



Trinity Team

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December 2025

The Fall is Grace

Pastor Erin Thomas

This week I was sent some words from profound poet, Quaker theologian, interfaith college chaplain and mystic Fred LaMotte. He writes:

"If you feel angry, sad, low down, just think of one small thing you are grateful for, and follow that feeling, that sensation of gratitude, down a thread of breath into your heart. I don't mean some metaphysical heart - I mean, literally, this purple pulsing organ that is also a brain, netted in a complex of neurons that sparkle with the same neuro-peptide transmitters as the brain in your head.

Follow that gossamer of gratitude (it is a fuse) down to the beaten darkness of your weary, patient, ancient blood. Sink into the boundless inter-galactic space that is somehow enfolded in the temple of your chest. Keep falling (the Fall is grace) until this silken breath of thanksgiving ignites a golden radiance (A Fire more solid than any material form on earth). Like Jesus, you have 'overcome the world.'

You are love. You are joy. You are wonder. Sleep on it."

Amongst Fred's many images that spoke to me, the words that deeply resonated with me were "the Fall is grace".

The Fall is grace.

Grace.

How can our Fall be grace?

In this moment, I'm speaking of our Fall as those moments when we ourselves fall into the movements of the Spirit.

As a liturgical season, Advent is a preparation time. Like Lent that prepares us for Eastertide, Advent prepares us for eventual coming of Jesus. It can be a hard season of waiting as our particular geographic region calls us to wait during the darkest time of the year. Just as some people struggle severely with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) during the summer solstice time, others struggle severely during this winter solstice time. Our bodies react when receiving too much or too little light, too much or too little heat. Such an incredible realization that we humans truly are interconnected threads within the complexity of creation!

Add to that the pressures of the holidays – family discord, health needs, financial stressors, travel plans that get knocked about – all these things can add to our bodily reactions during this time that sometimes compels our Advent waiting to feel heavier and more demanding.

And we fall.

We fall into despair, depression, anxiety, anger, boredom, confusion, and a sense of failure. We tried to meet expectations, say the right things, live up to standards. And suddenly the world reacts towards us as if we have failed. We even cry out that we have let our own selves down or shamed God or some other heavy accusation that grows out of the shadows – light or darkness – and we just ache to survive the season. Our burdens become heavier and heavier.

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So, if we have moments when we do fall into despair and shame, could our falls be grace and love too?

The answer? Absolutely.

And, as Fred pointed out, it's not just a symbolic understanding. Our very bodies have ways of connecting with the wild and holy Spirit of God in our very cells. Gratitude opens up our spiritual and our physical hearts to remember who we are connected to. Gratitude does not make all the bad things go away, but it does empower our heart muscles to journey through together, connected to both God and one another. Gratitude can be the midwifery of joy.

It's not a magic spell or cure-all. Not by a long shot.

But our falls don't have to be owned and operated by sin and failure alone. Our falls can be those gentle releases of gratitude, hope, peace, joy, love, creativity, imagination, wonder, curiosity, and a huge list of human expressions and experiences that God has created us all with in this world.

Gifts of grace for us all. Trust falls into the arms of the Spirit of God.

This Advent season, whether life is a delight for you or perhaps a rather dismal place of exhaustion and accusation, may your fall be a deep one shining outwards the rhythms of the Spirit's grace. May Her currents surround you and hold you. May Her whispers carry you through these darkest nights during this waiting season. And may joy emerge eventually in ways that surprise you.

A blessed Advent to you all, dear friends. May you all fall in grace.

And then sleep on it.

Amen.

Bishop's Message



December 2025

Dear siblings in Christ,

You know Advent is a season of waiting — but it's not a passive or idle kind of waiting! We are preparing for something world-changing! As candles are lit and prayers rise, we remember that Christ's coming is not only a story from long ago but a promise that continues to unfold right here and now — in our communities, our homes, and our hearts.

In these Advent days, I find myself thinking about all those for whom waiting is not a choice but a reality — those who wait for justice, for safety, for shelter, for dignity, for healing. The poor, the oppressed, the displaced, and the forgotten are close to God's heart. The winter's dark is challenging at times for mental health. The cold bites those without shelter. Weather can isolate us and intensify loneliness. Jesus' birth among the poor was not an accident of history, but the deliberate sign of a God who demonstrated how important it is to be present in our care for one another. On the world stage this gives us something to stand for that is different than a corporate or political perspective. We are called to invest our funds, hearts, and attention to turning the world around by refusing to stand by idly one-more-day.

We do not need, nor ought we, to wait for business and government to fix and heal this life. From the ground up we can rise to expand food support, nurture the environment, and free ourselves from capital captivity; people of faith have done it before and we have more resources and education that at any other time in history. Advent reminds us of the essential nature of our active response. Every turning year, we are reminded that following Jesus means not only believing but living as Christ calls us: to lift the lowly, to speak for the voiceless, to serve with compassion, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. We prepare the way of God each time we act with justice, mercy, and generosity.

This Advent, I invite you to take hope and turn it into movement. Let your prayers become courage. Let your worship become witness. Let your faith become the kind of love that makes a difference — for all people in need and for all creation. No more waiting, rise up, Advent calls! With Advent hope and peace,

Bishop Trish

Bishop Trish Schmermund
Synod of Alberta and the Territories, ELCIC



GLAD TIDINGS

The joy of being a Christian
Preparing my heart for this special feast
The hope that this brings in times of darkness
Striving to live an intimate relationship
With a loving God who is near
Through the gift of His Beloved Son, Jesus

Every day praying to learn
What love is through the eyes of Jesus
Not worrying if I am measuring up
Simply knowing I am loved unconditionally
Being taught and believing in His promise
"I will always be with you".

Through this wonderful gift of faith
Recognizing Jesus, in those I meet
Being touched and moved by kindness
Remembering the importance of being childlike
Recalling holding an infant in my arms
Stirred by his innocence and abandonment
Memories etched in my heart

A time of hurrying and worrying is now at play
Much to be done, much to prepare
Soon a familiar hymn of glad tidings will be sung
A reminder of a very special day
When Jesus our Saviour was born
Humbly and simply in a stable

Following a bright star three wise men were guided
On a long journey to find and adore Jesus, the Christ
What moved them and what moves me now?

Glad tidings of peace, hope, joy and love to all...

Beverly



Council Update

Trinity Family,

On church council, as we look forward to the church celebrations of December and the church business work of January and February, there are a few things to take note of. As Pastor Erin continues her gradual return to work, staying at 75% time through December, we are fortunate enough to have Pastor Prema able to also stay with us at 75% through this very busy time of year. Over the next month, we will be assessing options for the new year and supporting Pastor Erin as she monitors the course of her healing. In other work, church council will be discussing next year's budget with the finance committee in January and will bring the draft budget to special congregational meetings after both German and English services on February 8. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on that day after whichever service you attend. Our Annual General Meeting will take place on February 22 after a combined German/English service that day, so please also plan to attend this event.

Looking back over the course of this year, I want to acknowledge both the difficult times and the blessings of 2025. We spent time together early in the year considering options for the future of our German ministry and heard strong support for maintaining ministry in the German language here – currently made possible through Pastor Sigmar's quarter-time work, and Pastor Andrea's monthly supply preaching. We celebrated Heinz's retirement and all the ways he has served Trinity over the years. We welcomed Christopher into the role of maintenance for the church. We offered support to Pastor Erin after her traumatic injury and were blessed by the work of the Worship and Music Committee to organize services for several months until Pastor Prema joined us in August. We wished Aaron well as he left to pursue graduate studies and we welcomed Agnes into the role of English choir director. We celebrated with Pastor Erin as she started back just four months after her injury, and we continue to work in partnership with her in her healing journey. All this is in addition to the day-to-day work done by Sorin, Cherie, church committees, the TLW, and many volunteers to care for the congregation and our neighbours around us. We have weathered many changes this year and I am grateful for the care and connection that we create together. May Advent and Christmas be a time of peace and joy for you and your loved ones.

Deena
Church council chair

Glad Tidings

Glad Tidings to you all my, beloved!

As a an adult, having gone through a “few” Christmases, I reflect on the word ‘tidings’ that has built this season of Advent and Christmas for me. The word ‘Tidings’ means message or news.

Although Christ, born in the manger was always the primal focus as children of two pastors and living in a Seminary campus all my growing years, the glad tidings began with events and experiences. Some of my favorite memories around Christmas time as I recall is when the children of the campus, along with the students, professors, janitors, the gardener, the electrician and other staff would gather together and make rounds to all homes in the campus singing carols. We would gather at the main hall of the campus and head into the evening, singing carols along the way as loud as we could. At the homes, one person would read a scripture passage, one would pray and we would wish the family a very Merry Christmas and head onto the next door. As the crowd moved, someone would quietly pass the offering tin for the people to place their offering. It was a lot of fun, because I was with friends. I was going around singing the carols. Beginning at an age where the true message of joy in Christ was not fully understood, but yet experienced in the joy that was all around and contagious.

As advent began savory snacks, homemade chips, crackers and sweets would be prepared. We would package them in small bags or wrap them in newspapers, put them in small boxes and head to our neighbors to hand-deliver them, or deliver them as we dropped in for our carol rounds. This was part of Christmas celebrations.

Closer to Christmas day, we would travel to my maternal grandparents' place where we would cut down a eucalyptus tree on Christmas Eve bring it home to the common room, our prayer hall, and decorate it with lights, with tinsel, with a decorations and ornaments. The leaves of the tree were sparse and dry and hung low from the weight of all the decorations. We didn't really see the droopiness of the tree, just that we got to ‘decorate a Christmas tree’ with all the fun and laughter. This was part of our Christmas. This was glad tidings back then.

Christmas, as we know it, is filled with those memories; memories of the past, memories that we made.

There are memories which my children will make, as they remember not opening Christmas presents till the end of Christmas Day. In the small living-room, gathered with the fire on the television and opening presents with their grandparents, snuggling with GG or grandma, or playing with Grandpa's tension bandage; these are the ‘glad tidings’, messages of joy that will remain.

As we begin the season of Glad Tidings, as we recall a babe in a ‘not-so-pleasant’ stable, may we see the Christ in the glad tidings that are present. May you be blessed this season, to see the Christ among us. May you be filled to join the sharing of the tidings. May we be a reason for the gladness to abound.

Christ will be born; may we be held in anticipation as we eagerly wait, so that, when the babe is born, our Joy may explode with words that eagerly share the Glad Tidings.

Blessed be you and yours this Joyful Christmas.

Soli deo Gloria
To God alone be the Glory
Prema Samuel

Called into Worship

Come, praise the Lord - Psalm 134:1-2

Advent

November 30: Advent 1. Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope. Special Music by Trinity Instrumental Ensemble (TIE)

December 7: Advent 2. Lighting the Advent Candle of Peace. Special Music by the Trinity Handbell Choir

December 14: Advent 3. Lighting the Advent Candle of Joy. **Combined bilingual service at 10:30.**

Special music by Trinity choirs and handbells. followed by the Advent Cookie and Craft event. *

December 21: Advent 4. Lighting the Advent Candle of Love. A “Blue” Christmas service offering space to experience God’s presence and hope in the midst of pain and sadness. *

O Come let us Adore Him

TRAVELLING
ADVENT
2025

Join us Wednesday evenings throughout advent
at four Edmonton-area Lutheran churches
All are welcome

MIDWEEK SERVICES - stay for coffee & treats after worship

November 26	Ascension - 7 pm	8405 83 rd St NW
December 3	Trinity - 7 pm	10014 81 st Ave NW
December 10	Holy Spirit - 7 pm	11223 51 st Ave NW
December 17	Mt. Olivet - 7 pm	205 Fir St Sherwood Park

Christmas Eve Services at Trinity
 Family Service 4:00PM
 German Service 6:00 PM
 Candlelight Service 8:00PM

Christmas Day Service at Trinity
 December 25 at 11:00AM

Christmas

December 28. First Sunday of Christmas:

- German service with Holy Communion at 9:30 am
- English service at 11:00 am with Lessons and Carols. Special music.

Serving on Council

Dear Trinity Lutheran Church Family,

Serving on our church council has been one of the greatest privileges and joys of my life. When I first stepped into this role, I felt called to strengthen our sense of community - to help us grow closer not only as fellow worshippers, but as a true family in Christ. One way to do that was to bring back something meaningful: our Trinity Church Directory.

Thank you - for your time, your patience, your smiles, your photographs, and your permission forms. Creating this directory allowed me to blend two of my greatest passions: people and photography. And what a blessing it has been. From the atrium to your homes, from shy grins to bursting laughter, I witnessed the beautiful heart of Trinity in each and every one of you. Some of you I had known for decades; others I met for the very first time. Every conversation, every story, every quick moment before or after service felt like a gift. I met individuals, couples, and families I didn't even realize I had been worshipping alongside for years. I was welcomed warmly into homes for photographs - experiences filled with kindness, warmth, and stories I truly cherished. And for those I've grown up with or been blessed to know for ages, it was especially meaningful to capture a moment with you.

Sunday mornings are not only for worship. Sunday mornings are for family. That is why this directory matters so deeply to me. My hope is that it will not sit tucked away in a drawer, but rather become a tool that builds friendships, sparks conversations, and carries forward the work of fellowship that begins within our church walls.

Our faith brings us together; our Lutheran worship shapes us; but it is outside the sanctuary - through connection, support, and love - that our community flourishes. So please, reach out. Call someone on their birthday. Email a member you've wanted to get to know. Let this directory open doors for friendship and care.

I am also delighted to share that this edition will include a business contact page, offering us the opportunity to support one another's skills, trades, and livelihoods. If you have a small business or independent work and would like to be included, please contact Sorin, at the church office, or myself at 780-907-1377 before November 30. With a \$75 donation, your information will appear alongside other small businesses on the back cover, helping your Trinity family connect with and refer your services.

Thank you - for your time, your stories, your laughter, your hugs, your high-fives, and most of all, for sharing a piece of yourselves. Whether through a photograph, a phone number, or a simple conversation, you helped shape something truly special.

We do not yet have a confirmed release date, but please stay tuned for the 2026 Trinity Lutheran Church Directory. It remains a profound privilege to serve you and to serve our Lord through this work. I look forward to seeing you all throughout the Advent season.

May God's richest blessings be upon each of you.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Sabrina Sperber

Participate/Contribute

*December 3. 7:00 pm. **Midweek Travelling Advent service will be held at Trinity.** If possible, please bring a small snack to share after the service with our visiting guests.

***Advent Cookie and Craft event will be held on December 14 after the 10:30 am Bilingual Service.** Bring some cookies or finger food to share. Stay and make an Advent Craft. If you would like to lead a craft, please let Rosanne know.

***Christmas Tree Decorating.** Stay after the service on December 21 to add decorations to the trees. Enjoy hot chocolate, snacks and music.

There are many wonderful concerts during the month of December. For details, check the posters on the bulletin board in the hallway across from the office.



B's Diner Annual Christmas Party. Friday, December 19 from 1pm-7pm. Community Dinner with a Turkey dinner and all the trimmings, music, a place to gather in from the cold. Donations and volunteers are welcomed. For details check Bs Diner Annual Christmas Party on facebook.com



Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Appeal - Glad Tidings of Great Joy

Thanks to a combined effort of several churches and individuals, the Refugee Sponsorship Appeal is within \$5,000 dollars of raising the \$45,000 need to sponsor Reem, Katia and Hala (Salloum/Alasass) to come to safety in Canada and be reunited with family in Edmonton. They have been granted official refugee status by Canada Immigration (IRCC) and are now in Lebanon, awaiting further documentation to be completed.

This combined initiative has brought congregations together in a powerful expression of compassion and unity. Please continue to hold all refugees, displaced persons and victims of war and violence in your prayers.

Submitted by Rosanne Thede



Katia Alasass



Reem Alasass



Hala Salloum

Christmas Gift Giving

Gift giving is a tradition that is part of the Christmas Season. Consider sharing with an organization or person who doesn't have everything.

- A gift of time to a lonely person or someone you don't see very often.
- A donation to the Food Bank, Mustard Seed, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, or any other organization that cares for people in need
- An extra donation to the work and mission of our church
- Contribute to the Refugee Sponsorship Appeal.
- A charity near to your heart

"God loves a cheerful giver". 2 Corinthians 9:7(b)



Advent Calendar

Consider a different approach to your Advent Calendar this year - follow the guide below and then leave the collected food at the church on Dec 28 to be given to the Edmonton Food Bank:

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.

**ON CHRISTMAS EVE DONATE THE CONTENTS TO A
FOOD BANK.**

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni and cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - cranberry sauce
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - can corn
- December 22 - can mixed vegetables
- December 23 - can carrots
- December 24 - can green beans

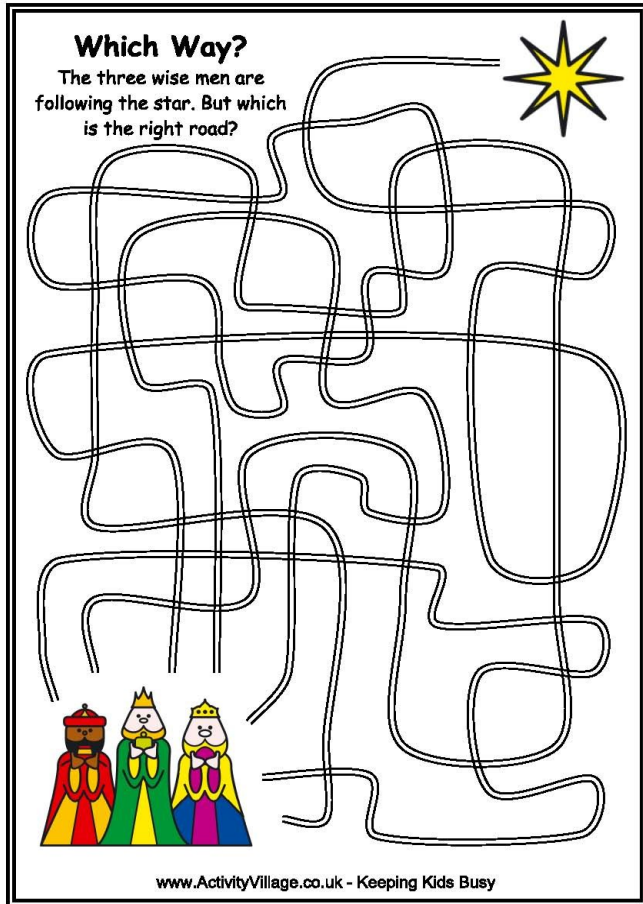
The Keeper of the Cheerios-Blog

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Christmas Puzzles



The Christmas Story



a	z	d	b	i	r	t	h	d	a	y	v
i	n	m	w	p	n	m	r	u	d	e	l
v	x	g	z	t	f	a	x	v	g	a	z
t	n	i	e	a	j	r	s	v	d	o	z
q	q	e	h	l	s	y	h	v	a	a	j
o	g	d	q	n	g	s	e	o	x	m	e
x	u	q	f	b	a	e	p	d	a	a	s
s	t	a	b	l	e	k	h	z	m	n	u
j	o	s	e	p	h	i	e	c	a	g	s
r	x	s	i	s	o	n	r	i	z	e	x
v	v	q	h	n	s	g	d	a	k	r	b
m	s	t	a	r	h	s	s	v	l	g	n

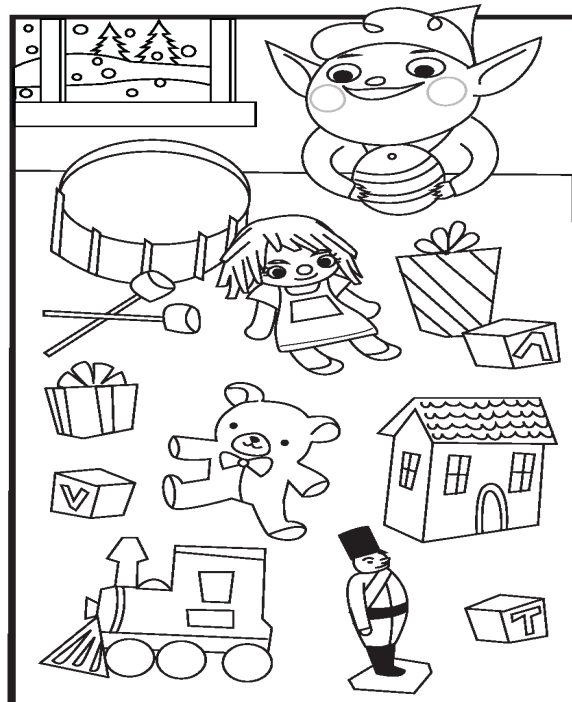
jesus manger joseph mary

birthday ox ass star

stable shepherds kings angel

FIND THE DIFFERENCE

The elves are going wacky in the workshop! Seven things in the picture on the right are missing or different in the picture on the left. Can you find them all?



Comings, Goings and Celebrations

November 24, 2024 to November 26, 2025

Baptisms

A.V. Edlund, September 7

E.S.J. Lotz, September 7

Weddings

Debbie Simpson & Kyle Bayha, February 7

Isabella Wine & Brendan Visser, April 12

Dahlia Braucht & Griffin Wallace, May 31

Victoria Blair & Nathan Pennie

Hannah White & Jared Bradley, August 9

Mercedez Gratrix & Andrew Elger, August 30

Deaths

Jason Albert Neitsch, November 26, 2024

Kenneth John Schmidt, December 5, 2024

Else Nikolaj, December 11, 2024

Adolf Klingbeil, December 22, 2024

Phillip David Wagner, January 17, 2025

Erna Lauterbach, January 24, 2025

Emilie Leopold, February 1, 2025

Heinz Hanefeld, February 7, 2025

Ludwig Schaaf, February 12, 2025

Hermann Freiheit, February 14, 2025

Lydia Otto, February 22, 2025

Emily Roth, March 23, 2025



Hildegard Haekel, April 5, 2025

Gerda Anna Beckmann, April 27, 2025

Irmgard Knoechel, May 3, 2025

Jasmine Theresa Beckmann, May 21, 2025

Klaus Przyswitt, May 26, 2025

Gundula Wilhelm, June 18, 2025

Donald Marshall Keller, July 8, 2025

Ray Christenson, November 1, 2025

Dana Rayment, November 16, 2025

Stephanie Niederhaus, November 19, 2025

Lauterbach Family Gingerbread Recipe

Attached is a Lebkuchen ('gingerbread') recipe from Erna Lauterbach's German cookbook called *Emma Quenzer Koch und Haushaltungs Buch* from 1951. Erna passed away in January 2025 but she made this Lebkuchen recipe many times up until she was 99 years old! When Erna came to Canada, her work colleagues bought her the cookbook because they said "you can't travel to a new land without a cookbook!" so the book made it to Canada and was used many times.

500g Kunstthonig (oder "cornsyrup"), 3-4 Eier, 250g Zucker, 15g Zimt, 1 Messerspitze Nelken, 10g Natron, etwa 1kg Mehl

Den Kunstthonig läßt man heiß werden und rührt so viel Mehl hinein, bis er wie ein dicker Spätzle teig ist. Eier und Zucker rührt man schaumig, gibt die Gewürze, Natron und das übrige Mehl dazu. Dann arbeitet man die beiden Teige gut zusammen, wellt die Masse halb Finger dick aus, schneidet Lebkuchen ab und setzt sie dicht zusammen auf ein bestrichenes Blech. Man läßt sie über Nacht stehen, bäckt sie in guter Hitz, schneidet sie noch warm auseinander und bestreicht sie mit Eigelb oder Zuckerwasser.

500g corn syrup, 3-4 eggs, 250g sugar (½ white, ½ brown), 15g cinnamon, ¼ tsp cloves, 10g baking soda, approx. 1 kg flour

Slowly heat the corn syrup in a metal bowl over a stove burner and stir in enough flour (about 500g) to produce a lightly-thickened mixture, then let cool to room temperature. In a separate bowl, whip the eggs and sugar until fluffy, add the spices, baking soda and remaining flour. Then combine both mixtures and kneed well with extra flour until the dough is uniform. Roll out the dough to about ¼ inch thick, cut into shapes and place them close, but not touching, on a greased cookie sheet. Leave them to sit overnight and then bake at 175°C (350°F) for about 7 to 10 minutes. Separate the gingerbread pieces while they are still warm and brush with egg yolk* or sugar water.

**Note: raw egg yolk may not be appropriate for everyone*

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The Team is intended to serve the members of Trinity Lutheran Church as a comprehensive communications tool. The editors welcome your comments or questions. Please submit all Team articles, information, comments or questions to: office@trinity-lutheran.ab.ca or drop them off at the church office - Attn: Trinity Team

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