



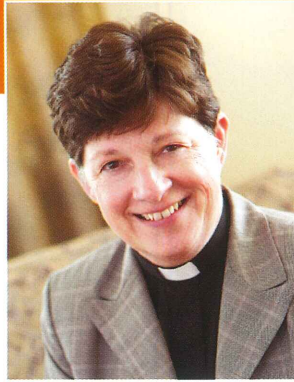
Annual Report

2016



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A message from
**PRESIDING BISHOP
ELIZABETH EATON**



Dear sisters and
brothers in Christ,

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is a church striving to grow and thrive in a changing world. As you connect with people in your neighborhoods, workplaces and beyond, you have likely discovered some approaches are more effective than others. In your pursuit of growth, it is often necessary to take risks and leave the comfort of being with “people like you.” This means there is an opportunity to offer a radical welcome to all God’s children.

Living with a daring confidence in God’s grace, we are called forward together in Christ as both servants and leaders to welcome others. In these roles we are called to be spiritually grounded, ecumenically minded, responsible, value-driven, accepting of others, nurturing and together in our efforts to do God’s work. These traits help us to be faithful and walk the way of Jesus.

As we accompany each other in this walk, we remember the cross of Christ helps us share our joys, burdens and tears. When your faith community gathers to review progress, you see how God has blessed and challenged your efforts. Through dialogue and discernment, you engage issues that affect your ability to grow and thrive. You make decisions about how to use the gifts entrusted to you to do God’s work in and beyond your community. Hopefully, this is also a time you realize you are not alone. You can find courage and hope in seeing the ways God and the people of the ELCA accompany each other in our walk and our work.

Our prayers are with you as you gather to plan and make decisions about how you are called forward together in Christ. May you remember Jesus, who gave his life that you might live.

Walking together and serving Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The script is elegant and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

LITANY

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, the one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation.
Amen.

As servants of Christ, we plant and support new congregations each year; we enable congregations to renew their ministries; we work with ethnic ministries to develop resources and networks for ministry, and we share resources for God’s work.

Together, we are partners in ministry.

As partners in ministry, we support The Lutheran World Federation’s global communion of churches with more than 80 companion churches in other countries.

Together, we accompany others in doing God’s work.

As people who accompany others, we send more than 200 missionaries to more than 40 countries, training leaders and evangelists who will expand ministries.

Together, we equip people to be disciples, evangelists and stewards.

As disciples, we equip God’s people across this country to be current and future leaders through our colleges, universities, seminaries and lay ministry schools. We especially support and pray for our more than 9,000 rostered leaders.

Together, we are members in the body of Christ.

As members in the body of Christ, we support congregations and synods with resources to assist in asset-based thinking, planning, operating matters and risk management.

Together, we are stewards of God’s gifts.

As stewards, we engage in culture and the world to work for justice. This includes engaging in lively conversation about current social, political, environmental and public issues.

Together, we are advocates of God’s work for the sake of the world.

As advocates, we facilitate dialogue and common action among communities of other faiths, seeking unity in faith and life with all Lutherans and our six full communion partners.

Together, we are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A church that shares a living, daring confidence in God’s grace.

Let us pray. As we are servants in Christ, partners in ministry, people who accompany others, disciples, members in the body of Christ, stewards and advocates, our faith comes through the good news of Jesus Christ and gives us the freedom and the courage to wonder, discover and boldly participate in what God is up to in the world. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide us and give us strength to always do God’s work for the sake of the world.

Amen.

2016 Annual Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church

Trinity Lutheran Church

A Stephen Ministry Church

2700 East Fulton, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

616 949-2510, www.tlcgr.org

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
all who by faith before the world confessed.
Your name, O Jesus be forever blessed. Alleluia, Alleluia!"

The ministry of this congregation reflected in these reports is dedicated to those Trinity members listed below who entered the church triumphant in 2016:

Mary Louise Bowman ~ January 22, 2016

John Keith Miller ~ February 21, 2016

John Silvio Bambini ~ March 19, 2016

Eugene Alkema ~ March 20, 2016

Robert L. Mellema ~ April 16, 2016

Daniel Barker Shumaker ~ April 28, 2016

Edward Howard Medley ~ May 20, 2016

Leigh Ann (Panzer) Hunt ~ July 24, 2016

Audrey Mae Polick ~ September 25, 2016

Our Mission : Trinity Lutheran Church is a dynamic family called by God to nurture each other in our daily journeys of faith and to joyfully increase our response to all people in need, sharing God's gifts of love and grace.

**Trinity Lutheran Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan
2016 Annual Meeting Agenda - January 15, 2017**

Call to Order, Brad Blair, Congregation President

Opening Devotions, Pastor Bob Linstrom

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the January 17, 2016 Annual Meeting Minutes

Appointment of Tellers

Nominating Committee Report

Ballot for Council

Kate Bredwell – first three-year term

Kathy Bush — second three-year term

Carol Butler — first three-year term

Jim Coates — second three-year term

Amelia Crist — a two-year term (completing the term of Taylor Sytsma)

Chris Engle – first three-year term

Julia Kessel – one-year term (youth representative)

Carrie Wygmans — first three-year term

Ballot for Synod Assembly Delegates

Brad Blair

Sherry Blair

Annette Remsburg

Frank Remsburg

Ballot for Nominating Committee for 2018 Candidates

John Fox

Janine Johnson

Neil Sandler

Michael Sytsma

Review of Reports

Pastors (pages 14-17)

President (page 18)

Committee Reports (listed alphabetically by committee name, pages 19-33)

Treasurer's Report and Presentation of the 2017 Budget, (pages 34-37), John Basher, Congregation Treasurer

Unfinished Business

Report on the "Strengthen to Serve" Capital Campaign

Report on the Building Project

New Business

Proposal to extend a Call to Ministry to Karen Z. Niemeyer as Part-Time Assisting Pastor at Trinity, Mike Mason, Call Committee Chairperson

Announcements, Lord's Prayer and Benediction, Pastors Bob Linstrom and Dan Schewe

Adjournment

The meeting was called to order by President, Brad Blair at 1:08pm following a potluck dinner. Pastor Bob led the gathered in an opening service of Dialogue & Prayer to celebrate who we are as a Church.

Agenda: Motion to approve, with the addition of an introduction of Daniel Schewe whom we will be considering for call as Associate Pastor, by Neil Sendler, 2nd by Doug Haneline, passed.

Minutes of January 18, 2015 Annual meeting minutes: Motion to approve by Dan Babin, 2nd by Gloria Vonder Heide, passed.

Appointment of Tellers: Jim Coates, Neil Sendler, Brenda Heacock. Counted 104 voting members present, which exceeds the quorum required for the meeting to take place.

Nominating Committee: Outgoing council member Mikaela Bradley was recognized as having served the first position of youth representative to Congregation Council. Michael Mulligan was also recognized for his service on council. Floor was open to nominations, but none made. **Motion to approve nominated slate of candidates for congregation council** by Peter McKinney, 2nd by Ted Niemeyer, passed.

Council members elected:

John Basher – second three year term

Paul Christ – first three year term

Gene Gunderson – first three year term

Wendy Johnson – first three year term

Emma Hall (youth member) – first one year term

Synod Assembly Voting Members: Motion to close nominations and vote for all submitted candidates by Nadene Delana, 2nd by Renee Fisk, passed.

Elected: Jim and Sue Coates, Jan and Norm Palm.

Nominating Committee for 2017 Council Candidates: Motion to close nominations and vote for all submitted candidates by Doug Haneline, 2nd by Dan Butler, passed.

Elected: Todd Brandstadt, Renee Fisk, Roger Marks, Bruce Youngman

Special recognition was given to member Elaine Rongey for instituting and working for 11 years on the Fair Trade ministry at TLC.

Review of Reports – Pastors, President, Staff & Committee Reports: Motion to receive Dan Babin, 2nd by Kim Engle, passed. Mention was made of need for more sacristans and invitation was extended for volunteers.

Treasurer's Report & Presentation of 2016 Budget: Motion to approve by Jim Coates, 2nd Dave Johnson, passed.

Notes from Treasurer Basher: Christian Education budget is lighter because of 2015 training that is not being repeated in 2016; Youth budget is higher because we are paying for adult chaperones on the mission trip; Property budget is affected by the hiring of a cleaning service and part time sexton that replaced a full time sexton and also the cleaning of the lantern, which wasn't done in the past; refunds are expected on leases on office equipment that were overpaid; the Day Care Center was closed in the Fall of 2015 ; Payroll is affected by moving the sexton's salary into a different budget line to pay the cleaning service; Stephen Ministry will be paying for training additional members and supervisors in 2016. Other notes were on the debt repayment for the parking lot (30 year loan with 5 year balloon); new associate pastor's salary (in line with Synod's compensation and benefits guidelines); 2016 pledge expectations based on 2015 receipts versus pledges. He also noted that salaries are now 57% of budget, down from 63% previously.

New Business:**Call Committee Report:**

TLC formed a call committee in September, 2015, chaired by Rachele Battreal for the Associate Pastor position. The committee was diverse across gender, age and four worship services: Dawn Brackmann, Dan Butler, Curtis Hahn, Allie Radke, Nick Zientarski and Brad Blair, ex officio as Council President. They met a dozen times from October through December.

Rachele presented Dan Schewe for consideration for call to the associate pastor position at TLC. She noted that he was the only candidate considered since he was assigned to our Synod and the Bishop felt this would be a good match for us. The Call Committee took extra steps to ensure that he met the needs identified in our Ministry Site Profile including interviewing extra references. Other due diligence steps included meeting with Dan multiple times, going to hear him preach and lead worship at Zion Lutheran in Comstock Park, reading his blogs and other writings. The congregation will have the opportunity to vote on the call at a specially called meeting January 31 following 11:15 worship. We viewed a video introduction of Dan, his wife Alexis and son Sam.

Proposal for a Capital Campaign.

John Fox presented a proposal by the Capital Campaign Committee for consideration.

I present a motion to spend \$60,000 plus expenses not to exceed \$20,000 to hire Walsh and Associates to conduct pacesetter and capital campaigns during 2016 for the purpose of securing pledges for the Trinity Lutheran Church building campaign.

He described the process as organizing face to face solicitations and handling the promotions since the congregation survey determined that we do not have the volunteers or experience to perform this function without assistance. In addition, to obtain a construction loan, we will be required to have a professional company do this. The timeline might be: pace setter campaign in the spring and capital campaign in the fall for the three year cycle. **Motion by Jo Murphy, 2nd by Peter McKinney/ passed.**

Announcements: Pastor Bob announced plans for Lent in 2016. The congregation expressed thanks to Pastor Jonathan Reid for his interim ministry at TLC.

Motion to adjourn by Michael Mason, 2nd by Beth Engstrom, passed.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer and Doxology.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37pm

Respectfully submitted, Carrie Wygmans, Council Secretary



Kate Bredwell

Kate Bredwell is a lifelong Lutheran. She grew up in Port Huron, where she was a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church. She earned her Bachelors and Master of Music degrees at Michigan State University, where she and her husband Bryan met as members of the Spartan Marching Band. She and Bryan joined Trinity in 1997. Kate is the director of bands at Lowell Middle School and the mom of Leah (14), Ali (10), and Zoe (4). At Trinity, Kate has served as a Stephen Minister, Bible study leader, Sunday School and VBS teacher, and confirmation mentor. She also sings in the Trinity Choir, and is looking forward to serving on council.



Kathy Bush

Hi, I am Kathy Bush. I have been a member of Trinity for 16 years. I am happy to be a member of our congregational council for the past 3 years. I am the council representative for the children's ministry. I had the privilege to serve as the hospitality chairperson for the Strengthen to Serve capital campaign. Additionally, I am currently active as a Stephen Minister and Trinity's coordinator for IHN/Family Promise. At Trinity I have also taught Sunday school, been a confirmation youth mentor, member of several bible studies, played on Trinity's Know Mercy softball team, cooking group, and helping hands.

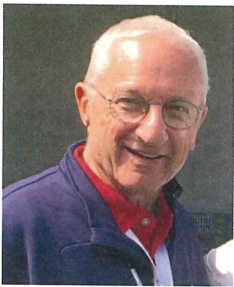
I am married to the love of my life, Bill Bush. We have 4 children and 3 beautiful grandchildren (ask me to show you pictures anytime). I am a nurse at Forest Hills Pediatrics.

I would be honored to continue to serve on church council.



Carol Butler

Carol Butler has helped others throughout her adult life. She trained as a teacher and taught elementary school for several years. She then became a counselor and therapist, working in four cities primarily with marriages, families, and grief issues. She retired as a therapist with Christian Counseling Center (now part of Pine Rest) at the end of 2015. She is now engaged in a program for Spiritual Direction through our Synod office. In the past year she has filled an open position with our Church Council and is liaison with our Health Ministries committee. Carol has been married to Dan Butler for more than 51 years and together they are parents to Rebecca Ulrich (member of Trinity), Brian Butler of Medford, OR, and Jason Butler of Goodyear, AZ and grandparents to seven beautiful, smart, amazing young lives.



Jim Coates

Joined TLC Nov 2012 when moved back to Grand Rapids after a 62 year lapse. Currently on Council, liaison to Property Committee, member of Finance Committee, facilitator for a DeGage' Team and Thursday Morning Men's study group, frequently assists in kitchen (Army KP training) for Wednesday dinners, funerals etc.

Had 30 year Corporate career spanning from field sales to CEO, followed by 10 years operating own business and consulting to fast growing companies. Currently, a certified Mentor for SCORE which is a national organization focused on assisting new start up companies, companies that are running into difficulties and companies that require guidance in adjusting to growth demands.

Happily and gratefully married to Sue for 16 years, have two sons, one in Kansas City as VP Sales Standard Beverages Co and the other son in DelRay Beach, FL as Senior Director Food Service for Thomas Cuisine Management who operates food service operations for retirement communities nationwide.

We are in very exciting and challenging times at Trinity and it will require the dedication, participation and patience of our entire Congregation to fulfill this ambitious undertaking. I am convinced our approach has been well thought out and result in a facility that we can all be proud of.



Amelia Crist

Amelia Crist has been a member of Trinity since joining with her family in 2007; Pastor Bob presided over her marriage to John Taylor in 2015. Amelia volunteered to fill Taylor Systma's vacant seat on the council and hopes to serve as the new Young Adult Council Representative.

Amelia graduated from Aquinas College in 2010 with majors in English and Theater and a minor in Communication. She's been an independent events and stage manager in the Grand Rapids area since graduating and has worked for clients as diverse as: Opera Grand Rapids, Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival, JW Marriott, Gordon Food Service, and Caledonia Dance Company. Most recently she has been an Intervention Specialist at Godwin Heights High School, an at-risk district where she helps manage in-school remedial programming, ensuring students stay on track to graduate. She recently accepted a position at the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan as their Events and Office Coordinator and is excited to help bring global programming and events to Western Michigan.

She and her husband John usually attend the eight o'clock service where Amelia volunteers as a cantor.



Chris Engle

Chris and his family joined Trinity in 2002. He has served on the Finance Committee, Audit Committee, and the Youth and Family Committee. This summer he will accompany the high school youth on his 11th mission trip. He has served terms on church councils of two prior congregations.

He and Kim celebrated their 30 wedding anniversary in 2016 with their three children, Andrew, Rachel, and Raymond. Andrew is a graduate of the Secchia Culinary Institute and also received his Bachelors in Hospitality Management from Ferris State. Rachel will graduate from the University of Wisconsin – Madison this May with a Bachelor's in Communications and Rhetorical Studies. Raymond is a first-year student at the University of Michigan, College of Engineering.

Chris owns Argus Financial Consultants, an independent financial planning firm. He is a Certified Financial Planner and a Chartered Financial Consultant.



Julia Kessel

Julia is a junior at Grand Rapids Christian High School. She was baptized and confirmed at Trinity. She assists in teaching Sunday School; she has attended two Youth Mission trips; she serves as a lector. Julia's school activities include: 3 years of sideline cheer; 3 years competitive cheer (current co-captain, 2 times academic all-state); 3 years tennis team; 1 year soccer team; and a member of the National Honor Society. Julia is the daughter of Trinity members Brad and Gayl Kessel.



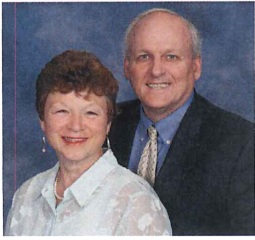
Carrie Wygmans

Carrie and husband David just moved from Ada to a 100-year-old farmhouse outside Lowell. David's daughters live in Ashville, NC and Lexington KY. No grandchildren yet, but that is in their plans, if not in their daughters' plans.

Carrie is employed at Diversified Distribution where she is writing Standard Operating Procedures for the warehouse, and serving as Safety Administrator. She has spent much of the Fall in Reno, Nevada and will be traveling to Chambersburg, PA and Greenville, SC to train employees on a new Warehouse Management System being installed.

She has been a member of Trinity since 1996. Carrie participates in the LWR Quilting Bee, serves on a Degage team, is a member of the Hospitality and Worship & Music Committees, and chairs the Spiritual Growth Committee. She loves to assist the pastors in worship when needed and is a communion assistant, greeter and backup sacristan. Carrie has been the Congregation Council Secretary for the past three or four years.

Carrie enjoys spending time with her family, including 6 sisters and many nieces and nephews and their families. She is an avid game & card player and belongs to two book clubs, sometimes even reading the scheduled books. She enjoys Saturday morning walks and coffee with friends.



Brad & Sherry Blair

Brad & Sherry Blair have been members of Trinity Lutheran since the late 1980's. They were married at Trinity in September of 1987 by then Pastor Jim Cobb. Their two adult children, Cal and Chris, were both baptized and confirmed at Trinity.

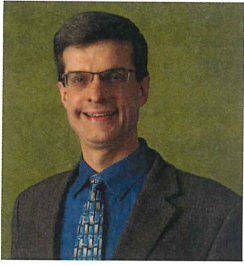
The Blair's have served Trinity in many ways over their 30+ years. Most recently they co-chaired the "Strengthen to Serve" Capital Campaign. Sherry currently teaches Sunday school to preschoolers and serves on the Gardening and Funeral Committees and assists with IHN. Brad is in his 5th year on Council, his third as President and has been a long-standing member of the Adult Choir. Both serve as Lector's, Communion Assistants and Greeters.

Sherry has previously represented Trinity at the Synod Assembly. This will be Brad's first time attending Synod Assembly if elected.



Frank & Annette Remsburg

Trinity has been our church home for more than thirty years. Our children grew up here and benefitted from an active Sunday School and Youth program. Our involvement has included the Evangelism committee, Sacristan schedulers for Rejoice services, Women's leadership roles and Frank's current role as chair of the Property Committee. Frank has been active with the building committee and led the effort to complete parking lot improvements as well as the cross tower reconstruction. We felt blessed to have been a part of this year's Trinity Travelers, on the trail of Martin Luther in Germany this past summer. In our retirement, we love spending time with our five grandchildren, including our winter months in South Carolina.



John Fox

John Fox is the Senior Medical Director for Priority Health. He received his Doctor of Medicine from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and completed a pediatric internship and residency at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. He also earned a Masters in Health Administration from University of Wisconsin.

He is married to Kristine and has three children, Linnea (21), Steven (19), and Andrew (17). He is very committed to youth leadership development and is active in the Boy Scouts of America as a scoutmaster and board member. He continues to practice medicine in third world countries, including Honduras, and leads one to two trips there annually. He helps keep nature nearby through the Land Conservancy of West Michigan where he serves as a work crew leader and on its board of directors.

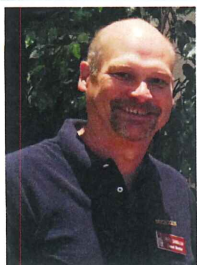
He enjoys woodworking, singing, hiking, skiing and collecting all sorts of things.



Janine Johnson

Janine Johnson's career was focused on roles in public relations and communications at organizations including Pfizer Global Research & Development in Ann Arbor; Merck & Co., Inc., in N.J.; and the Star Tribune in Minneapolis. Janine earned a B.A. degree in English from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn.

Janine and her husband Bruce, are parents to Teagan (age 15) and Sheyda (age 4). The family lives in Byron Center.



Neil Sendler

Neil and Sue Sendler became members at Trinity in 1990. They have two beautiful daughters, Stacy and Stephanie who are living together in NYC. Neil and Sue regularly worship at the 9:00 Rejoice service.

He joined council in 2008 to fill a vacancy. While on Council, Neil has been Council liaison to the Congregational Life Committee. He has also served as Chairperson on the Worship and Music Committee in the past. He has been involved in many activities including the Men's Ministry, Wild Wednesdays and worship assistant. This is Neil's final year on council.

Neil has a BS in Mechanical Engineering from U-M. He works for the City of Grand Rapids in the Environmental Services Department.



Michael Sytsma

Michael Sytsma serves as the Senior Vice President at Chemical Bank in Grand Rapids. Michael is a native of Grand Rapids and graduate of Miami University.

He has over 19 years of banking experience in the West Michigan market and more than 11-years of experience in real estate development & investments.

Michael serves the community as president of the Rotary Club of Grand Rapids, executive board member of Priority Health, chairman of the advisory board for Family Promise of Grand Rapids and past executive board member of the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan.

Michael resides in East Grand Rapids with his wife, Kristen, and their three children, Taylor, Turner & Lauren ("Boo").

Community Involvement

- Member of Grand Rapids Economic Club
- Member of Trinity Lutheran Church
- Volunteer at Degage Ministries
- Volunteer at Interfaith Hospitality Network
- Volunteer at Kids Food Basket



Karen Niemeyer

Dear Fellow Ministers of Trinity,

I'm excited that Trinity's Call Committee and Council have approved calling me as your assistant pastor; and I am looking forward to working alongside all of you, Pastor Bob, Pastor Dan and the Trinity Staff as we do God's work together in the years to come. Although I know many of you, here's a short autobiography for those who don't know me (and whom I'm looking forward to meeting soon!).

In past years I've worn many hats, including wife and stay-at-home mom, adult student (earning a bachelors degree in business and a masters degree in organizational communication), project manager at a marketing communications firm, and ministry coordinator at two Lutheran Churches (including Trinity for nine years). Because I was raised in the Lutheran Church/Missouri Synod where ordination is not permitted for women, I never seriously considered becoming a pastor. However, after working on Trinity's staff, interacting with ELCA women pastors and completing the Lutheran Lay Ministry Training Program, my dream of pastoral ordination began to take shape. So for the past seven years I have been working on my Masters of Divinity degree, including classes at Western Seminary in Holland, a mini-internship at Hope Community Church in Rockford, a student chaplaincy at Spectrum Health in downtown Grand Rapids, a two-year part-time pastoral internship at Christ Lutheran Church in Wyoming, and graduation from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in May 2016.

Among the many blessings in my journey have been the love and support of my husband, Ted, our two boys and their wives (who live close by), our daughter (who lives in Ohio), and our nine grandchildren (including four-year-old-quadruplets). In my spare time, besides babysitting for the little people in our family, I enjoy walking a couple of miles several times a week and escaping to the Lake Michigan beach as often as possible. I feel that I'm living in the best time of my life, and I am thankful that God has gifted me with a lot of energy and a love for doing ministry.

I am so appreciative to you for calling me and considering my being a part of Trinity's ministry. I know there is much more for me to experience...many wonderful people to meet....and oh so much more to learn. I look forward to doing that as I begin my journey with you as assistant pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church.

Together in Christ,

Karen Niemeyer



For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven . . .

What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time . . .

Ecclesiastes 3

The wisdom of Ecclesiastes gives us reflection, song and a sense of vocation, as we contemplate the ‘business’ or the ‘busyness’ that “God has given to everyone to be busy with.” Our life together can certainly be characterized as busy among the people and through the programs of Trinity, but it is a busyness that is rich in mission and ministry.

I have the privilege of sharing a few of the highlights of my fourth year among you as Trinity’s Senior Pastor in this report. In the spirit of ‘for everything a season,’ I will offer that report in the context of the four seasons of 2016.

WINTER 2016

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation in January included the adoption of a strong budget, the election of leaders and action to take on a Capital Campaign with consultants from Walsh and Associates. We also began to seek the contractors that would lead our Cross Tower remediation project, after authorizing that major initiative in December of 2015. I led a new pastor’s class on Wednesdays with subject material from Mark Stenberg’s 51% Christian; Finding Faith after Certainty. In the absence of an Associate Pastor I continued teaching the Sunday afternoon Confirmation classes and sought to support those who were leading ministries with Middle School and High School youth, including planning for the summer of 2016 Mission Trip and the turnout of campers for Stony Lake. I had a leadership role in a major event, “Welcoming Refugees: Do Unto Others,” at the Catholic Information Center in March with more than 400 community members in attendance. We celebrated together another Kids Against Hunger meal packing event in February and responded with cash offerings and bottled water for the people of Flint through our partners at Salem Lutheran Church in that community. The Outreach ministry of our congregation reported on 2015 benevolent giving in excess of \$230,000 through wider church and community partnerships. The people of Trinity began our Lenten journey to Easter with midweek worship, soup suppers and devotional resources, culminating with our Holy Week worship gatherings. A first (annual?) Holy Week Seder Supper was held with an enthusiastic gathering and a wonderful meal. The Trinity Travelers continued their preparations for the “Walking in the Steps of Martin Luther” Germany tour in the summer of 2016. And after a half year of vacancy, Pastor Dan Schewe received and accepted the call to join us as Associate Pastor on January 31. His arrival in February marked the beginning of a new chapter of pastoral ministry at Trinity. Pastor Dan was ordained and installed into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament on March 19.

SPRING 2016

A \$50,000 anonymous gift seeded a new Building Endowment Fund at Trinity as a matching grant challenge – the people of Trinity responded and more than \$165,000 is now working as a ‘forever gift’ to provide future care and maintenance of our facilities and grounds. Eighteen fifth graders completed a multi-week communion class with me and received Study Bibles for their Confirmation years at Trinity. We began to assemble a New Members ‘class’ for the spring and by early June we had received 50 new adults and children into our life together. Preparations for Art and Music Camp, SpringHill Day Camps, Camp VBS and Stony Lake Camp continued and Pastor Dan climbed into the saddle as our Youth and Family Pastor as the Mission Trip youth continued to plan their summer week of service. JOYful Days participants and Rummage Sale volunteers filled Centennial Hall and a Master Plan Revision from our architects rolled back the \$9 million original plan to a \$5 million alternative, a plan many perceived as superior to the larger plan completed the year before. That plan was shared in after worship forums in early May and was well

received by the congregation. I led a new Wednesday pastor's class based on Lisa Miller's text "Heaven; Our Enduring Fascination with the Afterlife." With the conclusion of Tim Van Der Bilt's five years of staffing Trinity's children's ministries, job postings for part-time Youth and Family staff positions were followed by a series of May and June interviews, culminating with the hiring of six part-time Children, Youth and Family staff members. A beautiful new Paschal Candle stand was dedicated to the memory of Pastor David Paul in the church sanctuary and the Trinity Choir began to sit in new posture chairs in rehearsal.

SUMMER 2016

A highlight of my summer was joining the 26 "Trinity Travelers" for eleven days following Martin Luther's heritage across eastern Germany. On the home front, working closely with Pastor Dan and our new Children, Youth and Family staff, we celebrated a strong start in fall programming for Trinity's families with children. A successful series of camps and Mission Trip were facilitated by our new staff and great volunteers. The Outdoor Worship service in July moved indoors as the rain came but the accompanying Pig Roast was a well-received new food and fellowship event. The "Strengthen to Serve" Capital Campaign kicked off in the early summer with its Pacesetting phase and a very strong team of leaders stepped up to facilitate this significant appeal. Cross Tower remediation continued with complications due to more severe damage than expected when the stone was exposed and structural damage that had to be addressed.

FALL 2016

A six-month capital campaign effort culminated in pledges and gifts for our building project totaling more than \$3,760,000. Sunday School and fall programming unfolded with new energy and growing participation. Trinity began its observance of the 500th year of the Reformation with a wonderful community Hymn Festival on Reformation Sunday and a series of monthly columns in our newsletter from the Trinity Travelers home from Luther's Germany. I continued to teach my Wednesday morning and evening forums and added in some First Communion classes for younger Trinity members. 21 ninth graders were lifted up in a festival Confirmation Sunday celebration and another 30 adults and children were received into membership, marking 90 new members in 2016. The people of Trinity embraced a new partnership with Congress Elementary School and the welcoming and resettlement of a new Congolese refugee family. Nine Trinity members who had died were lifted up on All Saints Sunday and 20 newly baptized in the last year were blessed. We came to yearend with a meaningful journey through Advent to Christmas, punctuated by a grace-filled first offering of a Children's Christmas Program by our new Youth and Family staff.

A new season is upon us as we gather in Annual Meeting in January of 2017. We embrace the revelation of a God who "makes all things new" in Christ Jesus, and the privilege of a new year of mission and ministry together. I am grateful to be a partner along the way. Grace and peace to you all.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Bob Linstrom, Senior Pastor



Report of the Associate Pastor to the Congregation

"Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the ones who curse you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." – Genesis 12:1 – 3

These words spoken to Abram ring in my ears daily. He is told to go and that he will be blessed and that all will be blessed through him. We are a blessed people and our blessing has its purpose, to bless others. It is not for us to hold onto tightly or hoard, but instead to what we have been given and be amazed at how God uses it to bless a myriad of people. We are blessed to be a blessing.

I remember ten months ago getting a call from Brad Blaire informing me that Trinity had voted to call me as your next associate pastor. Some days this seems like only yesterday and others like so much longer. I feel like in these past ten months I have become a member of the family that is Trinity Lutheran Church. Thank you for how you have welcomed myself and my family into your hearts. Your hospitality has been a blessing to us all. We are blessed by you. It is my joy, honor, and privilege to serve as your associate pastor. I'm eager to continue to see how and where God leads us in the greater Grand Rapids Community.

These past ten months have been very busy and very good. They began with my installation and ordination which quickly flowed into Holy week and has continued through this Christmas season. I have learned that Trinity is a busy congregation, and busy in all the right ways as we look to live out the ministry that God has laid before us.

My summer was highlighted by two trips and a wonderful week of Vacation Bible School.

Our Vacation Bible School was more targeted to the early elementary youth of our congregation and community, and was by all accounts a great success. I continue to thank Beth Hall for all of her work making it so. This summer we are trying out an evening VBS with activities for the whole congregational family.

It was a joy to spend a week in July with over forty of our youth at Stony Lake Camp. We laughed, played, and got to know each better all while learning more about how God was calling us to live. I am eager to continue to strengthen our partnership with Living Water Ministries, the organization that runs Stony Lake Camp. They are doing amazing things across Michigan, and beyond, to help raise up leaders and fight injustices.

In June I was blessed to spend a week with twenty-nine youth and eight adults in Somerville, Tennessee. We helped renovate homes for residents of that area and share with the what God has done for each of us. I continue to thank all the chaperones, parents, volunteers, and fund raising coordinators. This life changing experience was possible only through the generous support of Trinity through all of the fund raising efforts. I am excited for this summer's trip to Norris town Pennsylvania. We already have thirty-eight youth confirmed for the trip.

This September it was my joy to start teaching Confirmation classes as the primary instructor to our middle school youth. We have had a joy learning more about the Reformation, Luther, and what it means to be Lutheran. We will finish out this year studying the Gospels and Sacraments.

It has been a great honor to meet and spend time with a number of our members in their own homes, hospitals, and rehabilitation facilities. I find joy in the times we have shared stories, communion, and prayer. I am thankful for the friendships that have formed through these visits.

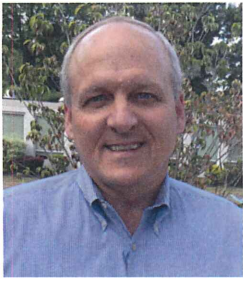
I continue to love worshiping at all of our services as we express our adoration to God for all He has done for us. I am thankful for the assistance of Larry Biser in helping me with my canting.

In addition to all of these amazing activities Trinity also embarked on a new staffing paradigm to serve our children, youth, and families. Our new configuration allows us to have gifted individuals focused on smaller ministry profiles to better serve those groups. Brittany Fischer is our Children's Ministry Coordinator. She is focused on making our Sunday School program a place where our children can learn the faith and build community. This year we started a new curriculum and a new start time. James Morin serves as our Family Activities Coordinator. He oversees activities for families such as Trunk or Treat, which went incredibly well this year. Taylor Sytsma is serving as our Middle School Ministry Coordinator. She has proven to be an amazing asset to our Confirmation program and is helping strengthen the community of our middle schoolers. Ashlee Wetherington serves as our High School Ministry Coordinator. Her energy and passion for helping our senior high youth find grounding and expression to their faith is contagious. Rachele Battreall serves as our Director of Youth and Family Ministry. In this role she is helping highlight different development moments in the lives of our children and families such as the blessing of the backpacks, gifting and connecting with newly baptized member families, and helping reach out to our youngest families. She also helps coordinate efforts across the whole children, youth, and family ministry team.

I know that over these past ten months I have been blessed by the people of Trinity, and have witnessed how you have been a blessing to the greater Grand Rapids community. I look forward to the ministry God continues to lead us into.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Dan Schewe, Associate Pastor



A year ago I mentioned in my January message that I am overjoyed and sometimes overwhelmed by how active our Congregation here at Trinity is. This remains true as we begin 2017 together and say goodbye to 2016. Here are just a few of the highlights of the year just completed:

- Welcomed a new Associate Pastor in Dan Schewe, his wife (Alexis), son (Sam) and recent addition Benjamin Herb.
 - Revamped our Children's and Youth & Family Ministry team and programming including hiring part time staff members:
 - Rachelle Battreall – Director of Youth & Family Ministry
 - Brittany Fischer – Children's Ministry Coordinator
 - James Morin – Family Activity Coordinator
 - Taylor Sytsma – Middle School Ministry Coordinator
 - Ashley Wetherington – High School Ministry Coordinator (added to her existing Finance Assistant duties)
 - Conducted and completed a six-month Capital Campaign that received 3-year pledges to date totaling \$3,745,275 for the purposes of renovating, remodeling and refurbishing our 60+ year old building.
 - Provided initial capitalization through congregational gifts to our Building Endowment Fund of nearly \$170,000 which will allow us to begin using the interest gained on this fund to perform building repairs outside of our annual budgeting for property management.
 - Approved funding for the remediation of our iconic Cross Tower and, hopefully, will have completed this work by the time you read this.
 - Welcomed 80 new members in Spring and Fall celebrations
 - Established a "Call Committee" which has unanimously recommended the hiring of Karen Niemeyer as a part time "Assisting Pastor" to help provide any or all of the following: pastoral care and visitations, worship leadership, recruiting & equipping leaders, senior ministry and volunteer recruitment.
- And did all of the above while running a surplus in our Annual Budget giving allowing us to increase our benevolent gifting.

As we move into 2017 our building will remain a major focus area as we determine what we will do which will be derived from whether and how much we choose to supplement our 3 year "Strengthen to Serve" pledges with additional borrowing. Many meetings with Architects, construction management and hours of reviewing costs and alternatives will take place early in 2017 in the hopes of bringing alternative plans to the congregation for a "go forward" decision. Lots and lots of work ahead!

As we begin this New Year I continue to request your prayers for God's strength and guidance and for His will to be done through the good men and women serving as your Congregation Council members.

Your brother in Christ,

Brad Blair

Brad Blair
Congregation Council President

Hebrews 13:20-21

20 Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, **21** equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Praise God for the blessings Trinity members continue to share with others!

Thank you to all of you who so generously made financial contributions as well as gifts-in-kind and too many volunteer hours to count. Trinity is a very giving congregation in so many ways!

From Trinity's Mission Endowment Fund, the 2016 distribution for benevolence totaled \$15,800.00. After careful consideration, the members of the Outreach Committee made the following decisions regarding the organizations that would benefit financially from these one-time gifts:

Michigan CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate): \$4,500.00

Mission India - Neerekshe: \$2,500.00

Honduras Health for Life: \$2,500.00

Salvation Army Congregational Partnership Program: \$1,500.00

SECOM (South East Communities Outreach Ministry): \$1,900.00

Salem Lutheran Church in Flint: \$2,500.00

Our Sisters: \$400.00

Preliminary Report of 2016 Benevolence to Date

Organization	Benevolence
Access of West Michigan	\$4,774.00
Baxter Community Center	\$678.00
Dégagé Ministries	\$4,482.00
Dwelling Place	\$848.00
ELCA Disaster Response	\$386.00
ELCA Missionary Support*	\$848.00
ELCA World Hunger	\$12,080.00
Family Promise (IHN)	\$6,410.00
God's Kitchen	\$1,017.00
Habitat for Humanity	\$4,068.00
Exalta Health (formerly H. I. S.)	\$1,695.00
Heartside Ministry	\$1,017.00
Home Repair Services	\$1,695.00
Hope Community Church	\$678.00
ICCF	\$1,186.00
In the Image	\$3,698.00
Living Water Ministries	\$1,186.00
Samaritas Senior Living	\$1,356.00

As part of Trinity's 2016 budget, a total of \$33,900.00 was approved for benevolence. That total has been distributed on a quarterly basis to 17 organizations over the past year.

Trinity's budgeted benevolence was distributed using a percentage formula. On the left is a summary of some of the gifts that Trinity has been blessed to distribute.

Please keep in mind that, since our fiscal year does not end until January 31, this is a preliminary report. The complete report will appear in the March edition of the *Messenger*.

* Trinity had been supporting Pastor Ann Klavano in Papua New Guinea for a few years but her term ended there in the spring of 2016. She was the recipient of our 1st quarter benevolence distribution for ELCA Missionary Support.

After consideration by the Outreach Committee, the remaining fiscal year benevolence dollars for that line item have been distributed to Mission India in Neerekshe.

The Children's Ministry Committee works with ministry and programs that involve our youth from birth through 5th grade. A HUGE thank you to all church members who have volunteered as teachers and in other ways. None of these things could happen without you!

Thank you to the following members who have served on this committee for all or a portion of the year: Rachele Battreall, Beth Hall, Brittany Fischer, Kris Shannon Elizabeth Derbin, Kathy Bush (council liaison), Chris Becker, Kristine Lang and Amy Stephan (chairperson). We are looking for a few people to join the committee, especially if you have a kindergarten or younger age child. Please contact Pastor Bob, Pastor Dan or Amy Stephan if interested.

2016 has been a year of change within our committee and the ministries/programming being offered to the children of Trinity. One big change was in staffing. The full time Children's Ministry position was restructured and interviews happened between the end of April and mid-June. After much consideration and interviewing, the gifts of the following Trinity members stood out and they were hired into part time roles:

Rachele Battreall – Director of Youth and Family Ministry

Brittany Fischer – Children's Ministry Coordinator

James Morin – Family Activities Coordinator

Awilda Diaz – Nursery Coordinator

Another change was with Sunday morning education. In September, teachers started using a new curriculum which is Lectionary based. It follows the church calendar so the children are learning about the same bible stories that are being read in the Sunday morning services. The structure of Sunday mornings now allows children who attend the 10:00 service to start by worshiping with their families, be a part of the children's sermon and then head to Sunday School. We are averaging 50 kids each week. Come join us and see what it is all about! We welcome feedback as we try to provide a strong and faith filled Sunday morning for our kids. Parents, please share your thoughts on the changes with Brittany Fischer, either pastor or any committee member.

Key events this year have included:

Roller Skating – A fun family event in January.

Kids Against Hunger Meal Packing – This took place in February and was a multi-generational activity. Over 15,000 meals were packed!

Winter Service Project – Children brought in personal care items as part of their offerings that were then donated to local agencies.

Art and Music Camp – Held the beginning of June for 2nd – 8th graders.

Spring Hill Day Camp – Hosted at the end of June, staffed by Spring Hill and open to the community.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) – Beth Hall stepped up to plan and lead this traditional event as we were in transition during the planning stages. Over 100 children from Trinity and our community participated.

Rally Sunday – A fall kickoff of our Sunday School year with 53 kids participating. Balloon animals, pictures and snacks were part of the fun as kids explored their classrooms and got registered for the fall.

Trunk or Treat – About 300 people attended the fun evening of games, food, decorated cars and "trunk" or treating.

Christmas Pageant – More than 40 Children were involved in the December 18th service as they sang and told the Christmas Story.

We look forward to our children learning more about God's love and grace as they participate in both Sunday School and other events in 2017.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Stephan – Children's Ministry Chairperson

What a year it has been around Trinity. There have been lots of changes and exciting opportunities for the future of ministry here in this place. My continued calling to serve the people of Trinity to the best of my ability, as I journey with you my vocation gets deeper and stronger every year I serve.

We strive to accomplish Trinity's mission through various ministries and programs creating opportunities to live out their faith.



Altar Flowers/Altar Flower Delivery: As the year comes to a close Diane Biser is handling the altar flowers. Many members have commented on how the worship spaces are beautified with the flowers. The flower chart has been placed into a sign-up genius electronic chart in hopes that we will increase the number of Sundays we have flowers in the worship area. The Trinity members who donate the flowers provide a great blessing to our beloved members who are homebound, hospitalized, and grieving or for special occasions like a baptism. These little touches of love and caring make an impact on the giver and receiver.



Advent by Candlelight: Our yearly tradition continues to be a very special time for the women and teens of Trinity. Venta Norris and her team once again planned a spectacular evening. The evening brought together approximately 15 hostesses and their 90 guests. Our speaker Karen Hossink, spoke on "Are you sure it's time, Lord?." Karen's presentation was followed by fabulous desserts and a beautiful music performed on the history of carols by Karen Betz-Griewahn and her daughters Anna and Eleana. The speaker and musician set the mood and helped the attendees prepare for the coming of the Christ child.



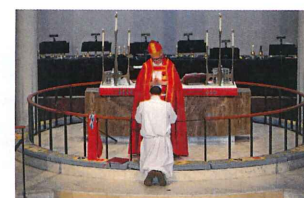
Angels of Advent Tea: Again this year we had a spectacular response to our Angels of Advent Tea. The planning team of Kristen and Abigail Lamprich, Joanna and Sydney Waite and Rochelle Roskam and Arabella Soule chose and implemented several crafts and take away's including a votive candle with a battery operated candle that changes colors for the afternoon. We had 30



mothers/grandmothers and 34 young ladies age 3-12 R.S.V.P. to attend. The afternoon was filled with a time of fellowship, fun and food. As always the chocolate fountain was hit, we had milk and dark chocolate and the new addition of tea sandwiches was enjoyed too. We had a great turn out despite the weather.



Celebration of Service: The third Sunday in January where we lift up the volunteers who have served our church family and community over the past year. We come together after the late service filling Centennial Hall for our all church family potluck.



Lutherans love to eat! Once the meal is finished we address the business of our church at our annual meeting, such as election of council members, delegates to Synod Assembly, changes to the constitution and any other business which this year included the recommendation of Pastor Dan Schewe to serve as our next Associate Pastor.



Dinner Groups: This year our numbers were down slightly, however, we had several new couples participate as well as a prospective couple. These three opportunities to gather with other members of our church family for an evening of food and fellowship are enjoyed by all. Thanks go to Joyce Schlanderer and Toni Petersen who continue to serve as the co-coordinators for the Trinity Dinner Groups.



Helping Hands: The Helping Hands Meal program has once again increased the number of families and meals we have provided to members in need. Finding rides for our beloved elderly members and others with special needs ride requests continue to go unmet. In 2016, we served approximately 15 families which were over 375 meals provided Trinity members.



Homebound Ministry (Bulletin Mailing and DVD's):

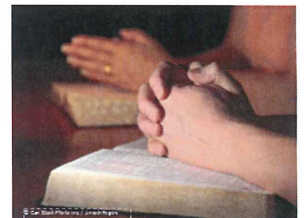
We continue to send bulletins weekly to several members so they can follow along with the service that is broadcast on GRTV channel 25 on Sundays at 11:00 a.m. The DVD ministry also continues. We send DVD's of the 11:15 a.m. Traditional worship service to several members who do not have access to the cable channel.

New Member Program: In 2016, the new member program has seen some continuous improvement to meet the needs of the individuals and families who are finding a church home at Trinity. We had 39 new households join Trinity in 2016, which breaks down to 60 adults and 26 children.



Poinsettia Delivery: During the Christmas season, we share the holidays with our homebound/shut-in members, some of our elderly Trinity friends with the gift of a poinsettia. This year we had 9 deliverers take a total of 50 poinsettias to our members and friends. These were a wonderful reminder to our members and friends that they are missed and thought of by their Trinity family. This was also the second year that members who lost loved ones were included in the deliveries this year. Once again the Tuesday morning quilters provided quilts for many of the Poinsettia receivers.

Prayer Ministry: We continue to work towards expanding our electronic prayer chain. The monthly prayer group meeting that met once a month had some interest in the beginning but did not really catch on. The day and time seemed to not be the best choice for this initiative. The Prayer request form on Trinity's website has been used.



The Prayer Tree was a wonderful success. Our year end party was attended by almost 70 of the pray-ers and prayees. The second year of the Prayer Tree began with an increase of young people 0-18 being prayed for. We had 108 children signed up. This year one of our continuous improvements was to have children group in sibling groups and individuals. This was done in order to make sure no child fell through the cracks.



Start of Summer Celebration: Our annual summer kickoff event was great for all who attended. We actually were able to have the event outside. We also had Java Blue play one last time before Trinity Members Tom and Peggy Demmon moved to Dexter, MI. Next year's event will be on Wednesday, June 21, 2017. It is exciting to be collaborating with James Morin, Trinity's new Family Activity Coordinator.



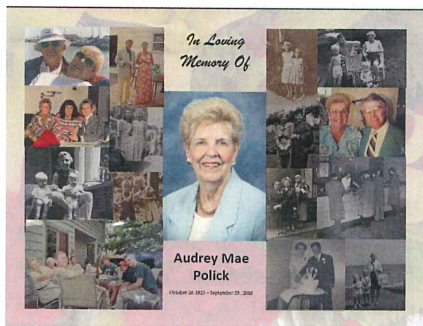
Wednesday Night Suppers & Advent Suppers: The Wednesday Night Suppers began in September again however, we are back in the same boat with lack of volunteers and our meal coordinators are basically cooking one meal a month. We continue to work to secure volunteers but it is usually the same few people who are helping.

The Baked Potato Bar for the 2016 Advent Meals was a **HUGE** success. Many members loved to Baked Potato Bar and were sad to see them end. The Baked Potato Bar for the Advent Meals will continue as a new tradition. We will need to tighten the toppings bar sign ups. A **TREMENDOUS** thank you goes to Linda Holm who helped make these meals a wonderful and come off without a hitch.



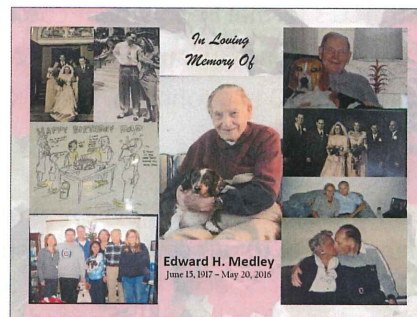
Medicare Consultation with Trinity Member Jo Murphy, Executive Director of Michigan Medicare

Enrollment program: Once again Trinity member Jo Murphy met with congregation members and/or their loved ones to assist them with enrolling in Medicare and Medicaid. Thank you to Jo Murphy and Jeanette volunteering their expertise and services.



Memorial Candles of Loved Ones

The Memorial Candle initiative continues and brings peace to the family members of a loved one who has passed away. In 2016, We gave away 13 memorial candles.



Respectfully submitted,

Angela G. Davis – Director of Congregational Life

Neil Sendler – Congregational Life Council Liaison

Jo Murphy – Congregational Life Committee member

Review of Reports - Fellowship Committee, 2016

The Fellowship Committee plans and provides a variety of opportunities for members and guests to get to know each other in a fun, relaxed atmosphere while building a sense of Christian family and community within the congregation. For those of you who participate in fellowship events, please consider inviting others to join you. For those who have never participated, we encourage to join us. We have a great time together!

Some of the fellowship events at Trinity in 2016 included Trivia Night, Soup Suppers, Spring and Fall JOYful Days, Richmond Pool Swim Party, Deck the Halls of Trinity, JOYful Days Holiday Luncheon and Scandinavian Smorgasbord.

Thank you to the many Trinity members who faithfully volunteer to help out in the many ways needed for these events to take place.

Respectfully Submitted by
Sylvia Stouten, Director of Discipleship
Brenda Heacock, Council Liaison, Fellowship

Review of Reports - Finance Committee, 2016

I would like to thank the following people for serving on the Finance committee during 2016: Chris Engle, Ted Niemeyer, John Basher, John Johnson, Jim Coates, Peter McKinney, and Pastor Bob, and TLC's Finance Assistant Ashlee Wetherington.

We had an Insurance review and an external audit (Review of Agreed Upon Procedures) by Jim Quist, CPA, completed this year and subsequently approved by council. Thank you to Dan Lynn and the members of the Audit Committee.

With TLC's formal Endowment committee in place and active this past year, responsibility for overseeing the Mission Endowment and Building Endowment funds has moved from the Finance Committee to this dedicated new committee (Pastor Bob, David Johnson, David Kovac, Todd Brandstadt, Mike Mason, Peter McKinney and George Bauer).

I also want to thank our jovial and trusty Treasurer John Basher for his reliable flow of understandable monthly financial data to our committee members, and for his preparation of next year's budget (deliberately similar to our 2016 budget). Special "Black Belt" awards go to John in the use of Excel and to TLC staff Finance Assistant Ashlee (where the rubber meets the road) Wetherington for Excellence in QuickBooks accounting software!

The Finance Committee meets the third Monday of every other month to discuss and give guidance to the financials of Trinity. Next meeting is Feb. 20, 2017. If you have any questions or concerns please contact anybody on the Finance Committee.

George Bauer

Health Advisory Committee, Parish Nurse & Stephen Ministry Report 2016

Health Advisory Committee (HAC)

The vision of the Health Advisory Committee at Trinity Lutheran Church is to share God's gifts of love and grace to promote spiritual, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

HAC members in 2016 include: Council Liaison, Carol Butler replacing Jane Renwick; Parish Nurse, Linda Heine; Chair, John Ritch, followed by co-chairs Jan Palm and Petra Rotzell; Janet Chobanian, Meri Leidel, Cindy Zientarski.

Activities this year included:

Blood drives held in March, July (22 pints) and November (15 pints)

coordinated by Sue Babin. Number of pints decreased with fewer sign ups and donors turned away due to low iron count.

Flu Clinic was held in October with 52 participants receiving vaccinations.

Planning for "Healthy Trinity" was started in January. Healthy Trinity will be implemented beginning April 2017.

The HAC met 8 times this year (1/5, 1/19, 3/8, 4/11, 5/3, 9/28, 10/26 & 11/30)

Thank you to the HAC for the wonderful work that was done while Linda (Parish Nurse) was recuperating from surgery.

Parish Nurse

Linda was on medical leave from March 16 through June 1st.

Contacts were made in January and June through December.

Approximately 350 contacts include: phone calls, notes/cards; hospital, nursing/rehab, home visits; homebound/private communion, office visits, and referrals from Pastoral Staff as well as referrals to resource agencies and Stephen Ministry.

CPR and First Aid classes were provided for staff in January.

Three new First Aid Kits were purchased and placed in easily accessible areas to better meet first aid needs. These kits are OSHA approved and meet ANSI Z308.1-2015 standards. (These standards are the minimum requirements for workplace First Aid Kits and minimum contents required.)

Calvin College junior nursing students visited on 2 separate occasions to learn about the role of Parish Nursing here at Trinity.

Attended 2 meetings of Grand Rapids Health Ministry Consortium (GRHMC).

Attended Exploring "Complicated" Mourning: Sudden Death and Trauma Loss presented by Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D. on August 5th. This excellent event was sponsored by the Greater Grand Rapids End of Life Coalition at GVSU Eberhard Center.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Parish Nurse.

God's Peace and Blessings,

Linda Heine, BSN, RN, FCN

Stephen Ministry

"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2, NRSV).

Some interesting facts about Stephen Ministry:

Since Stephen Ministry was founded in 1975:

More than 12,000 congregations have enrolled in the Stephen Series.

More than 70,000 pastors and lay leaders from those congregations have been equipped at Leader's Training Courses.

More than 600,000 laypeople have received Stephen Minister training.

More than one-and-a-half-million people have had a Stephen Minister to walk with them, providing one-to-one Christian care during tough times.

Stephen Ministry is confidential, Christ-centered care for people who are ***experiencing*** life's challenges. After 50 hours of training, a Stephen Minister meets one-to-one with a care receiver on a weekly basis to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support.

In 2016, we had 14 active Stephen Ministers who have met with and provided Christian care and support to 14 care receivers. As some Stephen Ministers have become inactive or have moved away, we have the need to train additional Stephen Ministers.

In preparation for that training, two Stephen Ministers, Beth Vanderwall and Sue Coates, *attended the Stephen Ministry Leadership training January 8-14, 2017 in Orlando*. Plans are being made now for a training class in the Spring!

As always, I thank all who have heard and heeded God's call to become Stephen Ministers and Leaders. I am grateful to care receivers who have accepted the care and support of Stephen Ministers. I thank the pastors, council and congregation for the support and prayers for Stephen Ministry. Every day, I thank God for this and all ministries at Trinity Lutheran Church.

In His Peace,

Brenda Heacock

Stephen Ministry Leader

Committee Members: Kathy Bush, Kris Fox, Gayle Kessel, Tess Lundgren

This year the Hospitality Committee had 2 focal initiatives.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN HOSPITALITY

We focused on providing hospitality in the form of meals and snacks during the multiple Capital Campaign meetings and the Capital Campaign Kick Off Dinner. Many thanks to Kathy Bush for leading this effort and recruiting volunteers.

USHERS & GREETERS

The Hospitality Committee held 2 gatherings for our Ushers & Greeters this past summer. First, we wanted to extend our thankfulness to this diligent group of people who are the face of Trinity Lutheran Church when visitors enter our place of worship. They are our front line and their warm welcome and assuring smiles often help visitors feel comfortable and welcomed. Thank you so much for all you do Ushers & Greeters!

Our second purpose of these gatherings was to ask for their input as to what is working and what may need improvement in this area of our church life. We had wonderful discussions and many helpful and important suggestions -- not least of all that we need to recruit and train more Ushers & Greeters.

So in the coming months our focus will be implementing many of these suggestions and on recruiting and training. The Hospitality Committee welcomes expressions of interest from those who feel called to serve on this ministry (on the Hospitality Committee or as Ushers/Greeters).

Respectfully Submitted,
Tess Lundgren, Chair

Review of Reports - Human Resources Committee, 2016

The Human Resource Committee is in our third year as a resource to Pastor Linstrom and the staff of TLC. Our members continue to share a wealth of knowledge and compassion when advising on staff related initiatives. This year the committee consisted of Carrie Boer, Mitchell Noland, Jan Palm, Stacey Curtiss, and Joni Korb. Bill Heyne stepped down in early 2016, and Mitchell Noland in late 2016.

The cycle of staff reviews and setting of goals and objectives, with each member of the TLC staff, took place in 2016. The HR Committee has in turn reached out to member of the staff to listen to any concerns they may have about their role at Trinity.

With the departure of Tim Van Der Bilt, our Children's Ministry Director, a new specialized team of six part-time staff devoted to the Youth and Family Ministry was assembled to address needs within that program. These positions include Brittany Fischer as Children's Ministry Coordinator; Rachele Battreall as Director of Youth and Family Ministry; James Morin as Family Activity Coordinator; Ashlee Wetherington as High School Ministry Coordinator (and part time Finance Assistant); Taylor Sytsma as Middle School Ministry Coordinator and Awilda Diaz as Nursery Coordinator. With the addition of new roles and new staff, we are focused on finalizing new job descriptions and revising others.

We would like to say a special thanks to Dawn Brackman for her professional services - providing Trinity Lutheran Church with advice and navigation through the Fair Labor Standards Act of 2016.

God's work, our hands!

Respectfully,
Mitchell Noland,
Committee Chair

Trinity's Outreach Team focuses on providing opportunities for our members to help address unmet basic needs both locally and globally. This is accomplished through monetary donations, the collection of tangible items, and through the giving of Trinity members' time and spiritual gifts. All members are encouraged to select activities to which they feel called to participate.

Local issues are addressed through many Grand Rapids area organizations including, but not limited to:

~Dégagé – Trinity provides regular teams of volunteer food servers and also has available for purchase \$2 Panhandler Vouchers.

~Family Promise/Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) – Trinity continues to provide shelter, meals, and hospitality for homeless families on site on a quarterly basis for a week at a time. Trinity did host one group of families for a two week period in 2016 when the church following Trinity in the IHN rotation was unable to host. We pray that more Trinity members will become involved in this vital ministry.

~Feeding America West Michigan – Members are encouraged to participate in bulk food repackaging.

~God's Kitchen – Trinity provides a regular team of volunteer food servers.

~Habitat for Humanity – Trinity members again worked on a Habitat build in Grand Rapids, as they have done for several years.

~SECOM – Trinity members provide Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets through SECOM. 2016 also included a tour of the facility and operations by the Outreach Team.

~Various local food pantries – Trinity supports pantries through ongoing food collection in the grocery cart near the kitchen and through the Souper Bowl Sunday collection.

~Trinity families also donate cleaning supplies, personal care items, new under clothing and diapers, school supplies, bus tickets, coats and blankets, and items for local charities' "Christmas Stores" during the year.

Please visit the Trinity website at tlcgr.org – Outreach tab – for a full list of organizations we support.

In 2016, Trinity also stepped up to lend support during the Flint Water Crisis, sending donations two times during the year to Salem Lutheran Church for replacement of lead water pipes and installation of a filtration system to serve as a safe water source for the community.

A partnership with Congress Elementary was a new venture for Trinity in 2016, and Trinity members have been very generous in donating a cargo van load of school supplies, snacks, hand sanitizers and sanitizing wipes. Trinity members also volunteer at Congress as reading tutors through the Schools of Hope program and as meal providers for teachers during parent-teacher conferences. A \$1500 grant from the Synod's Publicly Engaged Church will go to support activities at Congress Elementary as well.

God's Work Our Hands Sunday fell on September 11 in 2016, so we honored first responders in our community by inviting and specially recognizing them in our worship services on September 11 and by completing the following projects at their requests: 125 "On the Go" snack bags filled for American Medical Response; new kitchen countertops installed at GRFD Station #11; a new wheelchair ramp was evaluated and planned by Trinity members for installation at a Life EMS client's home, but was not ultimately installed by Trinity due to another community organization meeting the need.

A Mission Interpreter event to encourage Trinity members to learn how we can "tell the story" of the many ways the ELCA does God's work was scheduled for December 11, but was canceled due to poor weather. Look for a rescheduling of this event in 2017 when Bill Duggan from the Synod will join us to speak about this simple but very important ministry.

Global issues are addressed through the work of ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response. Trinity also has members who are active in meeting global needs through LWR Quilts, Operation Christmas Child, Neerekshe India Mission, and the Honduras Synod Team.

Respectfully submitted by Wendy Johnson, Council Liaison to the Outreach Team

The most significant focus of the Property Committee over the last 12 months, in addition to addressing the regular repair and operational needs of our facility, was to undertake the planned repairs of the cross tower. This was deemed 'urgent' in light of significant stone cracks, breaks and several large stone pieces falling from the structure last winter. Bids were received for the repairs and a contract was awarded in late April 2016. Work was begun shortly thereafter and progressed steadily throughout the summer and fall months. Several unexpected structural concerns were identified and repaired. These added significantly to the project cost and were deemed necessary before further work could go on. As of this writing, the tower repair contractor continues to await delivery of stone from the quarry. Once the replacement stone is received the tower is expected to be completed within a 4-6 week period, weather permitting.

As we all anticipate the launch of a major building project, hopefully in 2017, building modifications and repairs have been weighed against the goal of deferring them as much as possible for 'the big project'. Thus roof issues, HVAC, electrical and general maintenance have been delayed if possible and reasonable. Unfortunately, the committee was pressed to address: major boiler control repairs this past spring and summer; several roof leaks and subsequent ceiling repairs, and an AC failure in one of the offices.

Recent Property Committee efforts have been directed to: wall repairs and painting in the sanctuary; carpet cleaning; installation of a shower in the family bathroom downstairs, and a washer and dryer in the fellowship wing as requested by the IHN/Family Promise team. Also, a tree removal plan has been implemented to address dead and dying trees and to improve the western portion of the property. This has in part been completed with volunteer labor. The Property Committee recognizes the significant time, labor and plantings by our Volunteer Gardeners in our numerous flower beds.

The Property Committee has been served over this past year by: Jim Coates- Council Liaison, Gene Gunderson- Council Liaison, Niki Ferguson-Facility Sexton, Mark Johnson, Myron Pearson, Dale Barkema, Dan Workman, Fran Anderson, Dave Mester, Fred Wilcox, Bob Heine, Roger Marks, Bill Bruin and Frank Remsburg, Chairman. We are blessed to have this dedicated and committed group working to keep our church and grounds in the best condition possible.

Respectfully submitted by
Frank Remsburg, Property Chairman

For eighteen years, Trinity's Rejoice service has been providing an alternative to Traditional worship. With humble beginnings of just a handful of musicians, thirty-five worship attendees and paper bulletins with songs and liturgy, the Rejoice service has grown in leaps and bounds—three rotating bands, a Sound Technician, PowerPoint production of the songs and liturgy—not to mention, two very well-attended services each week. Led by Pastor Bob and Pastor Dan, as well as numerous lay people, at Rejoice, we witness creativity, artistic gifting and technology harnessed to bring God glory in spirit and in truth.

In 2016, we were saddened to bid farewell to long time Faceless bandleader, Tom Demmon.....he and Peggy retired and are now living in Dexter—close to children and grandchildren. We are eternally grateful for the inspiring, God-centered leadership provided by Tom through the years. Coming on board to lead Faceless, we have Ashlee Wetherington and TJ Turnage. We praise God for their call and commitment to lead our youth band!! In September, a Gratitude Picnic was hosted by the Worship and Music Team to honor band members and the PowerPoint team. The picnic included a lively discussion, focused on keeping lines of communication open between all involved in the Rejoice Worship ministry.

We are presently seeking personnel for all of the Rejoice bands. Please prayerfully consider contributing your musical gifts to help lead worship in the Rejoice service. Time commitment is approximately two rehearsals and two Sundays per month.

Please contact Cheryl Reeve (cheryl.l.reeve@gmail.com) for more information and to schedule an audition.

With deepest gratitude to:

Bandleaders: Ashlee Wetherington, TJ Turnage (Faceless)-Scott Dulecki (Rejoice) and Sheryl Vander Baan (Beyond Belief)

The Bands: Beyond Belief, Faceless and Rejoice

Sound Technician: Brooks Alder

PowerPoint Coordinator: Greg Lang

PowerPoint Volunteers

PowerPoint Creator: Jodi VanGorp

And all participating staff, volunteers and congregants, who make possible the Rejoice Service

Building community is at the heart of the Spiritual Growth Committee. In 2016, the committee helped build community in these ways:

Overseeing and encouraging small groups, organized studies, and retreats.

Ongoing study groups include those led by Pastor Bob and various other TLC members who led men's and women's groups. Pastor Bob will be leading the Wednesday study groups on two topics this winter/spring that the SG Committee will support: The Church and Homosexuality and a study on Islam.

A women's retreat, "Lavender Springs Spa", was held in February and hosted about 25 women. Women were invited to "take time out of our busy lives to relax with friends, share laughter and stories, and spend time with God." This was the second retreat hosted by the SG committee. Another is being planned for January or February 2017.

Maintaining the Church library.

We worked to remove outdated books from the library and will be continuing to find ways to make the library more visible to TLC.

Providing resources and guidance for Advent and Lenten devotions and groups.

TLC embers again volunteered to submit daily devotions for Advent, which the committee produced and distributed.

A Lenten study resource: *Look for the Light*, written by Rev. Stephen Bouman published by Augsburg Fortress, was provided and used by several groups and many individuals.

Finding and expanding opportunities to gather people in small groupings as a way to experience spiritual growth.

Met with Joyce Schlanderer and Toni Peterson and worked to encourage more TLC members to participate in Dinner Groups. Pastor Bob will supply a devotion to be used at the dinners.

Supporting the Capital Campaign by offering a community prayer to be used at various meetings and congregational gatherings.

We look forward to continuing work in these areas in the coming year and pray that TLC members and friends find themselves drawn into a deepening relationship with Christ as a result of taking part in them.

Members: Sue Babin
Kim Brock, Note Taker
Pastor Bob Linstrom
Kris Racek
Vince Schumacher
Sylvia Stouten, Staff Liaison
Carrie Wygmans, Committee Chair & Council Liaison

Our ongoing mission is to coordinate with our assisting ministers. Those are our acolytes, sacristans, communion assistants, lectors, greeters and ushers. It is a concentrated effort to make all of our worship services as meaningful as possible.

We said good bye this year to Chairman, Gordy Engstrom; we thanked him for his 12 years of his loyal and dedicated service.

We welcomed Ruth Evans, Jo Murphy and Tess Lundgren to the committee this year. Tess works with our Acolytes and Jo with the Sacristans.

Again this year, our committee has attended to several issues as they pertain to our worship together. The issues addressed by the committee were varied; from organ problems and choir chairs, to planning for the 500 - year Celebration of Reformation.

Worship and Music committee members hosted Appreciation events for Ushers and Greeters, Power point volunteers and Rejoice band members. At each event the volunteers were asked for their feedback on how their jobs could be made easier and on how they thought our worship events could be made even better.

The committee worked with Marjorie Paul to select a new Paschal Candle in honor of Pastor David Paul.

We held an Arts and Music camp this summer. Beautiful crafts were created and many children were introduced to music. A special thanks to Larry and Diane Biser for putting this event together.

Worship in the Park transitioned to an Outside Summer Worship at the church on July 24. It was combined with a pig roast and a send-off for our youth going to Stoney Lake Camp.

The Youth Led service and Trinity Concert Series were held again this year.

For Lent this year, Common Cup communing was offered on Ash Wednesday and on Maundy Thursday. Wednesday night Lenten services were offered at 6:30 in the sanctuary.

With Christmas falling on Sunday this year all of Trinity's staff and volunteers did a wonderful job of making the five services on Christmas Eve and two services on Christmas day a memorable experience for Trinity members and guests.

Finally, thank you to the members of the Worship & Music Committee for their commitment and dedication. We work together sharing God's gifts of love and grace.

God's Peace,

Jo Murphy, Chair

Worship & Music Committee Members

Pastor Bob: robert.linstrom@tlcgr..org

Karen Griewahn: kbgriewahn@aol.com

John Racek: jeracek50@comcast.net

Carrie Wygmans: carriestine@comcast.net

Ruth Evans: revans5295@gmail.com

Jo Murphy: Jo@mmapinc.org, Committee Chair

Tess Lundgren: tesslundgren@gmail.com, Committee Vice-chair

Larry Biser: lgbiser@att.net, Director of Music

Cheryl Reeve: cheryl.l.reeve@gmail.com, Rejoice Worship Coordinator

Diane Biser: dtbiser@att.net, Director of Children's Choirs

Rick Radke: radketrac@comcast.net, Council Liaison

Sid Hoeksema: sidhoeks@aol.com, Choir Director

Our Youth and Family Ministry began its work in 2016 truly by 'committee'. Plans were underway to hire an associate pastor, while a hold was placed on finding lay staff to lead our youth. Many volunteers continued to provide programming for our middle school and high school kids to grow in faith together.

As we end 2016, there is a full contingent of dedicated staff serving our Youtherans. Pastor Dan is at the helm with Ashlee Wetherington (High School), Taylor Sytsma (MS) and Rachele Battreall (Family) serving as lay leaders.

Here are the highlights:

Confirmation - Pastor Dan transitioned to leading the Confirmation program at the end of April. In October we welcomed 21 Confirmands into our congregation.

Currently there are 40+ 6th – 8th grade students in program.

Beginning In 2017, we will be confirming the 8th graders in May.

MS Youth Events- Peter & Jill McKinney took several middle school youth to Traverse City for Youth Quake in March. They also facilitated a large group game/fun day to celebrate the completion of Confirmation class in April. Taylor Sytsma is now coordinating monthly MS activities.

MS Stony Lake Camp - 45 youth attended at Stony Lake Camp

HS Youth Events- winter and spring events primarily coordinated between Mikaela Bradley and Ashlee Wetherington. A big highlight was **The 30 Hour Famine**, attended by 13 youth and 3 adults. The youth now serve monthly at Kid's Food Basket.

HS Youth Band - Faceless supported music for the Rejoice services monthly Tom Demmon transitioned the leadership to TJ Turnage and Ashlee Wetherington over the summer.

HS Mission Trip – 29 youth & 8 adults participated in a Group Workcamp in Sommerville, Tennessee. Many thanks to Chris Engle for his leadership and experience, and to all the parent volunteer chaperones and fundraising coordinators.

HS Sunday morning education – finished in May. Attendance was never more than a few students. To replace this, Ashlee and Pastor Dan are offering quarterly "Lunch and Learn" sessions to discuss current topics and how our Faith guides us.

HS Graduation Sunday – Trinity celebrated all of our HS grads with special bulletin inserts and a reception.

Youth Council Member – Emma Hall transitioned into this position for the 2016-2017 school year. Our committee has submitted Julia Kessel as the nominee for 2017-2018.

College Care Packages - Jamie Kuntzman led the effort to mail 56 boxes this fall to our college students.

Child and Youth Protection Policy – updated, created and put into place. Many thanks to Dawn Brackmann for overseeing this project.

Respectfully submitted by Kristin Bradley, Chairperson Youth and Family Ministry Committee.

Special thanks to past members Dawn Brackmann & Amy Stephen and to current committee members Pastor Dan, Ashlee Wetherington, Chris Engle, Jamie Kuntzman, Joni Korb, Karin Moglia, Peter and Jill McKinney, Emma Hall and Tess Lundgren.

*Treasurer's Report—2016 Budget & 2016 Forecast
11 Months Actual (Feb '16—Dec '16) & Jan '17 Forecast*

	2016 Budget	2016 Forecast
Income (Giving)	1,001,000	1,023,014
Expenses (Spending)		
Local Benevolence	33,900	34,648
Synod Mission Support	100,100	104,301
Christian Education	9,825	10,312
Music	11,255	11,229
Worship	6,904	6,363
Evangelism	1,660	1,760
Stewardship	8,450	3,800
Youth and Family	10,150	9,969
Fellowship	1,625	1,365
Property	65,864	71,025
Utilities	51,220	47,513
Leases (copier, printer/fax)	26,080	24,700
Office and Administration	67,106	68,570
Payroll	566,870	540,101
Stephen's Ministry	4,060	4,316
Reserves	14,071	14,381
Parish Nurse-Health Cabinet	1,700	1,167
Outreach	800	1,243
Congregational Life	6,800	4,591
Spiritual Growth	2,250	2,017
Total Expenses	990,690	963,372
Net Income	10,310	59,642
Less Debt Repayment	10,310	4,422
Net Cash Flow	0	55,220

	2016 Budget	Proposed 2017 Budget
Income (Giving)	1,001,000	1,001,000
Expenses (Spending)		
Local Benevolence	33,900	34,000
Synod Mission Support	100,100	102,100
Christian Education	9,825	10,325
Music	11,255	12,005
Worship	6,904	6,904
Evangelism	1,660	1,660
Stewardship	8,450	6,000
Youth and Family	10,150	10,150
Fellowship	1,625	1,625
Property	65,864	66,864
Utilities	51,220	51,220
Leases	26,080	26,830
Office and Administration	67,106	53,904
Payroll	566,870	569,603
Stephen's Ministry	4,060	2,260
Reserves	14,071	24,000
Parish Nurse-Health Cabinet	1,700	1,700
Outreach	800	800
Congregational Life	6,800	6,800
Spiritual Growth	2,250	2,250
Total Expenses	990,690	991,000
Net Income	10,310	10,000
Less Debt Repayment	10,310	0
Net Cash Flow	0	10,000

	\$ Amount	% of Total
Salaries		
Clergy	139,920	24.6%
Non-Clergy	272,555	47.8%
Contract	11,608	2.0%
Total Salaries	424,083	74.5%
Benefits		
Clergy	68,582	12.0%
Non-Clergy	51,582	9.1%
Total Benefits	120,164	21.1%
Other		
Payroll Taxes	25,356	4.5%
Total Other	25,356	4.5%
Grand Total	569,603	100.0%

	As of 12/31/15	As of 12/31/16
Cash / Equivalent Accounts		
Total General Fund	174,182	213,140
Total Dedicated Fund	281,665	244,225
Total Mission Endowment Fund	414,347	403,103
Total Building Endowment Fund	5,000	162,898
Total Capital Campaign Fund	52,764	1,051,246
Total Cash / Equivalent Accounts	927,958	2,074,612
Other Current Assets	877	619
Fixed Assets		
Land & Building	5,384,000	5,384,000
Parking Lot	390,942	390,942
Cross Tower	0	335,776
Total Fixed Assets	5,774,942	6,110,719
Total Assets	6,703,778	8,185,949
Total Current Liabilities	2,590	3,552
Long-Term Debt (Parking Lot & Cross Tower)	369,920	701,275
Total Liabilities	372,510	704,827
Total Equity	6,331,267	7,481,122
Total Liabilities & Equity	6,703,778	8,185,949

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Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song

Jésus, je voudrais te chanter

1 *Jé - sus, je vou - drais te chan - ter sur ma rou - te;*
 1 Lord Je - sus, you shall be my song as I jour - ney;
 2 Lord Je - sus, I'll praise you as long as I jour - ney.
 3 As long as I live, Je - sus, make me your ser - vant,
 4 I fear in the dark and the doubt of my jour - ney;

Jé - sus, je vou - drais t'an-non-cer à mes voi - sins par - tout,
 I'll tell ev - 'ry - bod - y a - bout you wher - ev - er I go:
 May all of my joy be a faith - ful re - flec - tion of you.
 to car - ry your cross and to share all your bur - dens and tears.
 but cour - age will come with the sound of your steps by my side.

car toi seul es la vie et la paix et l'a - mour:
 you a - lone are our life and our peace and our love.
 May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.
 For you saved me by giv - ing your bod - y and blood.
 And with all of the fam - 'ly you saved by your love,

Jé - sus, je vou - drais te chan - ter sur ma rou - te.
 Lord Je - sus, you shall be my song as I jour - ney.
 Lord Je - sus, I'll praise you as long as I jour - ney.
 As long as I live, Je - sus, make me your ser - vant.
 we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our jour - ney.

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

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As you gather, the following questions are frequently asked about giving and the work of the church. These may be helpful as your congregation engages in conversation about how to grow and thrive in the future.

What is missional giving?

One way individuals and congregations participate in missional giving is when their financial contributions, often called offerings or tithes, to and through their congregation, or other charitable organizations, are intended to do God's work in the world. We believe this work can be done faithfully through ELCA ministries.

Why give?

For some the answer is God first gave to us, thus through our life we have an opportunity to share God's generosity with others. This understanding demonstrates giving is a spiritual issue, not a financial one. For other Lutherans, the answer is also an identity issue. We are faithful Lutherans and this is what we do – share with others. This is not an individual experience only, for we are church together, and through our unified giving we do God's work.

Who gives?

All are invited to give as God has blessed them and as the Spirit moves them.

What to give?

As the apostle Paul wrote of the Christians in Macedonia, "They first gave themselves to the Lord." Through baptism, confirmation and our confessional statements, each person first gives of themselves to God. Within each person's faith walk, they are asked to give of their time, talents and resources. This can take many forms.

How much to give?

We teach to grow toward a tithe (10 percent of household income), to a tithe and beyond a tithe as God has blessed you. This may also apply to one's time.

When to give?

Individuals and congregations are encouraged to give regularly. The practice of "first fruits" giving, sharing a portion of God's blessings when they are received, is encouraged. This may be weekly, monthly or quarterly. There are also times for special giving. This is often in response to specific needs or opportunities. There are also times for planned gifts. This is often for major projects or at the end of life. All these forms of giving are encouraged.

Where to give?

Most supporters of the ELCA do the majority of their giving to and through their congregation. When growing toward and beyond a tithe, giving to all charitable organizations is considered.

How to give?

All regular giving received by ELCA congregations is considered undesignated. This means the dollars received can be used as determined by a missional budget or expense plan approved by a quorum of the membership and as managed by elected leaders. An increasing percentage of total giving to congregations is being designated for specific purposes. While we appreciate and celebrate all giving and respect the wishes of the donor, we also trust members and elected leaders to make financial decisions that support God's work in and beyond the local community, both in the present and for the future.

What is Mission Support?

This is the portion of your congregation's regular financial offering that is shared with your synod. The synod then shares a percentage for God's work that we do together through our ELCA churchwide organizations, both domestically and globally.

