



Trinity Lutheran Church

Proclaiming, Teaching and Living the Gospel of Christ!

WORSHIP SERVICES

Saturday: 5:00pm
Sunday: 8:30am

*Holy Communion is
celebrated weekly on
Saturday & Sunday*

**Sunday School &
High School Bible Study**
Sundays at 9:30am

Sat. Adult Bible Study 4:00pm
Sun. Adult Bible Study 9:45am

A Prayer for a Right Knowledge of Christ

*Almighty God, whom to
know is everlasting life,
grant us perfectly to know
Your Son, Jesus Christ, to
be the way, the truth, and
the life, that following His
steps we may steadfastly
walk in the way that leads
to eternal life; through the
same Jesus Christ, our
Lord.*

Amen.



LSB page 311

January 2026 - Newsletter

Angel Tree Ministry

Thank you to all that participated in the Angel Tree Ministry. Your generosity blessed 27 different children and fulfilled many wish lists! We pray God's blessings on the recipients and on this ministry.

Sunday School

The Heathers would like to thank all of the Sunday School kids, parents and teachers for making our program a success.

We would also like to thank Chip once again for doing the luminaries on Christmas Eve, everyone that donated candy, Kevin for the peanuts and Ruth for the cuties.

*Note: Miss Lori's class is accepting canned food donations
through January 30th for the Herscher Council of Churches.*

Offering Envelopes & Flower Chart

2026 Offering Envelopes are available for pick up in the Parish Hall. Please contact Diane in the office with any questions. The 2026 Flower Chart has also been posted in the Parish Hall near the northeast entrance to the sanctuary.

Officer Installation

Installation of officers (Council and Board of Education members) will be held Sunday, January 4th during the 8:30am worship service.

Voters' Meeting

We will meet Sunday, January 18th at 11:00am for our quarterly meeting. 2026 Mission Commitments along with regular business are on the agenda. Lunch will be served at 10:45am.

Annual Report-Attention all Group/Committee/Board Leaders

Make sure your group is included in the 2025 Annual Report. Please submit your reports/updates/new information to Diane in the church office no later than **Monday, January 12, 2026**. The report will be published in late January.



255 E. Third Street, P.O. Box 414 Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2262

Web site: trinitylutheranherscher.org Email: trinityher1@comcast.net

Visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/trinityherscher

The 7th Commandment

So the 7th Commandment is “You shall not steal.” By in large this seems straight forward. Don’t take other people’s stuff. However, there is a profound truth under this. Our stuff, our “possessions and income” aren’t just things, but rather they are gifts to us from God. God gives them to us out of His fatherly goodness and mercy. So there are two aspects that play up here.



First, any desire we have to steal is really a backhanded attack on God. Consider this – if you think you need to steal, you are really saying that God hasn’t been a generous enough God with you, that He hasn’t given you enough. We often forget how our greed and desire for more is really a terrible and wrong critique of God. God is generous to us, and this check on theft helps to focus us upon this truth.

Second, this reality that all that we have is a gift to us doesn’t apply simply to us but also to our neighbors. What they have is a gift to them from God. Thus the Catechism instructs us to help our neighbor to remember and respect what they have received from God as a gift as well. They might not remember or realize that what they have is from God.

This is why we are instructed not only to not steal but also to help our neighbors protect and improve their possessions and income. What they have is good, a gift to them from God, and we ought to help them rightly enjoy and delight in them. This ends up being the heart of the Lutheran approach to business – you don’t try to “win” the deal – you try to craft deals where you both benefit, where it is something you can both enjoy and rejoice in together.

So in this new year with it’s new business and dealings, remember that you are called to be a blessing to your neighbors and the people you have dealings with. You are an instrument of God meant to be a blessing to them, just as He uses others to be a blessing to you. God bless you this year!

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A Pastor Brown's User Guide

As we are at the beginning of a new year, I thought it might be good to refresh everyone on what I will call the “Pastor Brown User Guide”. This year I want you all to be able to get the most out of your Pastor.

One of the things I focus on as a Pastor is making sure that there is ample opportunity for you to be in the Word of God. With services and bible studies on Saturdays and Sundays, as well as morning devotions Monday through Thursday at 8, there are 6 days a week where you can be in the Word with me. Also, the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month we have a service at Harvest View/Villas which you are more than welcome to attend.

And there's a rhythm to my office work. Monday mornings I try to get most of my office work/writing done. I like to front load my writing, that way if anything goes strange and busy during the week, I'm ready for the weekend services. Tuesday mornings after devotions are set aside for meeting with the other pastors of the Circuit at Greek Study or Winkels (the month's pastors' business meeting and study). Wednesday and Thursday from 8-9 will be devotions and preschool devotions. Friday is my day off (technically Thursday is as well, but whose counting), so I try to keep that clear to scheduled events.

So if you want or would like something from me, simply let me know. I arraign my week so that there is open time in my schedule where I can be flexible and show up when called up. But here also is one of the things that is a quirk of mine – I am very introverted and easily get lost in my thoughts. I think a lot. I ponder the Word of God a lot. I default to being alone and pondering, so I'm not very good at trying to hunt people down for interaction – if you want something of me, please let me know, otherwise I'll probably be running down religious rabbit trails in my head. And don't worry, I will have time for you.

May God grant you growth in your faith this year and your understanding of Jesus' love for you!

- Pastor Brown

Christian Education Schedule

Sunday School is held Sundays at 9:30am. Meet in the front of the church for the opening.

High School Bible Study meets in the church basement Sundays at 9:30am.

Sunday Adult Bible Study is held Sundays at approximately 9:45am after Sunday worship and the Sunday School opening. We are studying the *book of Job*.

Saturday Adult Bible Study is held Saturdays at 4:00pm before the worship service. We are studying the *book of 1 Timothy*.

Facebook Live devotions are held online most weeks, Monday through Thursday at 8:00am.

**Be in the Word!
It's a great place to be!
All are welcome.**

Thank You Notes

Thank you to all those that sent Christmas wishes, cards, gifts and visited with me. I am thankful for all these blessings.

Gerry Kroesch

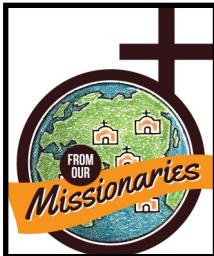
Dear members and friends and those who gave anonymously,

I am so thankful and blessed. Thank you for your kindness and generosity. Your Christmas cards, calls, texts, treats and gifts are greatly appreciated.

God's blessings to all for a Happy New Year!

In His service, Diane Hart

Missionaries



Please continue to pray for our missionaries Rev. Shauen & Krista Trump and their family as they continue to share God's love and spread His Word.

Weekly Bulletin Deadline

Items for the weekly bulletin are due in the church office each **Wednesday by noon**. Thank you!

Monthly Newsletter Deadline

Articles, announcements and information for the February newsletter are due by **Tuesday, January 20th by 9:00am**. Thank you!



Pastoral Care Contacts

Pastor Brown often roams around in his duties, but he will be happy to meet with you. Please call, text or email to set up a time.

Pastor's Email: pastorbrown.trinity@comcast.net
Pastor's Cell phone (call or text): 815-953-9995
Pastor's Office phone: 815-426-2262 x102

Diane Hart will continue to be in the office as often as needed. Phone messages and email are checked multiple times daily.

Diane's Email: trinityher1@comcast.net
Diane's Office phone: 815-426-2262 x101
Diane's Cell phone (call or text): 708-307-2710

Parish Hall Rental/ Property Check-Out List

The Parish Hall may be rented to Trinity members for various functions. Please contact Diane in the office to schedule, remit rental fee, and obtain a copy of the guidelines. **Reminder, the kitchen, tables and chairs should be left clean and floors swept. Restrooms should be checked for tidiness.**

Also, any property borrowed (old tables, kitchen items, etc.) need to be signed out on the check-out sheet in the church office. Please note, per the Church Council, the white tables and chairs may not leave the church property. **Also, all items used are to be returned clean and stored appropriately.**

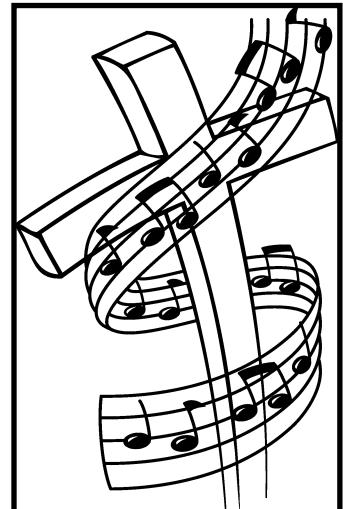
Villas at Herscher Services

Worship services are planned for Villas at Herscher Mondays, January 12th & 26th at 2:00pm. Watch the bulletins for updates.



New Year? New Hymn Perspective!

It's not a secret that Advent & Christmas is one of the two major "busy" seasons in the church. Weekend services, Midweek services, Children's Christmas programs, all on top of regular work weeks, family holiday planning, can leave church workers AND congregation members overwhelmed, stressed, and not (as) fun to be around. Looking back on my first Advent/Christmas season as a church worker, this was definitely true. Some weeks, it felt like as soon as I got done with one service, rehearsal, or task, I was immediately throwing myself into prep for the next; The next service, the next rehearsal, the next hymn, the next piece of liturgy, the next, the next, the next... You never feel "on top of things", you never feel "in control".



Pastor Brown has preached some sermons this past year about Christians' obsession with feeling "in control". We take comfort knowing that God is actually the One in control and we fear, love, and trust in Him above all things. Upon reflection of my own disregard of this fact as I allowed stress to consume a lot of my time the past month, I began wondering how one might combat this in the future. Constant prayer and personal devotion/Bible study are certainly fine training in our daily lives as Christians. However, one method I found myself subconsciously utilizing throughout Advent didn't take me far from my vocation in the church: Hymns.

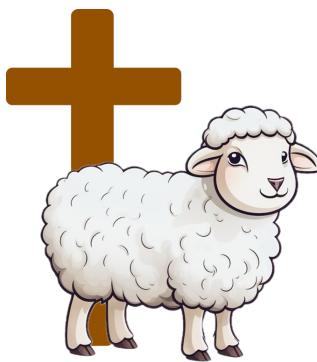
Yes! Hymns! The very pieces of music I stressed out preparing for services every week! How ironic is that? Many times, I found myself at the organ bench, reading or singing the hymns I was working on. Not just because Advent and Christmas hymns are some of the most beautiful in our hymnal, but rather because we tend to gloss over these well-known tunes and go on auto-pilot as we sing them. "Ah yes, 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' is a great hymn. I sing it every year in Advent, and hear it a lot on my Christmas CDs and playlists, too. But these Branches, Keys, and Daysprings get a little repetitive, do they not? I mean, it's SEVEN STANZAS!" Well, yes, but take advantage of that repetition to really listen to what the hymn tells or teaches us.

As church seasons come and go and we begin to "ramp-up" for the next busy seasons of Lent & Easter, I'm going to make sure I keep getting lost in the very hymns I prepare for services. By separating the tune and text and focusing on the words of the hymn writers, we may find our stress a little more bearable, as we keep our lives fixed on the Cross, with Christ always at the center.

A Musical Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

Caleb Dehning

Little Lambs Preschool



We had a great December! We completed all our projects, and the kids greatly enjoyed the book exchange and Christmas parties. Thank you to Deb Weerts and Ruth Kruse for volunteering to help with refreshments at the preschool Christmas program! Yes, it is a busy time of year, but it is also a special one. The birth of our Savior is worthy of celebration!

After a nice break, it is a joy to get back to our normal routine. However, sometimes it is necessary to deviate from that routine in the name of a good cause. If everything works out with scheduling and permissions, we expect to be hosting Herscher High School's Child

Development class this year! Ms. Morgan's students have visited in years past and were eagerly asking if it was a possibility this year; it seems text books about children hold decidedly less allure than actual children. That does not mean they do not have to do the work, of course. They will be visiting and working with both classes so they can see just how different the age groups are in terms of ability and development. Each high schooler will craft a lesson of their own for the preschoolers, which they must submit in advance and design to supplement our existing curriculum. It is surprisingly tough to make lessons that are engaging and not too complicated to complete within a limited time frame. When the preschoolers do complete them, do the lessons actually achieve their stated objective? Are the kids able to gain and/or apply knowledge in a way that is suitable for their young brains? Is the material stretching their minds or bodies, but gently? As anyone who has had to apply theory to practice knows, it is rarely as simple as it seems at the outset. We hope the high schoolers find the experience enriching and fascinating.

January is a new year in more ways than one. We are always growing, changing, and adapting, as students and teachers and children of God. Changing the calendar lets us mentally turn a page: our past is committed to memories we can go back and visit any time, while our present is freed to grow, change, and adapt with us. When the church calendar starts anew in December, we are reminded to be confident of God's guiding hand and our salvation in Christ. This reassurance is the foundation of our new year.

Wishing everyone a blessed new year,

Mrs. Brown

Raise Right Gift Card Program

Thank you for your orders this past year. Your purchases earned Little Lambs rebates totaling \$471.79 in 2025.

Trinity's Gift Card Program through Raise Right—This program is available year-round.

All orders will be placed on Mondays, allowing for delivery usually by Thursday of the same week (online orders will be submitted with the paper orders). New customers please contact Diane Hart in the office for the enrollment code or with any questions. Go to raiseright.com for more information or ask for a printed list of vendors if you prefer.

Thank you for supporting Little Lambs Preschool simply by shopping!



Trini-Teens Christmas Break Ice Skating

Trini-Teens and their families are invited to join us for ice skating on **Friday, January**

2nd! We will be meeting at the church at **2:00 PM** and carpooling over to Kankakee Ice Valley Centre. Let Caleb Dehning know if you plan to join us, and/or if you are willing to provide additional carpool vehicles!



Martha Circle & Trinity Sewing/Quilting Group

Martha Circle will not meet during the month of January.

Trinity Sewing will meet Tuesday, January 6th from 10am-3pm. We will notify you by text if weather is bad and we need to postpone. Our Holiday potluck will be Tuesday, February 3rd on our quilting date.

We would like to thank everyone that helps to make our quilt project such a success. We have plenty of batting purchased by Thrivent cards and fabric for backing to start this year's quilts. We are in continuous need of flat sheets and fabric for squares and backs. Sewers, if you clean your stash out, keep us in mind. A few of us are making port pillows for Phil's Friends and can use smaller squares.

Remember to keep those extra toothbrushes for Operation Christmas Child boxes. We have a box in our back storage area you may place items in.

Getting new glasses? Please drop your old ones in the basket on the table in the Parish Hall.

Board of Education

The Board will hold a brief meeting Sunday, January 11th at 10:30am after Sunday School & Bible Study. Please contact Lynne Noffke with any questions.

Church Council

The Church Council will meet Tuesday, January 13th at 7:00pm in the Parish Hall.

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild will meet Wednesday, January 21st at 5:00pm.

Hannah Circle

We still have a few Priester's Pecans left to sell in the parish hall. We appreciate your support of this fundraiser!

Christmas caroling at the Villas brought many smiles to their residents and we thank all of you who helped us sing.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 20th at 6:30pm. We will meet at Trinity's Parish Hall and Lynne Noffke will serve as hostess. Please read ahead chapter three, "Tamar and Ruth", from THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE SPEAK.

Looking ahead, we will be holding our annual Valentine Bake Sale on February 14th and 15th with all proceeds going toward our missions and ministries. Sweets for the sweet!

January Card Care: Frosty Thomas

Dartball

Dartball practice will be held Mondays, January



12th & 26th at 7:00pm.

Games will be played at 7:00pm Mondays, January 5th—Trinity 1 @ New Life Assembly and Trinity 2 @ home vs. Zion and January 19th—Trinity 1 @ home vs. Zion and Trinity 2 @ New Life Assembly.

Herscher Council of Churches

Our quarterly meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 6th at 7:00pm at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church. Happy New Year!

Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries (RLOM)

To learn more about this ministry, visit www.rлом.org or contact Barbara Schwark, Trinity's Advocate to RLOM.



Member Birthdays



1 Reece Harrod, Frosty Thomas,
2 Jeremy Thurston
4 Bryan Johnston
6 Dorothy Janssen, Kayla Scanlon
7 Keith Berger, Quynn Johnston
8 Jane Benjamin
9 Lauren Janssen
10 Wheeler Johnston
11 Haley Maland, Joseph L. Malone,
13 Mariah Malone
14 Pam Peterson
16 Emerson Evans
16 Wyatt Ferris, Joe Hart, Tina Varvel
17 Dara Wagner
18 Jennifer Doss, Robert Yactzak
24 Amy Henson, Remi Jo Royal, Van Schwark,
Ellie Smith, Cheryl Winebaugh
27 Valarie Crane
30 Austin Foltz, Bobbi Jean Jette,
Brad Moritz, Gabriel Noffke
31 Morgan Gaus

Please notify Diane in the church office if there are any errors or omissions. Thank you!

A Birthday Prayer

Everlasting God, "My times are in Your hand" (Psalm 31:15). Thank You for allowing me another birthday. Each new day is a gift from You. Today, I reflect on the manifold blessings You have given me. Great is Your goodness. Enable me to use my time wisely this year so I may be a witness to Your great love in my words and actions. Send Your holy angels to watch over me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Concordia Publishing House
Portals of Prayer
Jan.-March 2026, pg. 113*



Trinity Lutheran Church

November 30, 2025

Financial Summary

General

Beg. Balance	\$19,598.70
Receipts	25,494.59
<u>Expense</u>	<u>24,884.51</u>
Ending Balance	\$20,208.78

Mission Fund

Beg. Balance	\$ 855.00
Receipts	3,915.00
<u>Expense</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Ending Balance	\$ 4,770.00

Little Lambs Preschool

Beg. Balance	\$ 4,495.53
Receipts	7,802.50
<u>Expense</u>	<u>7,701.03</u>
Ending Balance	\$ 4,597.00

Complete financial reports are reported at Quarterly Voters' Meetings held usually on the third Sundays of January, April, July and October.



Please contact Diane in the church office if you need to pick up your offering envelopes, have them issued, or wish to be removed from the offering envelope list.

Too Funny!



“And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new. Also, He said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true’ (Revelation 21:5).

In January there is a great deal of “new” talk. Parties are held to ring in the “new” year. “New” year’s resolutions are made to set a “new” course of life in the “new” year. There is date forgetfulness as checks and other forms are filled out without using the “new” year on the dateline.

We use all this “new” talk because there is very often so much wrong with the old in us. We think back to the “new” resolutions from the previous year that only lasted a few weeks. That “new” person did not shed any pounds and instead, picked up a few. The “new” habits of going to the gym were soon replaced by even more time on the couch binging on Netflix. The “new” person who does not lose their temper, use sarcasm as a lethal weapon and spend more money than necessary, but who worships, prays and serves the Lord and the neighbor, never seemed to stick around. We need “new” talk because the Old Adam is alive and well within every one of us.

But this promise of “new” is a matter of stewardship. It is the Lord Himself who makes the promise of all things being new. These words recorded by St. John are not pious wishes or hopeless promises. They do what they say. YOU, that one baptized into Jesus’ death and resurrection, are NEW! These words are indeed trustworthy and true. This “new” comes to you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes free of charge, even without our prayer.

This stewardship of “new” is not a vague, someday kind of stewardship either. You are NEW now! Forgiven. Reborn from above. The old is gone, nailed to Calvary’s cross and buried and rotting in a tomb that was only borrowed by Jesus for His resurrection rest. The Gospel is what makes us NEW every morning. Remembering your baptism, you are new. Confessing your sins and receiving absolution makes you new. Hearing the Gospel filling your ears makes you new. Feasting on Christ’s body and blood in the Holy Supper makes you new.

These mercies, totally undeserved as they are, are entrusted to us to steward TODAY even as we long for the Last Day. But we know how often we fail in this stewardship. We hoard God’s creation as if it belongs to us. We belittle and devalue our neighbor because they look or sound or act in a way that we do not like. We seek to make the Holy Word of God softer and more palatable for those, or even ourselves, who refuse to confess sin as sin and repent. We value our comfort over truth, our reputation over faithfulness and our treasure over making sure that people get to hear of the Jesus who has done so much for the world and us.

We, as stewards of the Gospel, need to be made new every day. This is exactly what the Lord does. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel last year, so He gives us a new year. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel yesterday, and He gives us a new day. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel in the last few minutes, and yet in mercy our newness comes with each tick of the clock! Because that is how the Lord works.

As we see this working of all new things in us, it then calls us to be stewards of this newness to the world. This starts right in our own homes. It radiates out to our neighbors. It beams out from our congregations. This newness is teamed at the circuit, district and Synod levels all to shine the newness of the Gospel to those who need it.

Your new talk starts in the newness of the Gospel. Steward this treasure in this new year and this new day. It starts with a new you in Jesus. This is indeed trustworthy and true.



Serving Our Lord This Month — January 2026

Elder/Communion Assistant

January 03* Jerry Brutlag
January 04* Stan Schwark

January 10* *Available*
January 11* Ken Taube

January 17* Mike Bruner
January 18* Dan Shute

January 24* *Available*
January 25* Mike Bruner

January 31* *Available*
February 01* Ken Taube

*Denotes Holy Communion Served

USHTHISERS



Usher Captains

Mike Thomas (Sat.)

Karl Kruse (Sun.)

Usher Team

Victor Brown; Joe Hart; Brandt Nottke

Larry Sharper



Cindy Witheft
&
Debbie Witheft

Altar Flowers

Weekend or date:

January 03/04 *Available*

January 10/11 *Available*

January 17/18 *Available*

January 24/25 *Available*

Jan. 31/Feb. 01 *Available*



Trinity— January 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am	2 Trini-Teens Ice Skating Meet at Trinity 2:00pm	3 <i>Communion</i> Adult Bible Study 4:00pm Worship 5:00pm
4 <i>Communion Officer Installation</i> Worship 8:30am Sunday School & High School Bible Study 9:30am Adult Bible Study 9:45am Confirmation 10:30am	5 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Noon-6:00pm Dartball Games Trinity 1 @ New Life Assembly; Trinity 2 @ home 7:00pm	6 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Quilt Tying/ Sewing Group 10am-3pm Herscher Council of Churches @ St. Margaret Mary 7:00pm	7 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Handbell Choir 6:00pm Vocal Choir 7:00pm	8 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am	9	10 <i>Communion</i> Adult Bible Study 4:00pm Worship 5:00pm
11 <i>Communion</i> Worship 8:30am Sunday School & High School Bible Study 9:30am Adult Bible Study 9:45am Board of Ed Meeting 10:30am Confirmation 10:30am	12 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Annual Report Deadline 9:00am Villas at Herscher Service 2:00pm Dartball Practice 7:00pm	13 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Circuit Meeting @ Risen Savior, Manteno 9:30am Council 7:00pm	14 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Handbell Choir 6:00pm Vocal Choir 7:00pm	15 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am	16	17 <i>Communion</i> Adult Bible Study 4:00pm Worship 5:00pm
18 <i>Communion</i> Worship 8:30am Sunday School & High School Bible Study 9:30am Adult Bible Study 9:45am Confirmation 10:30am Lunch 10:45am Voters' Meeting 11:00am	19 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Dartball Games Trinity 1 @ home; Trinity 2 @ New Life Assembly 7:00pm	20 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Feb. Newsletter Deadline 9:00am Hannah Circle @ Trinity-Hostess Lynne Noffke 6:30pm	21 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Altar Guild 5:00pm Handbell Choir 6:00pm Vocal Choir 7:00pm	22 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am	23	24 <i>Communion</i> Adult Bible Study 4:00pm Worship 5:00pm
25 <i>Communion</i> Worship 8:30am Sunday School & High School Bible Study 9:30am Adult Bible Study 9:45am Confirmation 10:30am 4-H 6:00pm	26 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Villas at Herscher Service 2:00pm Dartball Practice 7:00pm	27 Pastor in Wheaton, IL	28 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am Handbell Choir 6:00pm Vocal Choir 7:00pm	29 Devotion on Facebook Live 8:00am	30	31 <i>Communion</i> Adult Bible Study 4:00pm Worship 5:00pm
Deadlines for printing: Bulletin announcement deadline-Wednesdays 12:00pm February Newsletter deadline-Tuesday, January 20th by 9:00am						