

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020



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



## A MESSAGE FROM ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON

Dear friends in Christ,

This year has been a challenging one! The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the church and society. We have had to shift the ways we engage in ministry from a focus on in-person worship and meetings to livestream worship, virtual meetings and gatherings in the parking lot. We have had to shift to teaching children at home and working from home. We have not been able to travel to see friends or relatives or to celebrate life events. This has also been a time to address economic and social justice issues, to shift our thinking and our way of life.

In times such as this, our baptism in Christ makes a difference and makes us different. Like Christians before us, we recall that God is faithful to God's promises and God's people. We see that God enables us to connect with one another even when we are separated. Shifts in the world invite us to be innovative in how we do God's work and reach out to all ages in making disciples. We see that God is at work not only in our buildings but beyond them as well. We have found new ways to serve our neighbors and reach those in need.

As we experience this time of uncertainty, we sense something new emerging. In many places there are new strategies and renewed energy for ministry, often generated by emerging leaders. We have developed a framework to build on, and now is the time to engage in hard work together. As you do in your congregation, we want our collaborative efforts to be both faithfully thoughtful and sustainable. We want to build up the body of Christ today and for the future.

Looking across the church, I am grateful for your generous giving of time, talents and resources. Yes, God does continue to bless us! God will provide both relief from life's struggles and hope for a stronger church, God's church. We do not need to know how the future will unfold. As members in the body of Christ, we need only trust that God is with us and will provide.

Building up the body of Christ together,

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

*"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." —Ephesians 4:11-16*

## 2021 Annual Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church

### Trinity Lutheran Church

A Stephen Ministry Church

2700 Fulton East, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

616-949-2510, [www.tlcgr.org](http://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 2020:

#### **Julia Alice Bauer**

January 28, 1949 – December 9, 2019

#### **Randall Raymond Preston**

May 10, 1929 – December 21, 2019

#### **Kathryn Elizabeth Christenson**

August 24, 1915 – February 14, 2020

#### **Diane Ruth Tanis**

December 27, 1946 – April 26, 2020

#### **Francis Edward Bolthuis**

July 19, 1931 – May 22, 2020

#### **Michael Gary Franz**

February 6, 1943 – September 29, 2020

#### **Susan Lynn Kwast**

April 6, 1958 – September 29, 2020

#### **Anne Hanson**

January 27, 1926 – October 7, 2020

#### **William Robert Heyne**

June 9, 1933 – October 9, 2020

#### **William Grant McClimans**

September 27, 1924 – October 13, 2020

#### **Phyllis Jean Gehl**

June 24, 1945 – October 29, 2020

#### **Roger Arthur Perham**

August 4, 1934 – October 30, 2020

**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  
2021 Annual Meeting Agenda - January 17, 2021**

**Call to Order**, Paul Crist, Congregation President

**Opening Devotions**, Pastor Bob Linstrom

**Approval of Agenda**

**Approval of the January 19, 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes** (pages 6-8)

**Appointment of Tellers**

**Nominating Committee Report**

**Ballot for Council** (pages 9-12)

Bill Bush – first three-year term

John Fox – second three-year term

Eric Gohlke – second three-year term

Sarah Huckstep – first three-year term

Alaina Lundgren – one-year term (youth representative)

Christophe Muganza – first three-year term

Karen Unruh – second three-year term

**Ballot for Synod Assembly Delegates** (page 12)

*Normally we elect four lay voting members and a couple of youth voting members to our annual Synod Assembly in May. Because this year's Synod Assembly will likely be a 'virtual' gathering in May, and detailed information has not been finalized to share with prospective voting members, the Congregation Council will be appointing voting members later this winter to represent Trinity.*

*If you are interested in serving as a voting member at this year's 'virtual' Synod Assembly, please speak with Council President Paul Crist, Vice President Karen Unruh or one of the pastors.*

**Ballot for 2021 Nominating Committee (pages 13-14)**

Sue Cothern

Tess Lundgren

Mike Mason

Rick Radke

**Review of Reports**

Pastors (pages 15-18)

President (page 19)

Committee Reports (listed alphabetically by committee name, pages 20-39)

**Treasurer's Report and Presentation of the 2021 Budget, (pages 40-42)**

Chris Engle, Congregation Treasurer

**Unfinished Business**

(none)

**New Business**

Q&A regarding the long pandemic separation at Trinity and plans for re-entry into parish life

**Announcements, Lord's Prayer and Benediction**

Pastors Bob Linstrom, Dan Schewe and Karen Niemeyer

**Adjournment**

## Annual Congregation Meeting

January 19, 2020

The 2020 Annual Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church was called to order by Council President, Paul Crist, at 1:00 p.m.

Pastor Bob Linstrom led the church members in opening devotions, singing the first two verses of *God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind*, and the Litany.

**Motion to approve the agenda:** With no additions to the agenda from the floor, Doug Haneline moved to accept the agenda as outlined in the 2019 Annual Report, Beth O'Connor 2<sup>nd</sup>/ Passed.

**Motion to approve the 2019 Annual Meeting minutes:** Carrie Wygmans/Meri Leidel 2<sup>nd</sup>/Passed.

**Appointment of Tellers:** Jim Coates and Mike Mason were appointed tellers for today's meeting. The 104 voting members present exceeded the number required for the meeting to proceed.

**Staff Recognition:** A few minutes were taken to recognize Trinity's staff and express deep gratitude for their many gifts in making Trinity a strong and welcoming church.

**Nominating Committee:** The Nominating Committee recommends the following nominations:

### Ballot for Council Members

Kate Bredwell – Second three-year term

Carol Butler – Second three-year term

Chris Engle – Second three-year term

Ryleigh Fischer – Youth Representative, one-year term

Amy Fox – First three-year term

Steve Heacock – First three-year term

Brad Kessel – First three-year term

Jamie Kuntzman – First three-year term

The floor was opened to additional nominations; none were submitted.

- Jim Coates moved to close the nominations and John Fox 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All nominees were approved.

### Synod Assembly Delegates

Trinity may send two male and two female representatives to the Annual Synod meeting.

The nominees are:

Bob and Liz Dever

Joe and Marybeth Iaria

Audrey Korb and Alaina Lundgren – Youth voting members

- No other nominations were received from the floor.
- Jim Coates moved to close the nominations, and Chris Kutschinski 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All nominees were approved.

### Nominating Committee for 2020 Council Candidates

Nominees are: Kathy Bush, Dawn Brackmann, Jim Coates and Carrie Wygmans.

- No other nominations were received from the floor.
- Rick Radke moved that the nominations be closed, Melissa Haneline 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All nominees were approved.

On behalf of Trinity and the council, Pastor Bob extended a heartfelt thank you to departing council members, Kathy Bush, Jim Coates, Carrie Wygmans and youth representative Elizabeth Mulligan, for their dedicated service to Trinity.

### Review of Reports

The Pastors', Council President's, and Committee reports are found in the Annual Report Packet. Attendees are asked to take time to review them and raise any questions they might have. With no questions from the floor, Dan Butler moved that the Pastor's, Council President's and all committee reports be received into the record, John Fox 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion; the reports were received into the record.

**Treasurer's 2019 Report and Presentation of the 2020 Budget:** Chris Engle, Congregation Council Treasurer  
**2019** (Trinity's fiscal year is February 1 – January 31)

- Expenses were 3% under budget due to the following:
- Technology upgrades
- Payroll was less than budgeted
- Reserves category remains the same; it is built into the budget
- Giving has increased slightly above last year

**Building Project**

- Financing costs went down from a projected \$96,695 to \$69,613
- It is anticipated that giving will continue as it has in the past year
- A first principal loan payment, \$3,788, was made in December
- An additional \$189,900 principal payment that was made in the past few weeks to get the current balance down to \$1,738,273.
- Monthly payment remains the same. Any additional funds that come in from campaign pledges will be used to pay down the principal.

**Year End**

- \$450,311 of the Cash Equivalents are Designated Funds
- Long-term debt: Mission Investment Fund, \$566,466
- Cash and Checking Equivalents: \$676,909

**2020 Budget Proposal**

- Benevolence is based on a formula; Local Benevolence is 3.3%.
- For 2019, \$34,600 was approved for benevolence. The final benevolence report will be published in the March 2020 edition of *The Messenger*.
- Interest expense will be \$83,523 based on a \$1.9 M loan balance.
- Most budget categories will remain the same as in 2019.
- Office and Administration includes \$4,500 to replace a 7-year-old server.
- Stephen Ministry was increased to pay for additional training.
- Outreach costs were for composting and recycling.
- The increased costs in Utilities were due to the new addition, space previously not heated or cooled.

A motion to accept the 2019 Treasurer's Report was made by Bill Leidel, Carrie Wygmans 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. The treasurer's report was approved.

**Unfinished Business**

**Building Project Updates:** Dave Mester, Building Committee

- The Building Project was started two years ago and is now complete!
- With one year of construction, no significant challenges were encountered.
- In April of 2019, the facility could be used while issues that needed to be resolved were addressed.
- A new roof was added over the Rejoice Sanctuary and landscaping will take place this summer.
- The Property Committee is taking care of items that were not part of the project.
- Trinity member, Rob Ferguson, is working with the committee to envision a future children's wing.

Pastor Bob extended this thanks to the Building Committee members for their time and expertise on this major renovation project; On Time and On Budget!

**Capital Campaign:** Brad Blair and John Fox

As of January 1, we have unofficially received \$4,004,562, an amount \$339,975 above the total campaign pledge of \$3,664,587.

- Many families have exceeded their pledge amounts.
- A special thank you to Mark and Mary Johnson to their witness of faith, dedication to Trinity and efforts in achieving a very successful Capital Campaign.

A motion to approve the Building and Capital Campaigns reports into the record was submitted by Beth O'Connor/Dan Butler 2<sup>nd</sup>. The motion passed.

**New Business**

There are no items to be considered under New Business, and none were made from the floor.

**Announcements:**

**Pastor Dan**

- Kid's Coalition food packing will take place next Sunday.
- Camp registration started this week.
- Twenty-six youth members have confirmed for the mission trip to Kentucky, and 20 are going to CHARGE.

Lord's Prayer and Benediction: Pastor Dan

Motion to adjourn: Mike Mason/Elizabeth Mulligan 2<sup>nd</sup>/Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Jacobson  
Recording Secretary



**Bill Bush**

I am honored to be considered for congregational council following in the footsteps of my bride, Kathy. We have been Trinity members for about 20 years. We have been involved with Stephen Ministry, Family Promise/IHN, high school ministry mentoring, Sunday school teaching, coaching and playing on Trinity softball team, and leading multiple small groups.

Kathy and I are blessed to have four children, two in-law children, and three grandchildren. We have been with Forest Hills Pediatrics for over 25 years - Kathy as a nurse, me as a pediatrician.

I am a western Pennsylvania born life-long Pittsburgh Steelers fan. I attended Allegheny College followed by University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. I also have a MBA from Grand Valley State University. I have served as president of the medical staff of Spectrum Health Hospitals and as Pediatrician-in-Chief of Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. I enjoy spending time with our family, fishing, hunting, golfing, and sharing with our Forest Hills Pediatrics families the joys of raising children as their pediatrician.



**John Fox**

John and his wife have been members at Trinity Lutheran church since 2000. Both John and Kris enjoy singing in the choir. He is handy with pruners and loppers and uses his mean weeding skills in the gardening group. He has served on the Congregational Council for a number of years.

John and Kristine have three grown children not living at home. His two sons (Steven and Andrew), two brothers, and three nephews are Eagle Scouts and his daughter, Linnea, is a Gold Award recipient. He is very committed to youth leadership development through the Boy Scouts of America. He continues to practice medicine in third world countries, including Honduras (although safety concerns have put a hold on that!). 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's a longtime volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and still has all ten fingers and toes.



**Eric Gohlke**



**Sarah Huckstep**

Hello, my name is Sarah Huckstep. I have been married to my husband Dave for just over ten years now. We have three young boys together who keep us very busy. Ryan is eight years old, Ethan is seven, and Logan is three years old. Our boys enjoy a variety of sports so that keeps us pretty busy during the week and weekends. We also just added a puppy to the family, Louis.

I have lived in the Rockford area my whole life. I attended Grand Rapids Community College for my nursing degree and finished my bachelors through Ohio University. I worked at Spectrum Health for 15 years in the intensive care unit. Recently I've put work aside to stay home with the children and help with their virtual learning.

We have been members at Trinity Lutheran for eight years now. My family usually attends the 9:15 a.m. service. I enjoy helping in the children's ministry and teach Sunday school as well. I look forward to serving on the Congregation Council over the next few years.



### **Alaina Lundgren—Youth Representative**

My name is Alaina Lundgren and I was born and raised in Ada, Michigan. I am bilingual in Spanish/English. I am currently in 10th grade at Forest Hills Central High School. I enjoyed being on the FHC Crew team this year.

I was baptized at Grace Episcopal Church; however, my family transferred to Trinity Lutheran Church when I was in second grade so I have been at TLC for nine years now. I completed the three year Confirmation Class and was confirmed at Trinity. I have loved attending camp at Stony Lake for the last eight years and am looking forward to my 9th year, hopefully, when they re-open this summer. I plan to participate in the Bridge Builders Program at Stony Lake. I went to South Dakota on my first mission trip. I'm signed up for this year's mission trip and am looking forward to deepening my relationship with God, making friends, and helping the residents wherever God calls me. I enjoy helping out with the Lutheran World Relief Quilting team whenever I get the chance. I love being on one of Trinity's Dégagé Teams and helping serve food to the patrons of Dégagé. I also enjoy volunteering for IHN and helping pack meals for Kid's Coalition Against Hunger. I am a member of Trinity's High School Youth Group.

Many of you may recognize me as one of the frequent acolytes for the late service and occasionally the 8 a.m. service. I have been an active acolyte since fifth grade and always greatly appreciate the chance to serve my church. I am looking forward to the opportunity to represent the youth of Trinity as I serve on the Congregational Council this year.



### **Christophe Muganza**

Christophe Muganza is a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He has a BS degree in Public Law from Official University of Bukavu in the Congo. He spent four years in India and then he came to America in December 2013. He became an American Citizen in 2020. He works as a machine operator at Advance Packaging Corporation.

He joined Trinity in 2014. He went back to Uganda to marry his wife, Benita, who was caring for their three children, Glory, Kenny, and Mary. Benita came to America in 2018 and in the same year she joined Trinity. They are waiting for immigration to allow the children to join them in America.

Christophe and Benita attended the ELCA Church Wide Assembly in 2019, they have spoken several times as requested by the church about their life story. He volunteers on the Refugee Program by using the four different languages (French, Swahili, Lingala and English) to assist the new refugees who cannot speak and understand English.

He enjoys talking with his children, meeting new people, doing volunteer work, participating in a Bible study with five other friends, watching world news and soccer games, learning about children's rights while living in conflict zones.



**Karen Unruh**

Karen and her husband Mike have been members of Trinity since moving to Ada in 2011. Raised in California in the Presbyterian Church (USA), she joined the ELCA while living in Mike's native Minnesota in 2009. Currently, Karen is the Vice President of the Congregation Council and the chair of the Children's Ministry committee. She has also served on the Safety and Security taskforce and the Returning to Worship coordination team. In non-pandemic times, she enjoys playing with the Resound bell choir and facilitating the Tuesday morning Women's Bible study and is thankful that the Tuesday evening book club has continued to meet via Zoom. She also enjoys Trinity's many social events, especially Trivia Night, which she has helped plan and write several times. She and Mike have two very active children—Steven (8) and Megan (6).

*2021 Synod Assembly Delegates Nominees*

Normally we elect four lay voting members and a couple of youth voting members to our annual Synod Assembly in May. Because this year's Synod Assembly will likely be a 'virtual' gathering in May, and detailed information has not been finalized to share with prospective voting members, the Congregation Council will be appointing voting members later this winter to represent Trinity.

If you are interested in serving as a voting member at this year's 'virtual' Synod Assembly, please speak with Council President Paul Crist, Vice President Karen Unruh or one of the pastors.



**Sue Cothorn**

After moving from Minneapolis to Grand Rapids in 1996, Sue and her family joined Trinity. She has been active as a reading tutor and working with the Trinity-sponsored refugee families. She works at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital and in her spare time enjoys reading, working in her yard and baking sweet treats for friends. Sue is married to Gregg and they have one adult son, Maxwell.



**Tess Lundgren**

Tess has been a stay-at-home wife and mother since their move to Grand Rapids in 2002. She and Tim, her husband of 34 years, have three beautiful daughters. Nyki is 24, Katarina is in 12th grade at Forest Hills Northern, and Alaina Rose is in 10th grade at Forest Hills Central.

The Lundgren's started attending Trinity in the summer of 2013 and officially joined Trinity in the fall of 2013. Since that time Tess has chaperoned youth trips to Springhill, State Gathering, Charge, and our summer High School youth mission trip. She has taught in our Sunday school for several years and volunteered in VBS. Tess served as a Confirmation Mentor for five years. Tess is team leader for one of Trinity's Dégagé service teams. She serves at Dégagé with her husband and girls and other team members. She serves on the Youth & Family committee and is chair of the Hospitality committee.

When not doing volunteer work Tess enjoys tent camping with her family, spending time in Copper Harbor at the family cabin, agate hunting along the shores of Lake Superior, fishing, hiking and exploring the back roads of Michigan. She is an avid game & card player. She loves all things creative including knitting/crocheting, making jewelry, baking, sewing, drawing, painting, crafts and DIY projects.



**Mike Mason**

Mike joined Trinity in the fall of 2013 with his wife, Sheri, and their 3 children, Tyler, Ethan, and Alexis. They usually attend the Rejoice service. Mike earned his bachelors degree in political science from the University of California-Berkeley. He also attended the University of Colorado-Denver where he earned a masters of science in finance and his MBA. Mike currently works for N2 Publishing as Director of Legal Operations.



**Rick Radke, Jr.**

Rick Radke joined Trinity in 2000. His two children, Allison and Charlie, have been baptized and confirmed at Trinity. Rick received his undergraduate degree from Michigan State University and his JD degree from the University of Detroit. He has been practicing law in Western Michigan since 1978. Rick has been serving on church Council since 2016 and has served on several church committees. He enjoys spending time with family, participating in various sporting and other outdoor activities, and he is involved in various organizations and associations.



Report of the Senior Pastor to the Congregation  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan

January 2021

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory,  
the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.  
From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*

*John 1:14, 16*

The Gospel text for the first Sunday of 2021 concluded our Christmas season observance with the great proclamation of the *Logos*, the Word made flesh from John 1. The Word born to us is the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it. The grace and truth revealed in the Word made flesh is at the heart of the miracle of Christmas. Grace upon grace.

I love the evocative proclamation of the Gospel of John. Jesus is revealed as the bread of life, the gate for the sheep, the vine, the resurrection and the life. And in John 8:12 Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." Faith people in 2020 have sought the light of life in the darkness of a world that has seemed out of control. We trust the promise of the light because we trust the one who makes the promise. Still, it has been a hard year to perceive the illumination that will overcome the darkness of this time.

Less than two months after the Annual Meeting of the Congregation in 2020, a gathering on March 15 of the Executive Committee, worship leaders and Trinity medical professionals led to the closure of our church for "in person" gathering in the face of an emerging pandemic. We began to explore what it meant to offer worship exclusively by live stream, for staff to shelter at home, to move all programs, meetings and planning to video conferencing formats and to somehow retain a sense of community in our separation. We have had success in meeting the challenge of the pandemic on some levels and have certainly fallen short on others. Throughout the last ten months we have actively sought to perceive the light of Christ in the darkness of this time. The community of Trinity Lutheran Church has been, for me, a light in the darkness, bearing Christ to one another in a most challenging time. Grace upon grace.

In this report I will not offer a list of programs or statistics to profile our 2020 year of ministry together. You have heard from me often in 2020; I will therefore keep my writing brief in this year's Annual Report. Many of you have received my congregational emails twice a week since the middle of March of 2020 and I am grateful for the dialogue that has been the result of that communication. I will share here the simple gratitude of a pastor who has been surrounded by committed staff and congregational leaders who have helped us find a new way to be the church in a most extraordinary time. With them, I look forward to forging reentry into our life together in 2021.

As I mark eight years since I was introduced to the people of Trinity at the Annual Meeting in 2013, I am grateful to be a part of a congregation that has found a way forward in the most challenging of times. I have been joined by great partners, including Associate Pastor Dan Schewe for most of five years, Assisting Pastor Karen Niemeyer for four years, and a ministry staff rich in gifts to further the mission of this congregation. I look forward to renewed opportunities to grow our ministry together in 2021. I anticipate grace upon grace . . .

It remains my distinct privilege to serve as one of your pastors at Trinity.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Bob Linstrom, Senior Pastor



Report of the Associate Pastor to the Congregation  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan  
January 2021

*“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” – Matthew 28:20*

This has been a strange year of ministry. In seminary they don't prepare you to minister in a pandemic. This year has been filled with many disappointments and bright innovations. Because of the pandemic we have been forced to try many new ways of doing things, some have worked, and some have not. I have learned and grown in many unexpected ways, for which I am thankful. I am continually thankful for our partnership in ministry as we seek to follow God on the road ahead of us.

Continually my mind has been drawn back to the final words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, 28:20. There he tells his disciples that he will be with them, even when he is physically not right there next to them. He assures them of his presence, no matter what. This year we have not been able to be present with one another as we like but have found ways to be present with one another through the other means. We have found ways to be connected in the disconnected reality we are living in, all the while thankful for the glimpses of Christ's presence with us.

This has been a hard annual report to write. It is filled with disappointment. Disappointment for things we were planning on doing yet were unable to. It has been a year of trying new things and seeing what works. It has been a year of trying to stay connected in a disconnected reality. It has been a strange and good year to journey in faith with you.

Last summer we were going to have an amazing week of camp at Stony Lake. Then that transitioned to the possibility of a week of camp at Trinity, and then to sadly not happening. Many are still grieving not having camp last summer.

Last summer a group of our high schoolers and adults were to have traveled to Winchester, Kentucky, on a mission trip. Then we planned a week of local service, which also was canceled. For many the loss of this experience still haunts them. It was something many were greatly looking forward to. We are currently planning on going to Hazlet, New Jersey, next summer with contingency plans for a week of local service if that falls apart.

One bright partnership did grow out of these plans falling apart. We have started conversations projects with Blessed by Brooklyn to partner with them in our community. Since then this has grown into a partnership, I'm very excited about. They seek to sojourn with young people who are in difficult circumstances to build relationships and show them a different path forward.

This year we were to have been ramping up the ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis. Sadly those plans were also pushed off a year, so we will be ramping up this year and next for that amazing experience.

This fall our Confirmation Classes transitioned to online via Zoom. While it has been an adjustment, they have been well attended and received by the group. The lessons have been recorded and shared with families who cannot make the live time, which is something we have learned and will continue to do into the future. This year we have been delving into the Old Testament and the 10 Commandments.

Sadly, our Confirmation students have had to endure two Charge events being canceled. This was the first event that was canceled due to COVID in experience. It is an amazing weekend conference put on by our friends at Living Water Ministries to help middle schoolers connect with one another and God. I'm sad to have missed it.

Our high school youth group moved outside in the summer and fall, often meeting by the fire pit to enjoy roasting marshmallows over the flames. As the fall turned to Winter the group moved online to meet via Zoom. We continue to find ways to connect with each other in these strange days and look forward to the time when we can gather in person.

In these hard times we have deepened our relationships with our mission partners. It was decided that a large portion of this year's fundraising dollars for our high schoolers would go to the Living Water Ministries capital campaign. We continue to support them in a myriad of ways. As previously mentioned we are growing a relationship with Blessed by Brookelyn and look forward to where that partnership will take us.

This year Christen Blauwkamp and I had to adapt a lot of our plans to connect with our youth in all of their ways. Some ways have worked others have not. It has been a year of learning and refining. We are thankful for the lessons we have learned.

We were able to continue work on our nature trail this fall, completely re-mulching it and much of the flower beds on the grounds. The outdoor worship space has gotten a lot of use in the past year, and we are thankful for its addition. I am working on a project with the Arts Committee to bring visual elements to the trail that people can contemplate as they walk it. As well I have noticed an uptake in the dead trees in our forests, both standing and down. I am extremely grateful for Steve Kleiman's efforts to clear the dangerous and downed trees. I am starting to, with some of our members, make a plan to repopulate and replant our forests.

This year I've gotten to use a lot of skills from my former life as an IT professional. I'm thankful they still reside in my mind. We have learned to use the technology available to us to help us stay connected.

It is my joy and honor to serve as one of your pastors. I look forward to the ministry God continues to lead us into. We are blessed, and we are a blessing, and God is with us, no matter what.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Dan Schewe, Associate Pastor



## Assisting Pastor Congregational Report

"And the People Stayed Home"  
by Kittie O'meara

*And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed....And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully....*

As I look forward to beginning my fourth year of ministry as your assisting pastor, I am once again thankful, especially at this time in my life for being able to do God's work (at a safe distance) alongside each of you and Pastor Bob, Pastor Dan and the Trinity Staff and Council. During this year of extended isolation, I have been grateful for the many ways my ministry has given my life a purpose. At a time when "the people stayed home" and many others of my age and circumstances have felt alone with little to do in their confinement, I have been blessed with challenging new ways of creatively carrying out my ministry responsibilities.

Although my visiting time inside the homes of Trinity's special homebound members has been curtailed, I have still continued to "visit" our members in other ways. During the warmer weather monthly visits were made with phone calls outside of retirement home windows; or whenever homebound members were permitted outside, safe communion was celebrated on nearby benches. As the weather has become colder, in-person visits have turned into monthly and weekly Trinity in Touch phone check-in's. Although I have dearly missed making hospital visits during the last nine months of 2020, receiving special permission to visit Susan Kwast at Spectrum Health Butterworth and to share the Commendation of the Dying with her was a solemn honor, as was leading the graveside Committal service of Anne Hanson.

Most recently I have been privileged to work alongside Congregational Life Director Angela Davis, as well as other Trinity staff members, in beginning a greatly needed neighborhood ministry, TRINITY NEIGHBORS. Contacts for each of the 30 neighborhoods have been recruited, and the ministry was introduced to the congregation in the January Messenger.

Facilitating over sixteen weeks of GriefShare, along with the Loss of Spouse and Surviving the Holidays seminars, have continued this year via ZOOM; and another thirteen-week group is being planned to begin in Lent 2020. These groups have been attended by people in and outside of Trinity who are grieving the loss of loved ones and who found it helpful to share with others, encourage each other, and learn the ins and outs of grieving through group discussions and videos.

During 2020 I also continued to build community with Trinity's seniors by working alongside monthly volunteer dinner hosts in the Life Begins at 60 group. Although our in-restaurant gatherings came to an abrupt halt in March, Driveway Dining evenings proved to be a delightful yet safe way for gathering during the summer, and appreciation goes to Carol and Dan Butler, Marybeth and Joe Iaria, and Jan Jacobson for hosting the gatherings.

Lastly, due to the pandemic, I was able to attend several informative and timely online webinars, including several GriefShare leadership seminars, a Safe Haven Ministries' pastoral seminar, several Synod-sponsored racial justice seminars, and a palliative care/hospice seminar presented by Wake Forest Faith Health.

As I've said before, and it's always good to repeat: Trinity is led by and filled with wonderfully gifted people who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior and who deeply care for each other. So as we continue our journey together after a uniquely challenging year of ministry, I look forward to the time in 2021 when the isolating will be behind us and once again we will join together as healed people of God, ready to live in new ways where we can build even closer relationships with each other at Trinity and with our neighbors in our city, nation and world.

Together in Christ,  
Pastor Karen

When I wrote last year's President's Report for the annual meeting report it started this way:

"As we enter the new decade, it is easy to get wrapped up in all the bad news coming at us from around the world daily."

Little did we know that bad news was going to continue and further dominate the world with the coming of the pandemic. Little did we know we would soon be experiencing extended isolation from each other, remote virtual Sunday services, and Trinity Lutheran closed for most of the year. It's still hard to believe how 2020 unfolded, and harder still to ring in the new year in our more socially distanced world.

It reminds me, as my father told me, that everything is relative. While this year has been a hard struggle for us all, the Trinity Lutheran congregation has put its faith in God and his plan for us. We've demonstrated the capacity to face new challenges and have grown as a church, a congregation, and as a light of hope in our community.

We must first thank the tireless work and dedication of our amazing pastoral team: Pastor Bob, Pastor Dan, and Pastor Karen. They have adapted to, and embraced, many challenges while continuing to lead, nourish, and shepherd us in our faith, our belief, and love for God and his son Jesus Christ.

We also need to thank the amazing Church staff that has adapted to working remotely and continued to help the church run without a hitch. It has not been an easy task, but they have done it with a zeal and commitment that is a testament to their devotion to Trinity and its congregation. God bless your work and thank you.

Special thanks are also due to the team that made virtual service happen every week. Not only did they quickly pivot to a virtual format, but also consistently delivered a professional, high quality experience that has been so important in bringing God's word and teachings to us each week. Amazing work that will benefit Trinity for years to come.

I would also like to thank the Church Council and their critical work as the voice of the Congregation. It has been a privilege to work with this team. Though Zoom can never replace gathering in-person, our virtual council meetings have been a fun, often entertaining, way to stay connected. The 2020 quote of the year is, "you are still on mute."

Trinity Lutheran has weathered the storm of the pandemic. It is a strong, vibrant, loving and financially secure church that is positioned to grow and flourish in the coming year. We will get through the pandemic and return to in-person services again, and I look forward to being with all of you in the very near future.

Thank you for your loving, caring, commitment to Trinity Lutheran.

God's peace to you all,

Paul Crist  
Trinity Lutheran Church President

**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 2020 distribution for benevolence totaled \$20,000.00. After careful consideration, the members of the Outreach Committee and the Congregation Council made the following decisions regarding the five organizations that would benefit financially from these one-time gifts:

- Living Water Ministries General Scholarship Fund—to help families across the state with limited financial resources send their children to camp.
- Blessed by Brookelyn—provides alternative activities and mentorship opportunities for area at-risk youth required to complete community service hours.
- Heartside Gleaning—empowers residents to become healthier through increased access to healthy food and nutrition education.
- Exalta Health—provides health and dental care to those who do not have access to much needed services.
- Dégagé Ministries—specifically to help fund its new practice of paying select patrons to do the work otherwise done by volunteers prior to the pandemic.

**Preliminary Report of 2020 Benevolence to Date**

Organization	Benevolence
Access of West Michigan	\$4,844.52
Baxter Community Center	\$1,222.25
Dégagé Ministries	\$3,175.59
Dwelling Place	\$338.45
Exalta Health	\$2,008.98
Family Promise (IHN)	\$15,625.09
God's Kitchen	\$406.14
Habitat for Humanity	\$10,806.64
Heartside Ministry	\$406.14
Home Repair Services	\$1,628.39
Hope Community Church	270.76
Inner City Christian Federation	\$6,425.32
In the Image	\$2,305.28
Living Water Ministries	\$1,425.32
MI Interfaith Power & Light	\$570.87
Mission India	\$6,305.42
New City Neighbors	\$951.49
The Pantry	\$1,387.62
Safe Haven Ministries	\$951.49
Samaritas New American	\$996.49
Samaritas Senior Living	\$541.52
SECOM	\$1,387.62
ELCA World Hunger	\$5,923.00
Lutheran Disaster Response	\$2,055.00

As part of Trinity's 2020 budget, a total of \$34,600.00 was approved for benevolence. That total has been distributed on a quarterly basis to area organizations over the past year. Trinity's budgeted benevolence is distributed using a percentage formula.

On the left is a summary of some of the gifts that Trinity has been blessed to distribute *through the third quarter of this fiscal year*. The figures include budgeted benevolence as well as special gifts.

Please keep in mind that, since our fiscal year does not end until January 31, this is a preliminary report. The complete 2020 benevolence report will be published in the March, 2021 edition of Trinity's monthly newsletter, *The Messenger*.

*Trinity's Children's Ministry lays the foundation for a lifelong journey with Jesus Christ. Children discover that God is active in their lives, form loving connections with a family of believers, and share God's blessings with our community and the world. The purpose of the Children's Ministry Committee is to provide oversight, guidance, critique, and support for all programming related to children ages birth through 5th grade.*

Current committee members are: Paul DeBoer, Steve Feutz, Anne Meeuwsen, Ted & Sarah Frecka, Cyndi Harrison, and Karen Unruh. Karen Unruh serves as chair and council liaison.

The committee works in partnership with the following part-time staff: Rachele Battreal (Director of Family Ministry), James Morin (Family Activities Coordinator), Ingrid Brang, Sheri Mason, and Andrea Severns (Sunday School Coordinators), and Awilda Diaz (Nursery Coordinator).

The committee began 2020 by welcoming Anne Meeuwsen, Ted & Sarah Frecka, and Cyndi Harrison. Many initiatives were lifted up, including: incorporating more outreach into children's programming, brainstorming new beneficiaries for the children's offering contributions, making instructional videos for Trinity's YouTube channel, organizing volunteers and resources for VBS 2020, gathering the next generation of Young & Sleepless parents, and envisioning a master plan for the Children's Wing. All of these efforts were underway before the health crisis forced us to change our focus to more immediate needs.

Sunday School almost instantaneously went to a virtual format, each week becoming more robust and engaging. Events were reimaged so families could participate from home. Brand new ideas emerged, and new technologies embraced.

A HUGE thank you to all of you who have volunteered your time as teachers, assistants, helpers, and storytellers. We have been blessed by your continual support, encouragement, and prayers. We look forward to seeing how God's awesome plan for us unfolds during the months ahead.

*He will feed his flock like a shepherd - he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep. Isaiah 40:11*

### **Key Events in 2020**

**Sunday Morning Education** - Sunday School is offered for children ages 3 years through 5th grade during the school year. Children are taught in a small group setting using Spark, a lectionary-based Lutheran curriculum published by Augsburg Fortress. Weekly activities include games, crafts, and offering. We ended the 2019/2020 year with 91 children registered. In person attendance averaged 50 children per week. Beginning in March 2020, Sunday School lessons were offered virtually, and continued throughout the summer and fall 2020. Weekly videos include a Bible story, discussion, craft or activity, and prayer. Families receive weekly coloring pages and worship bulletins. Current registration for the 2020/2021 Sunday School year is 55.

**Nursery Ministry** - The Nursery Ministry at Trinity is for families with children ages birth through 3 years old. New babies are welcomed to Trinity with a gift of a baby Bible. In 2020, approximately 12 babies were welcomed with baby Bibles.

**Kids Coalition Against Hunger Meal Packing** - Starting in December 2019, Trinity collected money to combat world hunger, and many volunteers gathered for a huge meal packing event on January 26. Children's Ministry helped promote fundraising and awareness to the congregation. Enough money was raised to allow us to pack nearly 26,000 meals, over 5000 more than in 2019!

**Pancakes & Playtime** - A fun fellowship event especially for young families. Forty-five participants gathered March 7 to enjoy a pancake breakfast, Bible stories, songs, and activities for infants and toddlers up to age four.

**Blessing of Backpacks for Kindergarteners and Blessing of Pre-schoolers** – Twelve kindergarteners submitted photos of themselves with their backpacks. These were shown during our live-stream worship on August 30, accompanied by a special blessing. Thirteen pre-schoolers submitted photos and received a special blessing during our live-stream worship on September 13.

**TLCGR Children's Ministry Facebook Page** - Our page launched in fall 2020 in order to better connect with Trinity families during this time of social distancing. This "closed group" is open to Trinity families with children from birth to 5th grade, as well as Trinity staff. We use Facebook to stay connected, post weekly Sunday School lessons, Good Night Trinity videos, updates on events, photos, and faith-related activities. We currently have 40 members participating and would love for more families to follow us!

**Good Night Trinity** – Our newest program premiered in October 2020. Each week, a different Trinity member hosts a 10- to 15-minute read-aloud. Video links are posted every Thursday. The books are geared for pre-school and elementary children and are faith-based and/or have a positive message. This new program has had a positive response from both families and storytellers.

**Christmas Program** - Our pre-school through elementary aged children presented the story of Jesus' birth in a video recording broadcast during live-stream worship on December 13. The program was a compilation of video narrations of the Christmas story and photographs. Thirty-eight families participated.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rachele Battreall and Karen Unruh

2020 was a year like no other. The staff and congregation learned new ways to be church together during the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost all the events that normally take place during the year were canceled or moved to virtual/online in 2020. The Trinity Church family continues to amaze me. I continue to serve as the staff liaison to or be a member of The Archives Committee, The Hospitality Committee, The Communications Committee, David Fox, Website Designer and Manager

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

**Altar Flowers/Altar Flower Delivery:** We have continued with the new process, we began in fall 2019, where members need to contact a local florist (several suggestions are made on the SignUpGenius) and order and pay for their flowers and have them delivered to the church on the Friday before the Sunday.



**Advent by Candlelight:** This yearly tradition was re-envisioned this year. Many thanks to Olivia Bradley, who brought together all the pieces of the evening into one wonderful presentation. Special thanks to Greg Lang and Kris Baker who without their help it would have been impossible to put this together. Our readers Dawn and Kendal Thorsen, Lisa Mead, Esther Sellman, Isabelle Mckinney, Ruth Ann Evans, Sheila Talsma, Kristin Bradley, Linda Taffs. Pastor Karen Niemeyer, Rebecca Marquardt, Karen and Megan Unruh, Mary Beth Mencarelli, Jacquie Murray, Wendy and Ella Kroll, Diane Biser, and Samantha McMillan. Our musicians Karen Betz-Griewahn, Brenda Baker, and Larry Biser. Our vocalists Diane Biser, Melissa Haneline and Emily Albaitis.

**All Church Potluck and Annual Meeting:** The third Sunday in January, we came together after the late service filling The Courtyard 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 of the congregation. This year there was a water main leak at the road which caused the water being shut-off. It was the quickest clean-up ever. A special thank you goes to Pastor Dan who got the city to hold off shutting the water off so we could do the dishes.

**Dinner Groups:** This year's dinner groups were postponed in the fall and will not happen for the 2020-2021 season. Thank you goes to Joyce Schlanderer and Toni Petersen who were once again willing to serve as the co-coordinators for the Trinity Dinner Groups.

**Helping Hands:** The Helping Hands Meal program continues to be a blessing for Trinity families who need help in the form of a meal. This year the Helping Hands Rides program took a big increase in need for the families of Trinity. At the beginning of the pandemic we have several members willing to get groceries, prescriptions prepare meals, etc. Please consider this important ministry.

**Homebound Ministry (Bulletin Mailing and DVD's):** The Trinity Members I would send bulletins to weekly has not happened, mostly because those for whom I was sending them to have gone to their eternal rest. An enormous thank you goes to Pastor Dan who has been making sure that the live stream worship has been getting sent to the public broadcasting station GRTV channel 25 so our members who do not have access to YouTube can continue to see the service.

**New Member Program:** The New Member program has not formally met but we have new folks who are getting involved in the life of Trinity and finding us as their church home. We look forward to when we can welcome them in person as new members.

**Prayer Ministry:** Steve Cairns continues to do an excellent job managing the [electronic prayer chain](#). The prayer chain continues to be a significant part of the prayer ministry of Trinity. The goal of expanding the electronic prayer chain continues. If you would like to join please email Steve Cairns at [sljgcairns@gmail.com](mailto:sljgcairns@gmail.com). This year the majority of the prayer requests have been received by various means from the yellow Let's Connect cards and calls/emails to the office or directly to Steve. [The Prayer Tree](#) is in its sixth year. Our fifth year finished in the midst of the COVID-19 with our prayers continuing throughout the summer. We kicked off the 2020-2021 Prayer Tree with 68 children being prayed for and 31 adults praying for Trinity's children and youth, in-utero to 18 years of age.



**Poinsettia Delivery:** Especially this year due to the physical distancing and isolation so many of us are feeling during the Christmas season, we shared the holidays with our homebound/shut-in members, some of our elderly Trinity friends, and those members who lost loved ones with the gift of a poinsettia. This year we had 99 poinsettia receivers. We had 17 volunteers deliver poinsettias to our members. Once again, the Trinity Lutheran quilters provided quilts for many of the Poinsettia receivers.

"The Volkerdings dropped off the beautiful poinsettia plant to her. It really brightened her day and apartment especially since she has been not be able to get out much since last March. Thank you from Pat Johnson and her daughter & son-in-law Nanci and Bob Guigue."  
-Patricia B Johnson

"Thank you for the special gift of the poinsettia plant and card. It is a very unexpected surprise. It is greatly appreciated. - Joan & John Walls

"Thank you for the wonderful flower and quilt. I am in awe of the church's generosity." -Mary Ashimine

"Dear Trinity members and pastors, just wanted to say thank you for the poinsettia and pastor visits. They have been a bright thought in my life at this time. Thank you for also for your prayers, they were so appreciated. Blessings to all involved." -Joan Perham and family

"Thank you to our church family for bring CHRISTmas cheer to my mom (Luretta) today!! She is getting stronger every day! Seeing long time friend Pastor Karen Niemeyer who personally delivered it today, she's still grinning from your presence! Thank you!! - Allison Landon with Luretta Bliet

"Thank you so much for the poinsettia I received today. It is almost solid red. I received one in Dec. 2018 from TLC. When the red leaves fell by Feb. 2019, it stayed green until 2 weeks before the second anniversary of my wife's, Jill, date of death (1-22-18) 2 lilies from the funeral had not bloomed since shortly after that funeral. They both bloomed for the first time here @the same time! The poinsettia from 2018 has remained with red leaves since Jan 2020! I am appreciative of YouTube services. This morning I watched both "Advent by Candlelight" and "the Advent Vespers." The flashback video @ "Advent by Candlelight" were nice to see. Please thank all those responsible for my poinsettia. (I thanked Craig & Patti Mutch) Clem Block's Christmas Card was a bonus. I was a BIG fan of his poetry. -Bill Beute



**Medicare Consultation with Trinity Member Jo Murphy, Executive Director of Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program:** Trinity member Jo Murphy, has once again, offered her expertise and met with congregation members and/or their loved ones to assist them with enrolling in Medicare and Medicaid. Due to the pandemic Jo was able to make adjustments to the needs of our members, providing in person, via Zoom or a phone call. Thank you to Jo Murphy for volunteering her expertise and services.



The Digital Communications committee was created by the Congregation Council to help create and enhance Trinity's use of digital technologies given the increased benefits, growth, and reliance upon using digital communications. Our third year continues to have a diverse and talented group with varying digital technology skills that have been in place since we were established in December 2017.

We added a new committee member at the end of 2020, Jim deJonge, which has been a huge blessing adding more knowledge of IT and digital expertise.

The purpose of this committee is to serve as an expert digital communications resource to Trinity staff, council, program leaders, and the entire congregation for Trinity related digital communication needs. This includes: evaluate, qualify, and make readily available an evolving set of recommended digital communication methods, and provide digital communication expertise to staff, council, and program leaders, and the congregation.

The initial focus of this committee was to streamline communication methods with Kris Baker. Bill DeWitt is working to build a better event calendar which congregation can view which events they want to see (filter out other content that are not useful for them). Our focus changed suddenly in March 2020 with the shift to virtual services and focusing on direct communications to all congregation members. We learned that all congregation members at least review some form of communication method when no one showed up to church the first virtual Sunday, which we will take as a win (trying to find some humor in 2020). With the focus being implementation of Google calendar, Google form for event submission, and plug-ins available, we were not able to complete this with Covid, short timeline, and events being canceled. This will be a focus on 2021, and will be implemented in January 2021, while events are lower.

We continue to refine Trinity's new website, which is the focus of David Fox, who built Trinity's current web site and has been maintaining and hosting this site for Trinity, leading this effort. David has updated the current web site with Trinity's new logo and color scheme, as well as making some other improvements, including calendaring and navigation. Although, the information is having to be changed quickly when things can move to a virtual platform instead of an onsite program. Our new website has easier navigation, streamlined content, and makes it easier for staff to update the web site. We now have more Trinity members viewing our website for information regarding services, and programs where before mostly external guests were viewing our information.

Angela Davis continues to maintain the Trinity Facebook page with over 579 people following this page. We have a youth ministry page as well, which has continued to grow with the focus on virtual youth programming.

We were thankful that Pastor Dan had already been creating and posting more YouTube content for sharing and viewing events and programs throughout 2019, so when we moved 100% to this platform for viewing live services, we were prepared and ready to handle this task. You can subscribe to this YouTube channel by searching for Trinity Lutheran Church Grand Rapids.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Rodammer, Committee Chair & Council Liaison

Angela Davis, Trinity Staff Member

Jim deJonge, Committee Member

Bill Dewitt, Committee Member

David Fox, Committee Member

Peter McKinney, Committee Member

Pastor Dan Schewe, Trinity Staff Member

Pastor Robert Lindstrom, Trinity Staff Member

"A Forever Gift"- Trinity Endowment Fund Update

The Endowment Fund Committee is pleased to report that both of our Endowment Funds the Mission Endowment Fund and the Building Endowment Fund are growing, and the investment performance is favorable. Below is a summary of the change in each account over the last year.

<u>Fund</u>	<u>12/31/19 Value</u>	<u>12/31/20 Value</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Mission	\$ 568,055	\$ 661,249	\$ 93,194
Building	\$ 210,788	\$ 331,370	\$ 120,582

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020, the committee made a distribution recommendation to Council that was approved. The Mission Endowment will distribute **\$20,000** and the Building Endowment **\$7,000**. During this challenging COVID 19 year, we are pleased that our Mission Endowment fund was able to distribute a record amount of funding to many charities that are in great need.

**In addition to the above numbers, we have received a matching gift offer for the building endowment that is currently pledged at \$165,187 as of January 2021. We are blessed to see this fund continue to grow as we care for our building now and for the future.**

The purpose of the Mission Endowment Fund is to provide for mission work that is beyond the duly adopted operating budget for the congregation. The purpose of the Building Endowment Fund is to provide for the care and maintenance of the church facilities and grounds that is beyond the duly adopted operating budget.

The Endowment Committee brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and vision to help this ministry grow at Trinity. The Committee consists of George Bauer, Chris Engle, Todd Brandstadt, David Johnson, Pastor Bob, Mike Mason, and Brad Blair.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Johnson  
Chairperson of Endowment Committee

## *Review of Reports - Fellowship Committee for 2020*

To say Fellowship at Trinity looked a little bit different in 2020 would be an understatement. It is difficult to provide Fellowship and interaction when we are socially distanced from each other. But, God's work continued...

One traditional Fellowship event was held at Trinity before the pandemic shut activities down. Trivia Night was held in February 2020. Karen Unruh was key in organizing this annual event. A fun time was had by all!

During the heart of the pandemic shut down this summer, we started a virtual form of Fellowship via Facebook. Angela Davis posted Facebook messages a couple times a week using photos taken at Trinity by Amy Fox. The Facebook posts feature a close up photo of some Trinity landmark for Facebook followers to guess. Then, a full photo of the landmark follows along with some information about the featured item. The goal of Virtual Facebook Fellowship is to help congregation members keep in touch with each other, and keep the beauty of Trinity in mind as well!

We hope Trinity will be able to hold more in person Fellowship activities in 2021, but we also remain committed to doing everything possible to protect everyone's safety and health.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Stouten, Director of Discipleship  
Amy Fox, Council Liaison, Fellowship

## *Review of Reports - Finance Committee for 2020*

The Finance Committee is happy to report that TLC finances are sound, in spite of COVID-19 changing so much of Trinity's "normal" activity to "remote mode." A big thank-you goes to the many TLC congregation members who faithfully continued their giving to support Trinity's work through a challenging 2020.

Our Finance Assistant Joanna Waite kept the books and generated a reliable flow of information for TLC leaders, working in lonely isolation along with Kris Baker in keeping the TLC church office operational over the last ten months; way cool! Special thanks to Treasurer Chris Engle with the TLC and Independent Bank teams that scrambled to prepare our successful application for the forgivable SBA Paycheck Protection Program loan. If God can mercifully forgive us sinners, then the Fed certainly ought to forgive our loan; just sayin'.

I would like to thank the following people for serving on the Finance committee during 2020: Treasurer Chris Engle, John Basher (Consultant-Guru), new member Mike King, Jim Coates, Peter McKinney, Pastor Bob, and Finance Assistant Joanna Waite. Thank you for putting up with Chairman George's weak attempts at humor during our Zoom committee meetings this year.

The Finance Committee meets the third Monday of every second month to discuss and give guidance on Trinity's finances. Our next meeting is January 18, 2021 at 6:00 PM (once again via Zoom). If you have interest, questions or concerns, please contact anybody on the Finance Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

George Bauer, Chair

*The mission of Health Ministries at Trinity is to share God's gifts of love and grace to promote spiritual, physical and emotional well being.*

### **Faith Community Nurse**

After a year and a half 'on the job', Kristin started 2020 with a better understanding of roles and responsibilities, more organized program goals and better time management. Funny how things change, right?!

At the beginning of March, suggesting that we alter how we pass the peace during worship seemed monumental, but nothing compared to what we would all be experiencing in the weeks and months that followed.

Creating a physician advisory group was very helpful as the pastors and executive committee made difficult decisions in the first weeks of March. Closing the church was a difficult decision, especially since it was before we were ordered to shelter in place by the governor.

The drastic shutdown measures to stop the novel coronavirus from spreading jolted everyone. Plans were immediately made to establish a phone calling ministry. The Health Ministry Action Committee identified subgroups of our congregation most at risk for challenges. Kristin, Angela, Sylvia and Pastor Karen matched members who live alone, were over 80 years old, single parents, and those with significant health issues or stressors with volunteers willing to make phone calls. By March 20, check-in calls were being made to ensure everyone had resources they needed during this public health crisis.

Kristin supports the phone callers with emails of encouragement, blessings, congregational updates and public health resources to pass along to their call recipients. By April, we had 37 members making calls to 200 households. This "phone a friend" ministry became an extension of ***Trinity in Touch*** and continues to be updated monthly as needs arise. At the close of 2020, we still have 18 members reaching out to about 80 others on a monthly basis.

Needless to say, **Visitation Ministry** has taken on a new form since the beginning of March. Many more phone calls, emails, texts, and letters are being exchanged to maintain connections. For a short time this summer, distanced and masked visits were made with folks able to meet outdoors. Hospital visits have not been allowed, though our pastors were able to see a few members during their last days and provide commendation of the dying. Homebound communion remains on hold as we journey through abstaining from the physical sacrament together.

Establishing health and safety measures for when our building reopened for staff and small group gatherings, and for the time we had in-person worship, is also something Kristin has helped oversee. She will continue to be a part of the public health coordination team as we navigate back to worship together.

Participating with the Spiritual Growth committee and as a leader on the Stephen Ministry team are additional areas where Kristin serves.

Eight nursing students from Calvin University spent time with Kristin during the fall semester learning the role of a Faith Community Nurse. Kristin attends monthly zoom meetings with the area wide Faith Community Nurse network and is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Parish Nurse Association.

### The Health Ministries Action Committee (HMAC)

- The committee meets every other month and has been integral in shaping Trinity's response to the current public health crisis, sourcing of PPE, resource sharing, volunteering and relaying information through the Messenger.
- **ReZooming Fellowship** coffee hour was started by this group. Since summer, Angela has taken this responsibility and is reimagining it even further for 2021.
- Sue Babin coordinated four **Blood Drives** at Trinity with Versiti Blood. Despite pandemic closures, by putting in place extra cleaning, distancing and masking protocols, we continued to provide these essential, life-giving events. In 2020 we collected 131 pints of blood (an increase of 52 units over 2019!!) Sincere thanks to our dedicated donors and also to Culvers for the "Give a pint, Get a pint" program!
- **Fitness Classes** resumed outdoors this summer with Tai Chi offerings. Xristina Kuhlmann continues to volunteer her time and talents as our fearless instructor. Taking over the East Parking lot several days a week, a dedicated crew of 8 - 16 people were guided through movement to improve their health and wellness. The donations raised from these classes are being set aside for program enhancements. Since the classes began in 2019, over \$1800 has been collected.
- The **Flu Shot Clinic** this Fall provided 75 immunizations to our members through Spectrum Health Visiting Nurses. #Prevention!!!
- A new group ministry to care for our minds, bodies and spirits was launched in September. **Walk & Talk** is a year-long Bible study & walking program that incorporates healthy habits into our lives of faith through physical movement and spiritual enrichment. Rebecca Ulrich coordinates weekly emails to all of the participants and monthly zooms have brought us all together. There are 35 participants at this time.
- **The Longest Night** service was coordinated by Kristin and supported by the committee. It provided a time and space to acknowledge the losses we have all experienced and directed us toward the light of Christ coming at Christmas.
- **CPR Training** is on hold. It looks promising to schedule training for Fall of 2021.
- Plans for Blood Pressure Sundays, health screening fairs and suicide prevention training are all things to look forward to in our future.

Many thanks to our current Health Ministries Action Committee members – Sue Babin, Deb Bambini, Corina Dulecki, Debbie Lown, Richard Gehl, Rebecca Ulrich, Kay Zeaman, Cindy Zientarski, Kristen Lamprich, Michelle Morin, Carol Butler (council liaison) & Kristin Bradley (FCN).

**The Health Advisory Committee (HAC)** met once in 2020. Their combined experience, wisdom, knowledge of health ministry events at Trinity, and overall encouragement functions like a mutual ministry team for our Faith Community Nurse. Thank you, Carol Butler (council liaison), Janet Chobanian, Jan Palm, Petra Rotzell, Meri Leidel, and Cindy Zientarski.

*"May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23*

With gratitude and peace,

Kristin Bradley, MSN, RN  
Faith Community Nurse

**Committee Members:** Kathy Bush, Angela Davis (Staff), Kris Fox, Jamie Kuntzman, Tess Lundgren (Chair), Toni Peterson, and Carrie Wygmans

### **Fellowship Hour**

Our mission for the Fellowship Hour is to provide a comfortable, welcoming space which brings parishioners together from all services to connect with each other each week. We offer light refreshments between services.

We are grateful for the faithful teams who serve coffee, tea, and snacks after services each week.

Fellowship hour took place in January, February, and early March until the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a shutdown of in person worship.

There was a brief return to in person worship beginning on October 25 but there was no fellowship hour after these services due to physical distancing requirements.

### **Yearly Calendar**

The Hospitality Committee is responsible for many annual events and special events that arise with the congregation. Due to the pandemic, most events were cancelled.

#### **Annual Events**

Sunday Morning Fellowship Refreshments - weekly prior to pandemic closure

January: TLC Annual Meeting and Potluck on 1/19

Kids' Coalition Against Hunger on 1/26

March/April: Lenten Soup Suppers - on 3/4 and 3/11. All others cancelled.

May: Confirmation Sunday Reception - cancelled

Graduation Sunday Reception – cancelled

August: Congregation Pig Roast and Potluck – cancelled

October: Trunk or Treat - cancelled

November: New Member Receptions – cancelled

December: Advent Potato Bar - cancelled

#### **Special Events**

February: Holden Evening Prayer Around the World Refreshments on 2/5

Bound Conscience Forum and Supper (Refugee Crisis) on 2/9

November: Silent and Live Auction - cancelled

November/December: Bound Conscience Forum and Supper – cancelled

### **Updates**

At the last meeting of the Hospitality Committee before the pandemic closure, we were joined by Sylvia Stouten who presented information on curbside composting in an effort to reduce the amount of trash, such as paper plates, cups, and napkins, etc. generated at the weekly fellowship hour and other events.

Although we continue in our time of separation, we are grateful for the many volunteers who have helped set up, cook, serve, and clean up for our past events. We look forward to a time when we can return to in person worship and resume our events that bring us closer together.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Kuntzman  
Council Liaison, Hospitality

The HR Committee's role is to support Pastor Bob as the supervisor of all staff. That includes documenting and reviewing Trinity Staff job descriptions and annual goals. The committee assists with job postings, interviews and the selection process. The committee also works with Pastor Bob to address performance, when needed. As a secondary role, we try to give voice to staff concerns.

Early in the year we completed a review of personnel files, taking action where needed, ensuring consistency and legal compliance. As the year progressed, and the pandemic kept us all more isolated, the committee met virtually. It was agreed that the HRC was to reach out to all staff as a check in. These calls were completed in the November/December timeframe.

Thank you to the dedicated HR Committee members who bring a wealth of compassion and expertise to the committees' mission.

**The TLC Outreach Committee provides financial help, tangible gifts, and volunteer help to locally and internationally.**

Our committee needs new members. If you are interested on the committee or have interest in any of the organizations below, please e-mail John Fox at [drscout1961@gmail.com](mailto:drscout1961@gmail.com) or Sylvia Stouten at [sylvia.stouten@tlcgr.org](mailto:sylvia.stouten@tlcgr.org) for more information. The committee meets the fourth Monday of every month at 6 PM at the church.

**SECOM** (<http://www.secomministries.org/>) and **THE PANTRY** (<https://thepantry.gr/>). The food that the members of TLC donate every week goes directly to these pantries to help feed those in need.

**ACCESS of WEST MICHIGAN** (<http://accessofwestmichigan.org/>). This organization coordinates the Food Pantries in Kent County, and is helping to move the pantries to more pro-active Resource Centers providing more than food to those in need. They also provide casework assistance help to congregations. Trinity Lutheran also helps agencies by **collecting underwear, personal care items, diapers, school supplies, bus tickets, coats, blankets and cleaning supplies.**

**FAMILY PROMISE** (<https://www.familypromisegr.org/>). TLC provides one week of shelter, meals, and hospitality for homeless families three or four times a year. This is done on a rotating basis with other congregations in the GR area. This is a very good volunteer opportunity for TLC members.

**DÉGAGÉ MINISTRIES** ([www.degageministries.org](http://www.degageministries.org)). Provides shelter and activities for the homeless in GR. TLC provides volunteers to serve food. DÉGAGÉ also provides for purchase \$2 vouchers that people can hand out to panhandlers.

**HABITAT for HUMANITY** ([www.habitatkent.org](http://www.habitatkent.org)). This organization builds homes for low-income families. TLC helps with the build by providing volunteers to help build the home. The people receiving these homes are screened for need and must participate in the building of the home. They receive a mortgage and pay for the home. Many congregations and organizations participate in the build.

**SAFE HAVEN MINISTRIES** ([www.safehavenministries.org](http://www.safehavenministries.org)). Safe Haven Ministries' residential and nonresidential services are available to individuals and families who have experienced or who are experiencing domestic abuse.

**MICHIGAN INTERFAITH POWER AND LIGHT** (<https://www.miipl.org/>). MIPL offers practical ways to put faith into action by promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other sustainable practices that lead to a cleaner, healthier, and more just world

**NEW CITY NEIGHBORS** ([www.newcityneighbors.org](http://www.newcityneighbors.org)). NCN takes a Christ-centered, faith-based approach to address the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of youth and invests in youth by creating job opportunities and providing relevant leadership training.

**CONGRESS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** Trinity Lutheran has had a successful partnership with Congress Elementary since our relationship began in 2016. Trinity continues to collect a variety of requested school supplies in the summer for use when school begins. TLC members could get involved in different volunteer opportunities at the school.

Trinity Lutheran also helps with **Lutheran World Relief quilts and school kits, Neerekshe India Mission**, and the ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Response efforts.

In Peace,

John Fox, Joyce Schlanderer, Don & Judy Otten, Marie Selleck, Vince & Carol Schumacher, Sylvia Stouten, Corina Dulecki, Pastor Bob

2019 left us with a sense of completion, but 2020 has left us a sense of anticipation that will extend well into 2021. For what now seems like an extremely brief period, the Trinity congregation and its visitors enjoyed the fruit of years of labor to improve this house, then we went home. The anticipation comes in the hopes of getting together soon and utilizing the improvements fully for their intended purpose.

Meanwhile, volunteers and staff continued diligently maintaining the buildings and grounds so that it is ready for that anticipated time. The outdoor gathering and worship space in the woods at the east end of the property received more woodchip surfacing, thanks to continued care by Pastor Dan and the youth of Trinity. We also saw the completion of an addition to the columbarium beneath the cross tower. A great improvement done by others, our friends at MDOT accomplished the cleaning of the ditch along the north edge of the property, greatly improving drainage and visibility of the Trinity sign. In addition to many hours of care around the grounds by dedicated members of the congregation, more extensive planning and preliminary work occurred at the south end of the property to transition from utilitarian vegetative screening to more pleasing and useful landscaping design. Attention now turns more intently to again caring for the older elements of the building, which have several capital needs of large proportion. This includes items such as the roof and west wall of windows in the sanctuary, whose framing is in extreme need of significant repairs and replacements. Additionally, our major tasks to-do list continues to spread over several pages, so we will stay well occupied for the coming years.

The committee was served in 2020 by Rick Radke, Jim Coates, John Potter, Gene Gunderson, Pastor Bob Linstrom, Lisa Mead, Rebecca Marquardt, Bob Heine, Dale Barkema, David Mester, John Potter, Neil Sendler, Michael King, and Matt Mencarelli. We have been blessed by Steven Basher's work as our Sexton. He has done well to balance time with the building and grounds with a reduced level of its use.

Thank you to all who continue to give so much to this congregation to ensure that there is a place to do what God put us here to do.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roger F. Mark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Property Committee Chair

The members of Trinity's Spiritual Growth Committee recently established the following Mission Statement to help guide their work: Our mission is to support the congregation in growing their understanding of God's Word by encouraging lifelong Christian learning and providing opportunities for members to deepen their personal faith. In 2020, the following opportunities and events took place:

**Committee Members** include: Sue Babin, Kristin Bradley, Kim Brock, Kris Racek, Sylvia Stouten, Pastor Bob and Brad Kessel (Congregation Council liaison). In 2020, the following opportunities and events took place:

### **Women's Retreat**

Trinity women enjoyed a one-day retreat on Saturday, February 1 at Trinity in The Courtyard. "For Just Such a Time as This" was based on a study in "Gather" magazine on the book of Esther. A highlight of the day was our keynote speaker, Trinity member Karen Palaszek, author of [The Resource-Full Body: How Self Honoring Choices take you from Stressed and Exhausted to Peaceful and Energized](#). Over 40 women relaxed with friends, shared laughter and stories, worshipped together and learned how to take better care of themselves to be empowered to live in a manner more pleasing to God.

### **Lenten Grace Groups**

Grace Groups began meeting during Lent in 2020 prior to the pandemic. The participants of the six groups studied a book by Henri Nouwen entitled, [The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming](#). By the second week in March, it was no longer possible to meet in person so some of the groups transitioned to meeting via Zoom. Feedback from the group leaders that completed the study was positive although all said that meeting via Zoom was less than ideal.

### **Making Connections – Book Discussion**

Due to the limitations placed on meeting in person, it was critically important for us to make connections among our church members and to counter the sense of isolation felt by so many. By early summer, our entire country was reeling from blatant examples of racism and injustice. We were blessed by Trinity member, Corina Dulecki's willingness to facilitate a book discussion for the entire congregation based on a book by Lenny Duncan entitled [Dear Church: A Love Letter From a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US](#). Participants found the three-session discussion to be thought-provoking and challenging. We look forward to when we can learn more about ways we can fight racism during Trinity's future Supper Forums on the topic.

### **Making Connections – Fall Grace Groups**

Trinity members gathered in small groups for the first time in the fall of the year to safely study and connect with each other via Zoom. The timely book by N. T. Wright chosen for a five-week study was [God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and Its Aftermath](#). There were 20 participants in two Grace Groups who experienced lively discussions based on the book.

### **Making Connections – Pandemic Prayer Group**

After studying Wright's book, it seemed that forming a prayer group would have a powerful impact as many expressed feelings of helplessness during this time. Kristin Bradley felt led to facilitate a monthly prayer group to seek God's strength, hope, understanding and peace during the pandemic. The group met via Zoom in December and will continue to meet on the third Thursday of the month at 11 a.m. via Zoom.

### **Advent Devotional Booklets**

Advent devotions based on the lectionary and written by Trinity members were compiled and offered in written booklet form and via daily emails. Devotions helped members to focus on the preparatory purpose of Advent, preparing our hearts for the arrival of the Christ Child.

### **Study Groups**

Several Spiritual Growth opportunities continued via Zoom in 2020 such as two monthly Book Clubs and a Women's Bible Study. Pastor Bob recorded his Wednesday morning Adult Forums with Zoom in the fall so that they were available for people to view later as well. We are grateful to all of our members who have provided leadership for various study groups throughout the year.

### **Meetings**

The Spiritual Growth Team meets on the first Tuesday of every other month at 5:30 p.m. New members are most welcome to join us. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, February 2 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sylvia Stouten, Director of Discipleship

The mission of Trinity's Stephen Ministry is to equip inspired members of Trinity to put God's love into action by giving people a safe place to be heard in a time of need, and to make it natural for people to seek and accept the loving hand of a Stephen Minister.

Our vision is that our church is a place where a ministry of skilled caregivers, sharing Christ's love, assures that no one is alone in a time of need.

Trinity's annual report gives us the opportunity to reflect on the past year and anticipate the year ahead. As we look back on 2020 and the challenges brought by the pandemic, we are grateful in many ways. As we look forward to 2021, we expect to celebrate, grow and strengthen Trinity's Stephen Ministry.

During this year, Stephen Ministers have been matched with 16 men and women experiencing some of life's challenges. We are thankful that this confidential, Christian ministry has remained strong during a difficult year. Meeting in person is always the preference in Stephen Ministry but, during the pandemic, our Stephen Ministers and care receivers have found new ways to meet; by phone, FaceTime, text and email. Also, the Stephen Ministry team has become very comfortable with meeting via Zoom twice per month for peer support. While we look forward to being able to meet again in person, we are thankful for new ways to care for others and stay connected!

Active Stephen Ministers include Nancy Anderson, Kris Baker, Patty Boer, Kim Brock, Bill Bush, Carol Eriksen, Susan Knoll, Rebecca Mattison, Patti Mutch, Norm Palm, Bob Pfau, Carol Schumacher, Sheila Talsma and Dale Volkerding. Those who will be inactive for 2021 include Jeanette Sorensen, Kathy Bush, Marjorie Paul, and Rebecca Mattison. Brenda Heacock is retiring from the leadership team and will be inactive in 2021. Sue Coates is also stepping off the leadership team but will remain an active Stephen Minister. We are grateful for the dedication and strong commitment of this group of Stephen Leaders and Stephen Ministers for sharing Christ's love with others during difficult times. We thank Marjorie Paul for reaching out to bereaved Trinity members by sending the "Journeying Through Grief" booklets. This year she has personalized and sent over 100 booklets.

Norm Palm and Sheila Talsma participated in the Stephen Ministry Leader Training Course this fall through Zoom. We are very blessed that Stephen Ministries adapted a new way of training during this public health crisis. Norm and Sheila were commissioned as Stephen Leaders at Trinity on November 8th. Being trained in both ministry and leadership has provided flexibility in meeting the need for matches during this challenging year. We appreciate the willingness of all our trained leaders to accept care receivers as needed.

Looking to 2021, we hope to train a new group of Trinity members to become Stephen Ministers. This was delayed from 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. It's with a great deal of excitement and anticipation that we await the time that we can gather and train a new group so that we can continue to meet the needs of our congregation.

In 2021, we will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Trinity's Stephen Ministry at the same time we celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Trinity Lutheran Church! It will be a year of rejoicing!

Please remember that Stephen Ministry is available to people in our congregation and community who are experiencing a crisis, difficult circumstances or everyday stress. Allowing someone to journey alongside you can help ease the burden. Connect with any of our Pastors, our Faith Community Nurse or a Stephen Leader to learn more.

We thank all who have listened to God's call to become Stephen Ministers and Leaders. We are grateful to those who have accepted care and support. We thank our pastors, council and congregation for your support and prayers. We continually thank God for this and all ministries at Trinity Lutheran Church.

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

In His Peace,

Kristin Bradley, Sue Coates, Brenda Heacock, Norm Palm, Kris Racek, Sheila Talsma, and Beth Vanderwall  
Stephen Ministry Leaders

2020 has been a challenging year for your Worship and Music committee!

Since March 15, we have been unable to worship together in the church building. Our online services have connected with many people, beyond those who might normally come to Trinity to worship. We average 300-500 screens viewing our service each week, which leads to an estimate of 600-1000 people watching. Many congregation members who traveled to cottages during the summer were able to worship through the YouTube livestream. Trinity members who have moved away from the area have enjoyed taking part. College students who are far away and members who are home-bound have benefited from this new means of worship. And, even once we are able to worship together in person safely on a regular basis, we plan to continue our livestream ministry. Having services available in the online format is a great outreach tool for meeting the needs of our community, both near and far.

Another challenge faced this past year by the Worship and Music Committee, along with the Re-Entry Committee and the Congregation Council, was attempting to return to some form of in-person worship. The outdoor services on the church lawn that took place last summer and into the fall were well-received. Plans were made in late September and early October to begin in-person indoor worship at the end of October. However, as these plans were completed and as we approached our first indoor service for Reformation Sunday on October 25, Covid-19 cases began to surge. Upon the advice of several medical professionals, we again suspended indoor worship after two weeks, returning to the blended-style live-stream service at 9:15 a.m., along with one final outdoor service on November 8, thanks to some lovely fall weather.

As the year came to a close, creativity and inventiveness led us through Advent and Christmas. Four pre-recorded Vesper services were put together - one for each of the Wednesdays in Advent - and two versions of the Christmas Eve service were also pre-recorded: one in a contemporary Rejoice Service style and one in a Traditional Service style. Funds which were originally earmarked for hiring extra musicians for in-person worship were used to cover the cost of the video editing for these services.

Plans are also in process to upgrade the A/V equipment in the sanctuary. The goals are to improve the sound quality of the spoken word in the space, and to enable live-streaming of the traditional service from upstairs in addition to Centennial Hall, with high-quality cameras and recording equipment. The new system will include an inductive loop for those with hearing aids. The project should be completed in the first part of 2021. Once we are finally able to return to in-person worship, being able to livestream traditional services as well as Rejoice will give people a choice of which worship style they'd like to participate in remotely if they aren't able to join us on-site.

We look forward to the day when we will be able to worship, with lots of music, in person! But until that time, we strive to help make our new forms of worship meaningful and we are thankful that technology helps provide a path for this. We appreciate your support and prayers!

Worship & Music Committee Members:

Pastor Bob Linstrom  
Jo Murphy  
Sid Hoeksema  
Larry Biser  
Kim Owens  
Karen Betz-Griewahn  
RuthAnn Evans  
Tess Lundgren  
Carrie Wygmans  
Kate Bredwell

**Committee Members:** Amy Stephan (Chairperson), Tess Lundgren (Council Liaison), Joni Korb, Peter McKinney, Jill McKinney, Rachele Battreall, Michelle Albaitis, Ryleigh Fischer (Youth Rep.) \*\*We are looking for a couple more committee members. Please let Pastor Dan or Amy Stephan know if you are interested.

THANK YOU to the following committee members who served on the committee for years and stepped away from their positions at some point this past year: Kris Shannon, Brittany Fischer and Elizabeth Mulligan (youth rep).

Thank you to the congregation for your continued volunteer and gracious financial support for the youth and their activities.

### 2020 In Review

**Faceless – Youth Worship Band** – on hiatus as we look for an adult or two to take on the leadership role. Anyone interested, please let Pastor Dan know!

**VBS Volunteers** – VBS was canceled.

**Outdoor Worship Space and Nature Trail** – Work continued on the outdoor space as improvements were made to the firepit, stumps were removed and more wood chips added to the trail and around the benches. This space was utilized as a safe COVID outdoor meeting space for the high school youth group in the summer and fall.

**Christmas Cookie Decorating/Delivering** – canceled

### MS Youth

**Confirmation** – Confirmands will be celebrated when we can meet in person again. Confirmation classes continued virtually and were able to be accessed on YouTube if people were unable to attend the live meeting. When meeting in person, a monthly volunteer activity was included.

**Youth Group Events:** Virtual youth group activities were held twice a month.

**Charge!** - canceled

**Stony Lake Camp** - canceled

### HS Youth

**Youth Council Member** –Ryleigh Fischer is our youth council member for 2020-21.

**Youth Synod Assembly Representatives** –Audrey Korb and Alaina Lundgren were to attend this year.

**Living Waters Ministry – Bridge Builders** canceled

**Mission Trip** – canceled

**Sunday Morning Bible Study** – first Sunday of the month gathering with Pastor Dan (includes donuts and juice!), averaging 8 - 12 youth in attendance during January – early March.

**High School Youth Group** – Once allowed, was able to meet outdoors, socially distanced and had some meetings virtually.

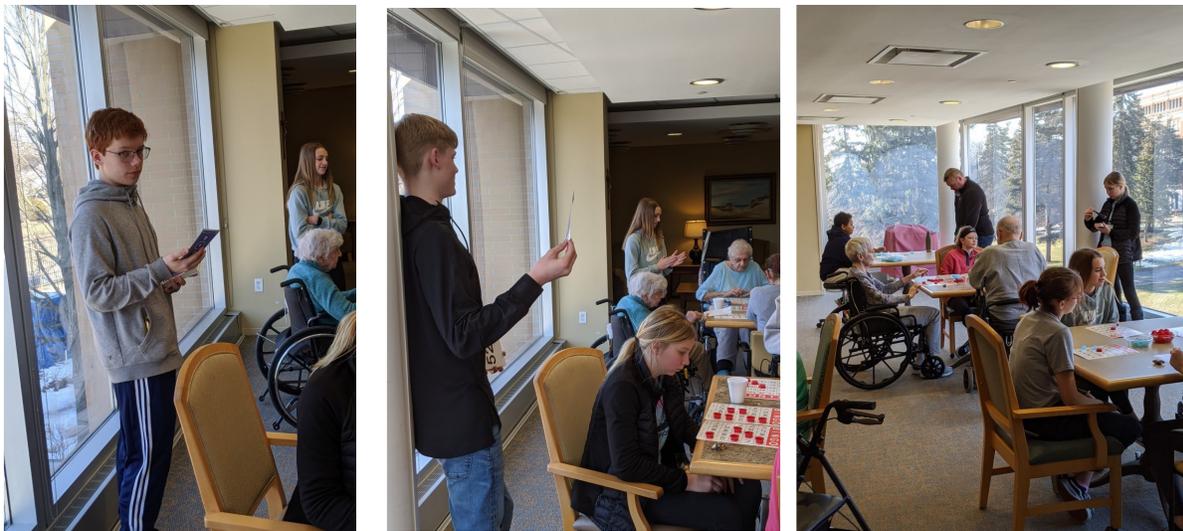
**30 Hour Famine** – a lock-in of Bible study, inspirational videos and going without food to raise money for the hungry, attended by 13 students, ended with a neighborhood can drive.

**Graduation Sunday** – Trinity celebrated graduates with special bulletin inserts and a book delivered to each home.

**College Care Packages** - Jamie Kuntzman led the effort to mail boxes this fall to our college students. These included food items, Starbucks gift cards and letters from Pastor Dan and Pastor Bob.

**Fund Raisers for Mission Trips** –Can Drive, Wreath Sale

Respectfully submitted by: Amy Stephan, Chairperson of Youth & Family Ministry Committee



**Above:** Middle School Youth leading and playing Bingo at an area Nursing facility

**Below:** High School Youth returning cans and bottles they collected during a can drive at the end of their 30 hour famine.



*Treasurer's Report - 2020 Budget and 2020 Projected  
February 2020 to December 2020 Actual plus January 2021 Projected*

	<b>2020 Budget</b>	<b>2020 Projected</b>
		<small>10 actual + 2 forecast</small>
<b>Income (Giving)</b>	<b>\$ 1,169,916</b>	<b>\$ 1,265,091</b>
<b>Expenses (Spending)</b>		
Benevolence	\$ 140,600	\$ 140,600
Education	\$ 11,345	\$ 3,382
Music	\$ 11,930	\$ 7,777
Worship	\$ 6,975	\$ 2,356
Evangelism	\$ 1,660	\$ 1,559
Hospitality	\$ 7,775	\$ 2,681
Stewardship	\$ 6,000	\$ 3,829
Youth and Family	\$ 11,150	\$ 6,423
Fellowship	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,209
Property	\$ 49,590	\$ 38,323
Utilities	\$ 61,900	\$ 60,998
Leases	\$ 24,400	\$ 21,907
Office and Administration	\$ 58,300	\$ 49,661
Payroll	\$ 616,293	\$ 571,313
Stephen Ministry	\$ 2,750	\$ 2,215
Reserves	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
Parish Nurse	\$ 1,550	\$ 913
Outreach	\$ 1,050	\$ 582
Congregational Life	\$ 6,500	\$ 3,024
Spiritual Growth	\$ 2,150	\$ 1,834
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,041,168</b>	<b>\$ 938,586</b>
Financing Costs	\$ 83,292	\$ 73,110
Net Income	\$ 45,456	\$ 253,395
Required Principal Payments	\$ 45,456	\$ 38,937
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>\$ 1,169,916</b>	<b>\$ 1,050,633</b>
Net Cash Flow	\$ -	\$ 214,458

*Treasurer's Report  
Comparison of 2020 Financials and Proposed 2021 Budget*

	<b>2020 Budget</b>	<b>2020 Projected</b>	<b>2021 Budget</b>
		10 actual + 2 forecast	
<b>Income (Giving)</b>	<b>\$ 1,169,916</b>	<b>\$ 1,265,091</b>	<b>\$ 1,183,551</b>
<b>Expenses (Spending)</b>			
Benevolence	\$ 140,600	\$ 140,600	\$ 142,300
Education	\$ 11,345	\$ 3,382	\$ 11,345
Music	\$ 11,930	\$ 7,777	\$ 11,930
Worship	\$ 6,975	\$ 2,356	\$ 6,975
Evangelism	\$ 1,660	\$ 1,559	\$ 1,660
Hospitality	\$ 7,775	\$ 2,681	\$ 7,775
Stewardship	\$ 6,000	\$ 3,829	\$ 6,000
Youth and Family	\$ 11,150	\$ 6,423	\$ 11,150
Fellowship	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,209	\$ 1,150
Property	\$ 49,590	\$ 38,323	\$ 49,590
Utilities	\$ 61,900	\$ 60,998	\$ 61,900
Leases	\$ 24,400	\$ 21,907	\$ 24,400
Office and Administration	\$ 58,300	\$ 49,661	\$ 69,760
Payroll	\$ 616,293	\$ 571,313	\$ 631,991
Stephen Ministry	\$ 2,750	\$ 2,215	\$ 2,750
Reserves	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
Parish Nurse	\$ 1,550	\$ 913	\$ 1,550
Outreach	\$ 1,050	\$ 582	\$ 1,050
Congregational Life	\$ 6,500	\$ 3,024	\$ 6,500
Spiritual Growth	\$ 2,150	\$ 1,834	\$ 2,150
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,041,168</b>	<b>\$ 938,586</b>	<b>\$ 1,069,926</b>
Financing Costs	\$ 83,292	\$ 73,110	\$ 68,400
Net Income	\$ 45,456	\$ 253,395	\$ 45,225
Required Principal Payments	\$ 45,456	\$ 38,937	\$ 45,225
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>\$ 1,169,916</b>	<b>\$ 1,050,633</b>	<b>\$ 1,183,551</b>
Net Cash Flow	\$ -	\$ 214,458	\$ -

	As of 12/31/2019	As of 11/30/2020
<b>Cash and Investment Accounts</b>		
Checking and Cash Equivalents	\$ 676,909	\$ 1,164,524
Mission Endowment Fund	\$ 566,466	\$ 636,861
Building Endowment Fund	\$ 210,410	\$ 319,774
Capital Campaign Fund	\$ 64,738	\$ -
<b>Total Cash and Investments</b>	<b>\$ 1,518,523</b>	<b>\$ 2,121,159</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Land and Building (original cost)	\$ 6,173,950	\$ 6,173,950
Recent Capital Improvements	\$ 6,759,171	\$ 6,759,171
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$ 12,933,121</b>	<b>\$ 12,933,121</b>
<b>Long Term Debt</b>	<b>\$ 1,738,273</b>	<b>\$ 1,586,903</b>

- \$716,281 of the checking and cash equivalents is memorial and designated funds.
- We expect to be approximately 10% below budget on operating expenses.
- Giving for operations is expected to be approximately 8% ahead of budget.
- There were \$44,700 in extra principal payment made on our mortgage.
- The church received a Paycheck Protection Program loan of \$102,730 which was forgiven in December of 2020. Loan funds were used to maintain wages and employment costs.
- The budget assumes full re-entry into pre-COVID operations.
- The proposed budget includes increases in hours for the Faith Community Nurse, estimated cost for an outside financial audit, and a contract for IT consulting support.

In the early verses of Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul writes to the Christians in Ephesus, a city on the Aegean Sea at the mouth of a river and at the intersection of three trading routes. The letter was written about ten years after the church had started. During the early years of this congregation, Jews and Gentiles from several ethnicities and nationalities had come together to form “one body.” Paul was aware that they had done well and commended them for their faith and love.

The word “one” appears more than seven times in the first four verses. This reflects the importance Paul gave to being called into the “unity of Christ.” He wanted to note that, although many of the church members came from far off, there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” This oneness reflects God’s gift of reconciliation in Christ.

A second emphasis from Paul was that, as believers, they were to “bear with one another in love.” This would require humility, gentleness and patience as each of them practiced their faith. It would require tolerance to “maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

A third emphasis was that each person had been given gifts by God and that these gifts were given to increase the whole. Because the Ephesian church was a young congregation and its members were just beginning in their faith journey, their understandings were often tossed to and fro. But as they grew in faith, each person contributed to building up the body of Christ.

The fourth and final emphasis was that by “speaking the truth in love,” each person must grow into Christ. This means taking time to learn about one another and their gifts. Knowing these gifts, we can do God’s work both within and beyond the faith community. When there are decisions to make or relationships to reconcile, we know to begin with prayer and reflection, always desiring to speak the truth in love — not for our own benefit but for God’s glory, that we might become more complete.

As our members and friends gather today, whether face-to-face or online, we are reminded of our calling into “unity in Christ.” We come from many places and work in many contexts, and yet we recognize “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

Whether new to a worshiping community or further along the journey, we realize that humility, gentleness and patience are required both in the good times and especially in times of uncertainty and struggle. God wants us to be more complete through our work. Christ provides the way. The Holy Spirit is with us for guidance and courage. Each of us has been given the gifts to be complete, and through our faithfulness we will grow stronger and work together as one body.

**LET US PRAY: LORD, LET THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL DWELL IN US DEEPLY. MAY WE EMBRACE THE RECONCILING POWER OF ONENESS WITH CHRIST. MAY THIS ONENESS GUIDE OUR CONGREGATION AS WE LIVE INTO THE NEW REALITIES OF THESE TIMES. AS WE MEET NEW PARTNERS IN MINISTRY, MAY WE TAKE TIME TO GET TO KNOW THEM WITH PATIENCE, HUMILITY AND LOVE. HELP US TO SEE HOW SHARING OUR GIFTS WILL MAKE YOUR WORK EASIER AND MORE FULFILLING WHILE BRINGING ALL OF US CLOSER TO CHRIST. MAY THE BLESSINGS YOU GIVE EACH DAY STRENGTHEN US TO A LIVING, DARING CONFIDENCE IN YOUR GRACE. AMEN.**

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

## LITANY

L. O God of all power and love ...

**C. ... we give thanks for your unfailing presence.**

L. O God of all power and love, we give thanks ...

**C. ... for the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss.**

L. O God of all power and love ...

**C. ... we ask you to send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire.**

L. O God of all power and love, we ask you ...

**C. ... to revive us to live as Christ's body in the world.**

L. O God of all power and love, we ask to be ...

**C. ... a people who pray, worship, learn, break bread, share life, heal neighbors, bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit.**

L. O God of all power and love, we ask you to be with us ...

**C. ... wherever and however we gather. Unite us in common prayer and send us in common mission, that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

### Build Us Up, Lord

1 Build us up, Lord, build us up; set in  
2 Build us up, Lord, build us up; let our

us a strong foun - da - tion. Lead us to do your  
lives re - flect your glo - ry. Cast a - way all our

ho - ly will; form and shape your new cre - a - tion.  
doubts and fears; help us tell the world your sto - ry.

Build us up, Lord, build us up; as we  
Build us up, Lord, build us up; help us

guide and teach each oth - er, help us to share your love with the  
bear good fruit for you, Lord, give us vi - sion and keep us

world: ev - 'ry sis - ter, ev - 'ry broth - er.  
sure. Grant us faith that's stead - fast and true.

*Refrain*

Grow - ing in Christ, we plant seeds for the king - dom; we fol - low in  
faith what's be - gun! Lord, set in our hearts the pow'r of your  
word to spread the news of your Son!

Text: Mark Glaeser, b. 1956, and Donna Hanna, b. 1952  
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