communications@sttimothygrandisland.com](mailto:communications@sttimothygrandisland.com), 716-773-4400). Thank you.

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

This month, we'll be celebrating Shari Miller and Kevin Wilson's birthdays on January 15th and Diane Wilson's birthday on January 25th.



## Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is an important resource available at St. Timothy's. To contact Pastor Adam for pastoral care needs, you can reach him at [pastor@sttimothygrandisland.com](mailto:pastor@sttimothygrandisland.com) or at 716-773-4400.

The following are some situations in which you should call:

- ◊ In the event of a hospitalization or placement in another health care facility.
- ◊ In emergency situations of injury or illness, even if there is no hospital admission. People are often sent home under difficult circumstances.
- ◊ In times of personal crisis or struggle in which you may benefit from direct pastoral care.
- ◊ When in need of pastoral services such as baptisms, weddings, home communion, funeral, or memorial services.
- ◊ In any other circumstance where pastoral care may benefit you. When in doubt, call.

# January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 Worship, 9:30 AM	5	6 	7	8	9 	10
11 Worship, 9:30 AM Property meeting, 8:45 AM	12	13	14	15 Finance, 9 AM Bible Study, 1 PM Council, 5:30 PM	16	17
18 Worship, 9:30 AM	19	20 Worship & Music, 7 PM	21 	22 Bible Study, 1 PM	23	24
25 Worship, 9:30 AM	26	27	28	29 Bible Study, 1 PM	30	31 