

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

Over the past year we have continued to experience changes in the world around us. Even as our church finds ways to adapt to this changing world, we find hope in the unchanging and always present promise of God's love through Jesus Christ. We change and adapt not to conform to the world but because we believe that the gift of God's Son is for the world, and that our congregations and worshiping communities are places to gather and be sent into the world, where we will tell the story of God's love in word and deed.

The ministries of our congregations, our synods and the churchwide organization provide ways for the church to move beyond the boundaries of structures and geography and to share God's love with people in our neighborhoods, our cities, our country and beyond. We engage in this ministry knowing that our church walks by faith, trusting in God's promise in the gospel, and that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. In John 15:5, Jesus reminds us, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." We are connected by the promise that we do all through Christ and can do nothing apart from him.

God gives the Holy Spirit, who uses gospel proclamation — in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations — to create and sustain this faith. Just as we rely on God to sustain our faith, we rely on each other to sustain the ministries that offer God's love to the world. Through your generosity to each expression

of this church — your congregation, your synod and your churchwide organization — you add to our collective voice proclaiming God's love for all.

I am grateful for your generosity over this last year. My gratitude spreads far beyond your generous financial gifts. You've shared your gifts of time through countless hours of volunteering, serving and accompanying. You've shared the gifts of your voices as we've tried to discover and learn how God is calling us to be the church now and into the future. And, finally, dear church, you have shared the gift of the realness of God's love with the world around you. Be well, dear church, and stand steadfast in the promise of God's love and grace as you take that promise with you into the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Elizabeth" being more prominent than the last name "Eaton".

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

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” —John 15:5

2024 Annual Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church

Trinity Lutheran Church

A Stephen Ministry Church

2700 Fulton Street East, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

616-949-2510, www.tlcgr.org

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

The ministry of this congregation reflected in these reports is dedicated to those Trinity members listed below who entered the church triumphant in 2023.

Madelyn "Midge" Reges

September 12, 1929 – January 1, 2023

Marjorie Mae Enell

March 8, 1929 – February 18, 2023

Janet Marie Konen

July 3, 1936 – February 18, 2023

Carolyn Eleanore McCready

April 27, 1936 – March 29, 2023

Alberta May "Bertie" Nelson

April 1, 1938 – April 25, 2023

James B. Billings

January 11, 1943 – September 7, 2023

Roy F. Lamprich

June 29, 1968 – October 27, 2023

Jack Frick

December 12, 1950 – December 14, 2023

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

Call to Order, Karen Unruh, Congregation President

Opening Devotions and Opening Liturgy, Pastor Dennis Smith

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the January 15, 2023, Annual Meeting Minutes (pages 5-7)

Appointment of Tellers

Nominating Committee Report

Ballot for Council (pages 8-9)

Bill Bush	(2 nd three-year term)
John Derbin	(1 st three-year term)
Sarah Huckstep	(2 nd three-year term)
Erick Kind	(1 st three-year term)
Julie McLeod	(1 st three-year term)
Dakota Morin	(youth representative 2 nd one-year term)
Kelly Wittry	(1 st three-year term)

Ballot for 2024 Synod Assembly Delegates (page 10)

Jim and Sue Coates
Dale and Gale Volkerding

Ballot for 2024 Nominating Committee (page 11-12)

John Fox
Fred Ulreich
Karen Unruh
Lauren Wright

Review of Reports

Pastors (pages 13-15)
President (page 16)
Committee Reports (listed alphabetically by committee name, pages 17-35)

Treasurer's Report and Presentation of the 2024 Budget (pages 36-38)

Chris Engle, Congregation Treasurer

New Business

Announcements, Lord's Prayer and Benediction, Karen Unruh, Pastor Dennis Smith, Pastor Kari Fast

Adjournment

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**Annual Congregation Meeting**

January 15, 2023

The 2023 Annual Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church was called to order by Congregation Council President, Karen Unruh, at 12:55 P.M.

Pastor Bob Linstrom led the congregation members in the opening Litany.

Motion to approve the agenda

With no additions to the agenda from the floor, the agenda was approved as written.

Recognition of Trinity Staff Members

Trinity staff members stood and introduced themselves.

Approval the January 16, 2022 Annual Meeting minutes

There being no corrections from the floor, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Appointment of Tellers

The designated tellers, Jamie Kuntzman and Susan Knoll, confirmed there were 84 voting members in attendance, enough for a quorum.

SPECIAL ORDER – Unfinished Business

At last year's Annual Congregation Meeting, the initial approval of Trinity's amended Constitution and Bylaws took place. Nothing has changed since that meeting, but now the congregation must ratify those changes.

Steve Heacock presented a motion to accept Trinity's Amended Constitution and Bylaws, Jim Coates 2nd the motion. The motion was approved.

Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee members met and recommend the following candidates for Council; their profiles may be found on pages 9-13. This year's process was more challenging than in the past. It was impacted by the changes to Trinity's bylaws and new council members assuming their positions today. It was also necessary to re-elect some members currently serving.

In the future, one third of the Council members will be retiring every year, usually six people.

Ballot for Council Members**Three Year Terms ending in 2026**

Steve Heacock – Second three-year term

Brad Kessel – Second three-year term

Jamie Kuntzman – Second three-year term

Dan Butler – First three-year term

Michelle Feutz – First three-year term

Michelle Morin – First three-year term

Two Year Terms ending in 2025

Chris Becker – First three-year term

Susan Knoll – First three-year term

Jacquie Murray – First three-year term

Chris Norton – First three-year term

David Marquardt – Eligible to be elected to first three-year term in 2025

One Year Terms ending in 2024

Bill Bush – First three-year term

John Fox – Second three-year term

Sarah Huckstep – First three-year term

Karen Unruh – Second three-year term

Erick Kind – Eligible to be elected to first three-year term in 2024

Dakota Morin – One-year term (Youth Representative and eligible to be elected to a second one-year term in 2024)

Lauren Wright – Eligible to be elected to first three-year term in 2024

There were no additional nominations from the floor.

Gloria Von Der Heide moved to close the nominations and accept the nominees as listed, Carrie Wygmans 2nd the motion. All nominees were approved.

Thank you to our outgoing Council members!

Ballot for 2023 Synod Assembly Delegates

Bob and Liz Dever

Joe and Marybeth Iaria

Their profiles may be found on page 13 in the Annual Report.

With no additional nominations from the floor, a motion was made by Carol Butler to close the nominations and cast a

unanimous ballot for the Synod Assembly Delegates, Jim Coates 2nd. The motion was approved.

Two youth representatives will be selected by the Youth & Family Committee.

Nominating Committee for 2023 Council Candidates

Nominees are: Kate Bredwell, Amy Fox, Steve Stephan, and Brenda Heacock.

No other nominations were received from the floor.

Mike Mason submitted a motion to close the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for the

Nominating Committee members, Gloria Von Der Heide 2nd the motion. The motion passed.

Review of Reports

Pastor's and Committee reports are found in the Annual Packet. Attendees are asked to take time to review them and raise any questions they might have.

Pastors' Reports (pages 14-18)

Council President's Report (page 19)

Committee Reports (pages 20-35)

The Pastors' reports, President's report and [Committee Reports](#) as written were accepted into the record.

Thank you to our outstanding staff members!

Treasurer's 2022 Report and Presentation of the 2023 Budget

Chris Engle, Congregation Treasurer

2022 (Trinity's fiscal year is February 1 – January 31)

There are three key areas; Operating Budget, Designated and Memorial Funds, and Endowment Funds.

1. Please see page 24 of the Annual Report for an explanation of Trinity's Endowment Fund. The Endowment Committee reviews Trinity's investments and makes recommendation for distribution of the funds. The funds are used to repair Trinity's building and benevolence to the community.

The drop in value is a result of the distribution and general economy challenges.

2. There are 77 funds within the Designated Funds category. They range from Scholarships, Gardening and Landscape, Christophe's Children ...

3. Capital Reserves are rainy day funds, and Trinity is in a very good financial position.

4. Operating Reserves

There is an overlap with additional benevolence outside the budget. It is close to \$500,000 – Trinity has a global touch. The Budget year-end, January 31, is projected as all funds for the year have not yet been received prior to today's meeting.

This past year has been one with property challenges. Rainwater working its way into the building has damaged the plaster and drywall.

Utilities have dramatically increased. An increase in cost was anticipated, but not such a large one.

Budget 2023

The proposed budget is a little lower than 2022.

1. Increases in exterior maintenance; all the water challenges.
2. Utilities increased last year and will remain high.
3. Staff responsibility changes made sense, and Helping Hands is a new category.
4. Payroll increases reflect economic inflation, but there were some savings in benefits. The open position resulted in Payroll costs less than projected.
5. Additional principal payments are being made to the mortgage.
6. The amount in Reserves appears very small. Why is that? It is the amount budgeted every year.
7. It appears there is a projected loss for the year. We do not think that will happen. Giving fell behind this past year, but the last five months have been very good. Trinity is on pace to do well next year. Jim Coates made a motion to accept the 2023 Budget as presented; Vince Schumacher 2nd. The 2023 Budget was approved.

Unfinished Business - None

New Business

Approval of Restated Articles of Incorporation

Copies of Trinity's Constitution and Bylaws are available.

- Trinity's constitution was first filed in 1898 with the State of Michigan. Trinity was incorporated and officially recognized as Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- It has been six years since the constitution was reviewed. Council members John Fox and Steve Heacock took on this challenging task.
- The most important change is to bring in State laws that protect volunteers in non-profit organizations. A motion to approve the Restated Articles of Incorporation was made by Steve Heacock, George Bauer 2nd. The motion passed.

Announcements:

Kid's Coalition Against Hunger meal packing will take place January 29 after the 9:15 service.

Registration opens for summer camp

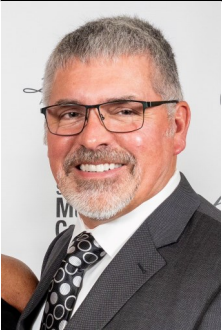
Vacation Bible School is June 19-22

Mission Trip to West Virginia is June 24

Lord's Prayer and Benediction

The meeting was adjourned at 1:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Jacobson, Recording Secretary



Bill Bush

I am honored to another three years on council. We have been Trinity members for about 23 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 27years- 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 Derbin

John and Elizabeth Derbin have been members of the church since 2004. They were married at Trinity in 2006 and have been raising their sons Nick (15) and Tristan (12) in the church. John grew up in the Detroit area and fell in love with West Michigan while attending GVSU where he earned a Bachelors degree in Finance. He is a Certified Financial Planner, with 24 years of experience in the financial services and non-profit sectors.

John has been active in the Trinity family since joining. He has volunteered with many Trinity ministries, including planning the last capital campaign, mutual ministry, Trinity men's group, and most recently as an usher at the 10:45 service. Outside of work and church, John is an assistant Scout Master for his sons' Boy Scout Troop.



Sarah Huckstep

Hello, my name is Sarah Huckstep. I have been married to my husband, Dave, for close to 14 years now. We have 3 young boys together who keep us very busy. Ryan is 11 years old; Ethan is 10, and Logan is 6 years old. Our boys enjoy a variety of sports so that keeps us pretty busy during the week and weekends. We also enjoy getting our dog Louis out for daily walks.

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. Over the last couple of years, I have enjoyed being a full-time mother. With my youngest in school this year, I have taken a position at a preschool in Rockford.

We have been members at Trinity Lutheran for the last 11 years. 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 continuing on the Council over the next few years.



Erick Kind

Erick received his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Michigan State University in 1993. He was hired by the Michigan Department of Transportation in May of 1994 where he has been employed for nearly 30 years. Since December of 2015, he has been the Grand Region Engineer responsible for strategic planning, management and oversight of all areas of transportation within MDOT's responsibilities. Erick and his wife, Carol, have been members of Trinity since 2004. They have two daughters, Malena and Audrey. Erick serves as an usher at the 8 a.m. service.



Julie McLeod

Julie and her husband Sam started attending Trinity in January 2023. Although new to Trinity, Julie has a long history with the ELCA church dating back to 2000. Julie spent most of her childhood and teen years involved in the ELCA church that her family attended and it was there she discovered her passion for working with children. Julie has many positive memories growing up ELCA and she and Sam are so thankful to have found a church home at Trinity.

In 2009, Julie moved to Grand Rapids to attend Calvin College and graduated in 2013 with her Bachelors in Elementary Education with minors in Early Childhood Education and Language Arts. Since 2013, Julie has worked for the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids. She started as a teacher for the Y's Great Start Readiness Program and transitioned to a director role in 2018. She now serves the Y as Senior Community Childcare Director, working with community partners and teachers to provide quality early childhood learning experiences to children aged birth through five years old throughout Grand Rapids.

Julie and her husband, Sam, married in 2018. They enjoy playing board games, reading, crafting and taking their two dogs to Shaggy Pines. Julie has enjoyed getting to know the Trinity community through Youth Group and Tuesday night book club, and is looking forward to continuing to grow her involvement in the life of Trinity!



Dakota Morin—Youth Representative

My name is Dakota Morin, I'm a junior at City High School. I've been going to Trinity since I was 3, I work in the nursery, and I'm involved in all of the youth group activities. I am also a lifeguard at the YMCA and I've been a lifeguard for 2 years.

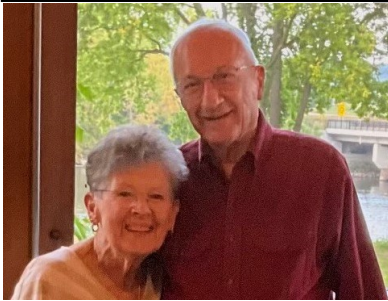


Kelly Wittry

Kelly and Phil joined Trinity when they moved to GR in 2015. Since their return to Cincinnati in 2019, they have continued a GR and Trinity presence, and have now returned to full-time living in Rockford. They have 2 grown children, Andy in Nashville and Gretchen in Chicago, and 3 well-loved rescue pups.

Professionally, Kelly is a Director at Procter & Gamble. She is also an Executive Coach/ Life Transitions Coach, Founder of Waves Solutions LLC (<http://wavespotential.com>). She serves on the Miami University Alumni Association Board of Directors as President-Elect as well as on the Cincinnati ArtsWave Women's Leadership Steering Team.

In her 2015-2019 time at Trinity, Kelly was a Stephen Minister, a Reader (9:15 service), served with IHN and DéGagé, and participated in the PhotoVoice Interfaith ministry. In Cincinnati, she served as Vice President of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Council, led the Good Shepherd 2020 Strategic Visioning workshop and effort, served on 3 call committees and a Pastoral Care Committee, and more. She is extremely excited to get back to Trinity for personal worship and growth, community and to serve.



Jim and Sue Coates

Jim and Sue moved to Grand Rapids from homes in Florida and northern Michigan in 2012, the same year they became members of Trinity. Their extended family includes seven adults in addition to spouses, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Jim graduated from the University of Michigan, receiving an MBA in Business Administration. His career path included sales, marketing, and management positions. Since retiring, he has served as a business mentor for SCORE (part of SBA), volunteering at Trinity as a past Council member, member of the Finance and Property Committees, and helping as Sacristan, usher, lector, and wherever needed. Recreational activities include playing golf, cards, and travel.

Sue received an elementary teaching degree from Kalamazoo College, teaching first grade students until she switched careers to become a stay-at-home mother to her five children. Her involvement with education continued when she became Executive Director of Tecumseh Community in Schools, where she lived at the time. Since joining Trinity, she has served as a Stephen Leader and Minister, Sacristan, usher, lector, as well as attending educational opportunities such as Bible classes and book groups. She also enjoys golf, playing cards, and reading.



Dale and Gale Volkerding

Dale and Gale married in 1979, moved to Grand Rapids where they have continuously resided since 1980, and joined Trinity Lutheran in 1981. They have three adult daughters, Emily (Robleske), Anne (Sechrist), and Holly; all three baptized, attended Sunday school, and confirmed at Trinity.

Gale grew up on a farm in the Chicago suburb of New Lenox, IL; Dale in Washington, D.C. They both attended and earned undergraduate degrees from Valparaiso University (Indiana); each then completed a master's degree, Gale in Social Work at Western Michigan University, and Dale in Tax at GVSU.

They both fulfilled much of their professional aspirations in the Grand Rapids area, Gale doing 40 years of Clinical Social Work Counseling at Pine Rest Christian Hospital, and Dale 30 years as the financial, treasury, audit, and tax manager for the ETNA Distributors Group.

Both now (mostly) in retirement, Gale maintains a certification in Spiritual Direction from the Dominican Center at Marywood in Grand Rapids and continues with a small spiritual direction practice. They like to read, do bible studies, church educational forums, help in volunteer activities, and sing and worship in the Trinity Choir. Gale is on the Trinity Health Ministries Committee, and Dale is a Stephen Minister.

Their recreational activities include travel, hiking, biking, exercise, table puzzles and games, Dale joining with his brother, cousins, and friends for fishing trips, and sharing family time with their daughters, grandchildren, siblings, cousins, and their loved ones.



John Fox

John Fox, MD MHA, is currently the Senior Medical Director of the Americas, Market Access, for Illumina, a genomics sequencing company in San Diego. He is a pediatrician and epidemiologist by training.

Dr. Fox earned his BS in chemistry and biochemistry from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and his Doctor of Medicine Degree by the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, MD.

He is married to Kristine and has three independent adult children. He and Kris sing in the Trinity choir. John also helps with the gardening and forestry groups and has served on the congregational council. He serves on boards for the Land Conservancy of West Michigan and the Boy Scouts of America. He's a longtime volunteer with Habitat for Humanity and still has all ten fingers and toes.



Fred Ulreich

Fred and Shawn Ulreich have been members of Trinity since 2004, moving here from Rocky River, Ohio, near Cleveland. They have two daughters along with their husbands, and two grandchildren. While in Rocky River, Fred served as a deacon and as congregation president at St. Thomas Lutheran Church and School. Here at Trinity, Fred has served on church council and as congregation president from 2008-2013. He was also on the call committee during the transition to Pastor Bob.

Fred is the founder and Managing Director of The Eastwind Group, LLC, a consulting firm that helps trade associations and select businesses improve their value to members and clients. Before devoting his work fulltime to The Eastwind Group, Fred served as Chief Executive Officer at one of the leading trade associations in the residential construction and remodeling industry.

Originally from Chicago, Fred has a business degree from Bowling Green State University as well as graduate work in Organizational Development from BG.

In addition to being a consultant, Fred plays the tenor banjo and had performed aboard the showboat at Opyland and at one time was the featured entertainer at the Portside Festival Marketplace in northwest Ohio.



Karen Unruh

Karen Unruh just completed her second term on the Congregation Council, during which she served as President. She and her husband Mike have been members of Trinity since moving to Ada in 2011. She enjoys ringing with the Resound bell choir, facilitating the Tuesday morning Women's Bible study, and chatting about books with the Tuesday evening book club. She also enjoys Trinity's many social events, especially Trivia Night, which she has helped plan and write several times. Karen and Mike have two very active children—Steven (11) and Megan (9).



Lauren Wright

Lauren and her husband, Colton, have been members of the church since 2019 as 8 a.m. attenders. January is their favorite month after being married in the church in 2020 and welcoming their son, Theodore, in 2022.

Lauren came to Grand Rapids after graduating from Hope College and growing up in Portage, MI. Professionally, she has worked for Farmers Insurance for the last 10 years, currently in the role of Project Manager.

In their free time, Lauren and Colton love to travel, hike, spend time with family and friends, and be on the water. They look forward to becoming more engaged with the Trinity Church Family through this opportunity.

Lauren looks forward to serving with you all.



Report of the Associate Pastor to the Congregation
Trinity Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan
January 2024

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:18-20

These are the final words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew; we call them the Great Commission. In them Jesus sends out his people with a mission. They are to teach, baptize, serve, and remember that Jesus is with them always. We too cling to this direction Jesus has given us. Our lives are ones with a mission, to teach, serve, draw people together, and remember that God is with us all the while. In 2023 we strove to help our young people embody this mission. I am continually thankful for our partnership in ministry as we seek to follow God on the path ahead of us. It is a joy to journey together.

In the summer of 2023, a group of ten students and four adults traveled to East Bank, West Virginia, on our annual Mission Trip. Our friends from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Big Rapids, joined us on this journey. There we participated in the mission of God, rebuilding homes and community. It was an amazing impactful week as we reflected on how God is forging us.

We had thirty-four youth attend camp at Stony Lake Bible camp last year. It was a powerful week of community and nature. For many of these youth this was their first experience of camp and I have heard from many of them that they cannot wait to return this summer.

Last November we had an awesome *Charge* conference in Traverse City. We had eighteen youth and four adults attend and everyone had an amazing experience of God and community.

Our Confirmation Classes continue to be a meaningful faith formation experience for our middle schoolers. We have been digging into the Hebrew Scriptures and 10 Commandments this year. We will finish up this year be looking at the prophets and wisdom books of the Bible. We continue to record class sessions for those who have a conflict or health issue.

Our high school group continues to meet weekly on Sunday nights for youth group. The group has been delving into different teachings of Jesus and seeing how they guide their lives. The group also serves in our community once a month, either with Home Repair Services on a construction site or by cooking meals for our local partner ministries. This time has been a great benefit to these young people as a safe space to dig deeper into the issues and calling they experience in their lives.

Our high schoolers meet the first Sunday of the month to delve into the scriptures with me. It has been a joyful gathering as we dig deeper into the faith we share.

This past December we decorated and delivered Christmas cookies to thirty-three homes. We had over forty individuals help in some form. It was wonderful to watch our community care for itself.

Next summer our high schoolers are heading to New Orleans, LA, for the ELCA Youth Gathering. We have a group of twelve youth and four adults confirmed for this amazing experience. We are also heading to Lincoln, IL, for our annual service trip. I am excited for both of these amazing faith formational experiences in the lives of our youth.

Next summer we also head to camp at Stony Lake from July 22 – 27. Registration is currently open. It is already looking like we will have a large group again.

I was asked by Bishop Saterlee to serve as our Synod's Champion for the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. In this role I have been connecting with congregations and encouraging them to participate in the Gathering. I have also worked with the synod council to create a fund to help congregations with the cost of the gathering.

In the past year much work has been done on caring for natural resources on our property. Our forestry management team has been clearing dangerous dead trees and invasive species and planting indigenous plants. There is much work left to do, but every piece of progress we can make makes a large difference. We also continue to have Eagle Scout candidates working on projects on our property.

I am thankful that I get to use many of my technical skills from my former lives as a sound tech and IT professional. It is helpful when communicating with contractors and volunteers on our many projects. It also helps me model ways we can all use our gifts to follow in the path God has set of us.

Through these and many other experiences we have continually find ways to follow together the path of life God has called us to. 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



Dear Trinity Family and Friends,

What a privilege, honor, and blessing to serve with you for a second year as one of your pastors. Trinity Lutheran is a generous healthy congregation; loving the Lord, caring for one another, and serving the world. As I look back on my ministry with Trinity in 2023, three words come to mind: connecting, deepening, and transitioning.

CONNECTING: An area of continued connection during 2023 was the visitation ministry, which I'm blessed to share with Kristin Bradley, our Faith Community Nurse. On a monthly basis, we visit Trinity's members who are unable to attend worship. These visits are enjoyable and meaningful; most of them include sharing Holy Communion. There are also sporadic hospital visits to pray with people during times of difficulty.

Another holy pastoral visit is officiating at the Service of Commendation just prior to a person's journey to their heavenly home. This service often includes loved ones at the bedside. I was blessed to lead this service for my own Mom in Minnesota, as 21 relatives squeezed into her hospital room, encircling her with love, laughter, and tears the day before she went home to the Lord on January 23, 2023.

Another area of connection at Trinity is various pastoral care conversations. These conversations are available upon request by emailing me directly at kari.fast@tlcgr.org. If you are struggling with loss, stress, mental health, or something getting in the way of a fulfilling and generous life, don't suffer alone. We will also talk about possible resources for continued connection and help.

DEEPENING: In 2023, I was blessed with more opportunities to be a small group leader to various groups. Along with Carol Butler, I led GriefShare, a 13-week grief support group. This beautiful group of people showed one another deep love, care, and support, even in the midst of their own life struggles. Other small group experiences were the various *Heart-to-Heart Conversations with Pastor Kari* during which we listened to one another share what was on our hearts. We left knowing and understanding one another in a deeper way.

This past spring found me leading the five-week pastor's forum that lined up nicely with JOYful Days!. In it, we reflected on the vitality of our faith through a book study of *Atlas of the Heart* by Brené Brown and we were invited to draw near to God through various prayer practices.

In preparation for welcoming our 80+ new members in the spring, Jeanne Becker, our Helping Hands Coordinator, and I offered various *Spiritual Gifts Assessment* gatherings. I was also able to be present with the new Helping Hands Committee as it continued to get organized.

It was satisfying being a leader at Trinity's women's retreat, *Just Love*, along with other delightful Trinity women. This day-long event included more than 40 women. This day focused on the theme of biblical justice, it was a day to: sing, pray, laugh, cry, share, and learn together.

TRANSITIONING: We celebrated Trinity's Ministry Fair in October; this was a day to connect with the various ministry opportunities at Trinity. On Sunday, November 5 we celebrated and honored the loss of Pastor Bob's ten-year ministry at Trinity with a beautiful reception of over 300 people.

In 2024, I look forward to the many events, people, and ministries – to the opportunity to preach during the five Wednesday Lenten Services. Another goal, which has remained the same since I started, is to learn the names of all of you, the plentiful lovely people of Trinity. It's a challenging and gratifying, multiyear goal!

God's Deepest Blessings,

Pastor Kari Fast
Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care

I don't think any of you reading this will be surprised to hear that 2023 was a year of changes at Trinity. Some of these were big, obvious changes, while others were smaller or more behind the scenes.

Of course the biggest change this year was Pastor Bob's retirement. After learning of his retirement plans in June, the Congregation Council began the first steps of the transition process:

- We met with the bishop in August and organized a congregation survey and congregation listening sessions in September and October. Through the survey and sessions we were able to learn what our members think about the strengths of our congregation, what our challenges might be, how we and our community have changed over the last several years, where we would like to see our congregation heading in the future, and what qualities we are seeking in our next Senior Pastor.
- We formed a Call Committee that will soon begin to work with the bishop's office to receive applications and interview candidates for Senior Pastor.
- We called Dennis Smith as a contracted consulting pastor to move with us through this transitional time. Pastor Dennis began his ministry with us on December 17.

Both Pastor Bob's retirement celebration on November 5 and his final Farewell and Godspeed Sunday on November 19 were extremely well attended, a testament to his impact on this congregation. Thank you to all who planned and attended these events, contributed to his retirement gift, and shared their gifts of hospitality and music during these celebrations.

In addition to the changes related to our pastoral transition, our church building and grounds themselves underwent several changes this year, including:

- Installing lighting in the west parking lot and electrical access on the west lawn, improving safety and security and opening up more opportunities for outdoor worship.
- Expanding the security camera system.
- Upgrading thermostats and controllers in the sanctuary and in the Children's Wing/Commons, which involved minor asbestos abatement.
- Smoke detector and fire wall improvements.
- Removing the "modesty wall" in front of the choir and refinishing the platform edge.
- Repairing leaking within the sanctuary and beginning plaster repairs. A huge thank you to the members of the Property Committee, who work diligently to ensure that our buildings are maintained, repaired, and upgraded as needed.

The early part of 2023 saw a continuation of our initiative to grow and revitalize our committees, adding new members and chairs to several of our standing committees. We also formed new committees last year, including a reorganized Safety and Security task force and a Green team to evaluate ways to be better environmental stewards of our buildings and grounds. In addition, a new initiative is underway to create and/or revise committee charters to more specifically define the roles and responsibilities of the many committees that keep Trinity actively engaged with our members, our benevolent partners, and our local and global communities.

Amid all of these changes and transitions, I would like to thank our excellent Pastors Dan and Kari, our Congregation Council, and our dedicated staff for the stability they provide and for the additional work they are taking on during this transitional time. And thank you to all of our members who volunteer their time and talents in so many ways to ensure that our programming continues to run smoothly so that we can continue the mission and ministry to which we are called.

Blessings to all of you. It has been a true honor and privilege to serve as your President for the past three years!

Karen Unruh

Review of Reports – Benevolence Committee for 2023

Trinity's 2023 Budget also included \$157,380 for benevolence. That total has been distributed on a quarterly basis to organizations over the past year. Trinity's budgeted benevolence is distributed using a percentage formula.

Please keep in mind that, since our fiscal year does not end until January 31, the complete 2023 benevolence report will be published in the March 2023 edition of Trinity's monthly newsletter, *The Messenger*.

ORGANIZATION BENEVOLENCE	
GIFT RECIPIENT	AMOUNT
Access	\$1,225
Baxter Community Center	\$1,225
Christophe's Children	\$79,679
Degage Ministries	\$2,785
ELCA Disaster Response	\$10,065
ELCA World Hunger	\$12,535
ELCA Youth Gathering Fund	\$5,000
Exalta Health	\$1,715
Family Promise (IHN)	\$4,494
Gods Work Our Hands	\$2,857
Habitat for Humanity	\$1,815
Home Repair Services	\$1,225
ICCF	\$1,225
In the Image	\$1,225
Living Water Ministries	\$1,225
MI Interfaith Power and Light	\$735
Mission India- Neerekshe	\$8,500
MomsBloom	\$725
New City Neighbors	\$1,225
Pr. Karen Niemeyer Scholarship	\$12,000
Safe Haven	\$1,225
Samaritas Resettlement MI	\$2,100
SECOM	\$1,284
The Green Apple (The Pantry)	\$1,281
TOTAL	\$157,380

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. The committee's goal is to help ensure there is balance between the three primary types of children's ministry programming: Christian education/faith formation; fun, fellowship events; and service to the wider human community. The Children's Ministry Committee has 5 or 6 meetings scheduled throughout the year. Trinity members interested in joining the committee can reach out to Director of Family Ministry Rachele Battreall for more information at rachele.battreall@tlcgr.org.

Members currently serving on the committee are Peni Aldrich, Doree Burnside, Sarah Frecka, Ted Frecka, Cyndi Harrison, Anne Meeuwssen, Brittney Mencarelli, Amanda Schneider, Maddie Scurfield, Annie Slabaugh, Jodi Wood, Heather Worsfold. Sarah Frecka and Cyndi Harrison have the role of committee co-chairs. Anne Meeuwssen serves as secretary. Sarah Huckstep is council liaison.

The committee works in partnership with the following part-time staff: Director of Family Ministry Rachele Battreall; Family Activities Coordinator James Morin; Sunday School Coordinators Sheri Mason and Amy Stephan; and Nursery Coordinator Awilda Diaz.

Staffing transitions are anticipated starting in Spring 2024. The Children's Ministry is actively seeking members interested in leadership roles in this vibrant ministry. Roles include Sunday School Coordinators and VBS Leaders.

Key Events in 2023

Sunday School is offered for children ages 3 years through 5th grade during the school year. Each week we will talk about what it means to connect with God and each other. The image of a light bulb reminds us that God calls us to be his light in the world. Connected together by faith, we shine bright! The Bible verse we've chosen to go along with our theme is *"He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together."* - Colossians 1:17

Class for ages three years through third grade begins after Children's Time around 9:25 a.m. Kids meet leaders in the Commons for songs, offering, and prayer. Then children are divided by age into small groups for classroom lessons using a Lutheran, lectionary-based curriculum called *Spark*. Young children will study the same scriptures heard in worship, through Bible stories, activities, and crafts. Children return to worship in time for communion.

The fourth and fifth graders use a Lutheran curriculum called *Connect*. Bibles, videos, and learner sheets are designed just for tweens, blending solid theology with quirky humor. *Connect's* Bible-centered approach explores major themes in the narrative arc of the Bible—from Creation to Revelations. We are in the second year of a two-year curriculum cycle. This year's focus is on the New Testament. Class for 4th and 5th graders begins in the Lounge at 9:15 a.m. Children return to worship prior communion.

Over 60 children are currently registered for Sunday school. 68 children attended class in Fall 2023 at least one time; 8 of the 68 children are non-members or visitors; 37 of the 68 children attended over 50% of the classes; highest weekly attendance: 42; lowest weekly attendance: 17; average weekly attendance: 31. The total number of children of Sunday School age (3 years- grade 5) on Trinity's roster is approximately 145. Approximately 41% of the 145 have attended Sunday School more than once in fall 2023.

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. The church Nursery is fully staffed each Sunday morning from 8:30-12:30, and provides a safe, loving environment for our youngest members.

Young and Sleepless 3.0: This is our fellowship group for families who have at least one child preschool aged or younger. An organizational meeting for the third generation of this group was facilitated by Pastor Bob on February 12, 2023. Events offered in 2023 specifically for young families include: *Pancakes & Playtime* (March 18) and *Parents' Night Out* with childcare at Trinity (May 13). More events are planned for early 2024!

Kids Coalition Against Hunger Meal Packing (January 29, 2023) We collected \$14,456 and packed 34,874 meals!

Annual Easter Egg Hunt (April 9) Youth helped to fill and "hide" 1,200 candy and toy-filled eggs.

Vacation Bible School (June 19-22) At STELLAR VBS, kids discovered how they can shine Jesus' love and hope in everyday life! 72 kids from Trinity and the community gathered for four mornings of Bible activities, games, songs, and fun! The VBS offering was "Fuel for Kids" for Christophe's Children.

Blessing of Backpacks for Kindergarteners (August 27) was very well attended! This year it was opened up to kids of all ages.

Blessing of Preschoolers (September 17) This recognition in worship was a meaningful way for families to mark the first day of Sunday School and the milestone of attending preschool!

Children's Christmas Program (December 10) - Preschoolers and elementary aged children presented the story of Jesus' birth on the 2nd Sunday of Advent at the 10:45 service. Children dressed as sheep, cows, pigs, horses, donkeys, angels, and shepherds. 4th and 5th graders were narrators and had the roles of Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Gabriel, Herod, the Magi. This year's program included Christmas songs, Trinity musicians, and the premier of the Children's Vocal Ensemble. The program was followed by a festive Christmas cookie reception. A job well done - children, staff and volunteers!

Respectfully Submitted,

The Children's Ministry Committee

Review of Reports - Communication Committee for 2023

A great deal has been accomplished in communications at Trinity over the last year, with much gratitude to Trinity's Communications Coordinator Carrie Lamb. Carrie is responsible for the monthly production of *The Messenger* that provides the opportunity to share Trinity member involvement in many aspects of worship, projects, initiatives, and volunteer events. Additionally, Carrie has the responsibility of managing Trinity's social media pages – Facebook and Instagram – and overall web page development and content. Communications staff has also successfully revised the 'Life at Trinity' handbook and has refreshed logos and publications over the course of the last year. All of this work is overseen and coordinated through the Communications Committee. This committee is comprised of Trinity members that include former Senior Pastor Bob Linstrom, Pastor Dan Schewe, Carrie Lamb, Kris Baker, Peter McKinney, David Fox, Bill DeWitt, David Marquardt, Jim DeJonge, and Skip Franklin. Moving forward, the communications committee is focusing attention on several of the following initiatives:

- creating an official mission statement that will align with the mission and vision of Trinity Lutheran Church and lead to more effective and informative communications.
- congregational survey, which will be short and easy to complete online. The purpose of this survey is to assess how our church is doing in the area of communication and, through feedback from members and friends, to seek areas in which we can improve/be more efficient.
- to add QR codes to our YouTube channel and/or livestreamed worship so people watching from home can scan and link to the current bulletin and/or Weekly Connection.
- for people volunteering and representing Trinity in the community to have t-shirts to wear that have our church logo etc. on them. We are currently working to have an option for volunteers to order t-shirts. This work is ongoing.
- General items: continuing to strive to make communication easy for Trinity members and friends (including things like livestreamed worship, scheduling/calendar, etc.). We plan to discuss ways in which to pare down items and pathways of communication, dependent on survey results.

The Communications Committee is continually grateful for feedback and input. Trinity members are welcome to share suggestions or ideas with committee liaison David Marquardt or Communications Coordinator Carrie Lamb.

Worship life at Trinity continues to experience significant growth and vitality in attendance and participation. This sense of enthusiasm is evident in the Rejoice bands, the Trinity Choir and the Resound Bell Choir. It also is seen and heard as guest musicians enhance worship for festive occasions such as Christmas, Easter and, in this past year, the services honoring Pastor Linstrom upon his retirement.

This growing enthusiasm has also been clear in the Celebration of Music Concert Series. We have enjoyed strong performances with at least 200 attendees at each event. In December we had a record of over 350 guests for the *VoxMas* performance. Concerts are an outreach to the congregation and the surrounding community. Trinity is known for offering outstanding concerts in an excellent acoustical space. These are important events at which we welcome many guests to the church in monthly offerings.

This is also true as we welcome people to enjoy the gifts of visual artists as displayed in the Overlook Gallery. This rotating gallery sparks one's imagination. It allows us to experience a wide range of visual arts on a regular basis.

In addition to larger projects, my weekly work as Music Director & Organist is shaped by:

- *Worship planning for congregational singing through hymnody and liturgy
- *Worship music leadership of sanctuary services as organist and pianist including midweek Advent and Lent services
- *Scheduling and rehearsing with cantors, instrumentalists and vocal soloists throughout the entire year
- *Artistic Director of the Celebration of Music Concert Series monthly events
- * Meeting with church staff and music support staff to coordinate worship service details
- *Serving as the accompanist for the Trinity Choir
- *Director of the Resound Bell Choir

It was rewarding to work with Children's Ministry leaders in collaborating on new possibilities for children's music offerings. It was a goal to create a plan that would be workable for families and that would give interested children an opportunity to learn music in a small group setting. The children's ensemble rehearsed a song that they shared as a part of the Sunday School Christmas program. This was an important step forward which we hope to continue in 2024. I am grateful to volunteer musical leaders Steve Feutz, Kris Fox, and Marcia Schaner for skillfully teaching the children.

I am grateful for the work of Mr. Sid Hoeksema as Trinity Choir Director and Dr. Deb DeWitt, Rejoice Worship Coordinator and Keyboardist. Their leadership is deeply appreciated as they support the Music Ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Darlene Kuperus
Director of Music & Organist

"A Forever Gift" - Trinity Endowment Fund Update

The Endowment Fund Committee is pleased to report solid returns this past year for both endowment funds—the Mission Endowment Fund and the Building Endowment Fund. Based on the positive results and in accordance with our investment policy, Trinity was able to make significant distributions this past year. Below is a summary of the change in each account over the last year.

<u>Fund</u>	<u>12/31/22 Value</u>	<u>12/31/23 Value</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Mission	\$716,987	\$812,707	\$ 95,720
Building	\$604,113	\$688,705	\$ 84,592

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.

In the 4th quarter of 2023, the committee made a distribution recommendation to Council that was approved. The Mission Endowment distributed **\$27,000** and the Building Endowment **\$18,000**. Over the last eight years, the Mission Endowment has distributed nearly \$150,000 while the Building Endowment has distributed close to \$65,000. We thank you for generously supporting this ministry.

I'd like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Endowment Committee each of whom brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and vision to help this ministry grow at Trinity. The Committee consists of George Bauer, Todd Brandstadt, Chris Engle, and Brad Kessel. Please reach out to me or any of the other committee members if you have questions on how to contribute to one of the endowments or would like to join the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Mason
Endowment Committee Chair

EVENTS

Advent by Candlelight – This event was cancelled due to the low number of signups.

Advent Suppers – Suppers were offered on the 3 Wednesdays leading up to Christmas followed by Vesper Services in the Sanctuary. Our Advent Suppers were well attended this year. Our meals were potluck style with Trinity providing the entrees each week and parishioners bringing bread, sides, and desserts. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped in the kitchen setting up for our supper and all who helped clean up after supper. Couldn't do this without you!

All-Congregation Potluck at Annual Meeting – Each year on the 3rd Sunday in January our Congregation gathers for a potluck lunch followed by our Annual Church Meeting. Our potluck was well attended, and we had a quorum to conduct church business and to vote as appropriate. Again, thank you so much to all the volunteers who helped put this meal together and helped clean up afterwards.

BUNCO Night – In October we held our first ever BUNCO Night. This event was a fundraiser for Christophe's Children. RuthAnn Evans and the LWR Quilters were instrumental in making this event a success. We gave a Mission Moment and invited the whole congregation to contribute to this very needed cause. And you all gave so generously from your hearts. We raised over \$4000 for clothing for the children. Thank you everyone!

Christmas Angels – This year we once again partnered with Samaritas to bring Christmas to 104 children in Michigan who otherwise would not have had any presents. Thank you so much to everyone who adopted children for this program. You are wonderful! Thank you to all my very special elves who made this program a success: Ian & Cheryl Love, Martha Carter, Jan Palm, John Bosserman, Carrie Wygmans, and Jeanne Becker. And a special thank you to Grace at Penske Truck Rental for donating a truck so we could deliver all the presents. You touched the lives of 104 children and the hearts of all their parents. Thank you.

Christmas Eve Supper for Pastors & Musicians -- Each year we put together a meal to care for our worship leaders on Christmas Eve. Thank you to those who signed up to bring food this year. Our pastors and guest musicians were well cared for and offered a heartfelt thank you to all who contributed to their meal.

Easter Breakfast – This is a service project put together in combination of Fellowship & Hospitality and Youth & Family. The youth and their families do a great deal of food prep, serving, and clean up. This is an event enjoyed by many parishioners each Easter and is well attended. Thank you so very much to all who contributed food to our Easter Breakfast, your contributions helped make this a beautiful and scrumptious event.

Euchre Night & Potluck – We had 12 teams of Euchre players come out for our Potluck & Euchre Night event. This gave us 6 tables of play.

Fall Parish Potluck – Immediately following the 10:45am service on September 17th we held our annual Fall Parish Potluck. Trinity provided pulled pork with parishioners bringing sides, fruit, desserts, etc. It was a wonderful gathering and well attended.

Funerals – Thank you so very much to all the volunteers who are on my funeral volunteer list. These events are unexpected and call for volunteers without much notice. You have never let us down and have always served with such faithfulness, kindness, and fellowship. This is a very unseen service but so very important. You serve so that families do not need to worry about the details but can host their guests and spend time with their friends and families remembering their loved ones. Thank you for this gift you give all of our grieving parishioners who have lost a loved one and have chosen to have a luncheon. You are a blessing.

JOYful Days – JOYful Days is held twice a year in the Fall and again in the Spring on 5 consecutive Wednesdays. We start with Donuts & Coffee before Pastor's Forum. We then transition to a catered lunch in the Courtyard followed by a speaker. These events continue to be well attended with 30-55 participants each week. All adults are welcome to attend these series. Thank you to Steve Stephen for catering each of our meals in 2023 and to all the volunteers who work in the kitchen, serve and clean up after our meal. You are awesome!

JOYful Days Holiday Lunch – The JOYful Days Holiday Lunch is a time for parishioners to come together and enjoy each other's company. There is no speaker at this lunch. This year we held our Holiday Lunch at Red's Restaurant at Thousand Oaks. We had 31 attendees.

KCAH Brunch – Kids Coalition Against Hunger is sponsored by our Children's Ministry. In collaboration with this event Fellowship & Hospitality provides a brunch for parishioners before or after they help pack meals for this all-congregation inter-generational event.

Lenten Soup Suppers – During the 5 Wednesdays between Ash Wednesday and Easter we gathered in the Courtyard for Soup Suppers. Parishioners sign up to bring homemade soup to share for our meal. Tess makes 3-4 soups as Trinity's offering to our meal. These suppers were well attended. After these Soup Suppers parishioners gather in the Sanctuary for a mid-week service. Thank you to all the volunteers who made soup and to those who helped in the kitchen setting up our supper and all who helped clean up after supper. Couldn't do this without you!

Schwallier's Corn Maze & Bonfire – This event has quickly become a favorite for our congregation and is a multi-generational event. We rent out the entire facility and take a wagon ride to the back 40 where we roam their awesome corn maze, the kids play on the play equipment and bounce pillow, and we all gather around bonfires and roast our own hotdogs and s'mores. Unfortunately, we were rained out this year. We will try to schedule this event earlier in October to attempt to get better weather in 2024.

Scandinavian Smorgasbord – This year we had over 125 parishioners and guests attend our annual Smorgasbord. Kris Shannon and her kitchen team put together a wonderful spread of food for the evening. While a team decorated the Courtyard and made a very fun and welcoming space. Sydney Waite was Santa Lucia and Lexi Shannon assisted as The Star Child. Kris and John Fox sang Santa Lucia while the girls passed out cookies. Darlene Kuperus was our accompanist, she, along with the Foxes, lead the group in singing Christmas Carols. It was a beautiful night. Thank you to all our volunteers who helped in the kitchen and in the dining room. And that you so much to everyone who made a dish to share.

Summer Celebration – This year our Summer Celebration was held inside following the 10:45am service which was a good thing as it decided to rain. We had a wonderful traditional Lutheran Potluck. Lots of food and lots of fellowship. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to help behind the scenes to set up and to clean up. You are the backbone of these events!! Thank you to everyone who brought a dish to share, potlucks are my favorites because we get so many wonderful dishes.

Sunday Fellowship Hour – Sunday Fellowship Hour is offered after each of our 3 services each Sunday. We offer coffee, ice water, cookies, fruit, etc. We are always looking for people who are interested in being hosts at the Hospitality Counter. There are 2 shifts: 8a-10:30a (with a break to attend the 9:15am service) and 10:30a-12:30pm (with a break to attend the 10:45am service). You can serve as a family, as a couple, with a friend, by yourself and make new friends. If interested, please contact Tess Lundgren, 616.889.9503ph/text. You get to see and meet many of our parishioners in this hospitality position. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Lisa Wiseman who has become a weekly volunteer behind our Hospitality Counter. Say hello to her and let her know how much you enjoy the snacks and the COFFEE!

Trivia Night – Karent Unruh has been our Trivial Masters for years but stepped down this year so that she could enjoy the event as a participant. Tim & Tess Lundgren became the new Trivia Masters and we had a wonderful night of Michigan Trivia. Our potluck was a wonderful start to our evening. Childcare is offered, come out and enjoy some fellowship and lots of laughter.

RECEPTIONS

The following receptions were held this year to honor members of our congregation:

- Confirmation
- Funeral Receptions
- Graduation
- New Member
- Veterans Appreciation

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Choir Luncheons
- Brunch for all staff Church Wide Calendaring meeting
- Brunch for area wide Pastors Meeting
- Christmas Lunch for Staff
- Service Projects with the High School Youth to make meals for UFM (Urban Family Ministries)

OTHER

Decorating of the Church for the Christmas Season – A huge thank you to our decorating team this year which was comprised of Kristi Flatts, Jordan Wiseman, Chris & Joanna Waite, Breslin Waite, Sydney Waite, Krysta Billock, Tim & Tess Lundgren, and Katarina Lundgren. Thank you to everyone who helped make our building space festive during Christmas time!

Kitchen – A huge thank you to all my volunteers for each event. It takes many volunteers to pull off all the events we do at this church. I am grateful to each and every one of you for volunteering your time and for helping make these events wonderful and especially for your friendships. I have very much enjoyed getting to know you and spending time together. Many hands make light work but more importantly, you lift my spirit with laughter and good humor when we work together. Thank you.

Licensure – Our kitchen is state licensed. We are inspected on an annual basis and have surprise inspections throughout the year. We have passed all of our inspections as noted by our current license that is posted behind the Hospitality Counter in the Courtyard. In addition to the kitchen itself being licensed the church must maintain a ServSafe Manager on site. I am that person and I renew the state testing every several years to remain current to keep our kitchen open.

It continues to be my honor to serve the Congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church as your Fellowship & Hospitality Coordinator. My door is always open, and I am happy to hear any ideas parishioners may have to get people together in fellowship. If any member of our congregation feels called to serve our parish family through their gift of hospitality, please be in touch with me. I'd love to hear from you & work with you.

Respectfully submitted,
Tess Lundgren
Fellowship & Hospitality Coordinator

We on the Finance Committee are pleased to report that TLC's 2023 operating expenses remain under control and within TLC's income stream. Our congregation has been able to make additional principal payments on our mortgage. Attendance onsite for worship and various events continued to increase through 2023. Many people continue to join in via live-streaming of our worship services.

2023 saw TLC's largest group of new members ever. We hope that flu, RSV and COVID remain under control so that we all can participate face-to-face regularly. Thank you to all the faithful TLC congregation members who supported Trinity's ministry in 2023!

Besides singing praises to God, we also sing praises to our Finance Assistant Joanna Waite who keeps the books to provide a reliable flow of decision-making information for TLC leaders. Thanks for patiently dealing with the complexity of TLC's many designated fund accounts, Joanna!

Thank you to the following people who served on the Finance Committee during 2023: Treasurer Chris Engle, Jim Coates, Peter "IT Magician" McKinney, Gloria Von der Heide, Chris Norton, Pastor Bob, and Finance Administrator Joanna Waite.

The Finance Committee meets five times per year, on the third Monday of February, April, June, September, November. We endeavor to act as a supportive sounding-board for TLC's Treasurer and office staff. Our activities include discussing actions to sustain reliable and secure operation of TLC's computer systems, reviewing income and expenditures versus budget, and giving guidance on establishing Trinity's budget for each new year (which begins on February 1). Our next committee meeting is February 19, 2024, at 6:00 PM (usually in the Library next to the church office). If you have new ideas, 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

Our part-time Faith Community Nurse (FCN), Kristin Bradley, functions as the director of Health Ministries at Trinity. She oversees the Health Ministries committee and is a part of the Spiritual Growth and Helping Hand Committees. She continues to organize & participate in visitation ministry, along with our pastors, and she is the staff liaison and referral coordinator for Stephen Ministry. Kristin also assists with the New Members program, the Christmas poinsettia/cookie projects, and *Trinity in Touch*. In 2023 our Faith Community Nurse partnered with Pastor Dan to help the middle school youth create portable labyrinths and to write cards to our homebound members.

In addition, she maintains our First Aid/AED supplies, schedules CPR training, coordinates the Immunization Sunday Clinic, facilitates the Care & Share caregiver support group and is our quarterly blood drive coordinator.

Kristin provides health care resources and connections within our community and she is a part of the area wide Faith Community Nurse organization and the national ELCA Faith Community Nurse organization.

In spring she presented to GVSU nursing students about the importance and intersection of faith and spirituality in health care.

During 2023, Kristin has been part of several task forces within our congregation: Adult Abuse Policy creation, Safety and Security exploration and implementation, and database software examination.

Looking forward to 2024, Kristin is working with Davenport University Nursing students who are going to help with educational health ministry programs within our congregation. She has also coordinated with the National Kidney Foundation to offer High Blood Pressure Management classes at Trinity.

The Health Ministries Committee

- Our committee met 6 times in 2023 and has welcomed a few new folks to learn about what our committee all does at Trinity. Our meetings are open to all Trinity members and you don't have to be a healthcare professional to join!
- We partnered with the Outreach Committee and the Congregation Council to bring domestic violence issues to light. We brought in **Safe Haven Ministries** to provide a full day of training in January regarding Domestic Violence and abuse. Twenty-five people attended and we all learned more about how to create an environment that is open to receiving reports of abuse and become more equipped to provide resources.
- Our **Food for Thought** dinner and speaker event in Spring was attended by over 75 people who enjoyed a baked potato and salad bar and a great presentation on 'Sleeping Well' by Trinity member and sleep specialist, Dr Jason Coles. We had originally planned to have a November **Food for Thought** event, but with the congregational activities to celebrate Pastor Bob's retirement we have moved that to January 31 and we'll learn about Intuitive Eating from an area dietician.
- **Self-Guided Labyrinth** days have started! Kristin sets up the labyrinths in the Commons and provides general guidance and resources for anyone who wants to explore this meditative movement practice. Watch for invitations in the eBlasts. Individuals and groups are invited to use the labyrinths.
- **Care & Share** is our caregiver support group which is facilitated by Kristin. They met most months during 2023 and this past fall focused on Henri Nouwen's "Courage to Care" teachings. In January we will start the conversations around the "Positive Approach to Care" by Teepa Snow.

- Four **Blood Drives** were held at Trinity facilitated by Versiti Blood. We focused on increasing our participation this year as the area blood supply remains low. With a creative Mission Moment, more direct asks, emails and follow ups, we increased our donations significantly. Debbie Lown assists with calling donors and a team of volunteers provide baked goods and oversee the 'canteen' during the drives. In 2023 we collected 122 units of whole blood and 42 double reds. Sincere thanks to our dedicated donors, enthusiastic volunteers, and to Culvers for the "Give a pint, Get a pint" program!
- The **Fitness Program** changed up a bit after Kristina retired in August. Trinity member Debra Freeberg now offers her time and talent to hold "Power Bend and Stretch" classes every Wednesday morning.
- In October, we began a partnership with *Senior Neighbors* and they provided us with a wonderful instructor who taught 'Tai Chi for Arthritis' on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for a 10 week session. We are partnering with them again for another 10 week session in Spring of 2024.
- The **Immunization Sunday Clinic** provided 104 influenza vaccines to our members through the Spectrum Health Visiting Nurses. Due to the lack of the new covid boosters at the time we couldn't offer those vaccines, but plan to next year. #Prevention!
- **CPR Training** was held twice in 2023 and was facilitated by our Red Cross instructor, James Morin. The next training will be in Spring of 2024.
- Trinity's **Library** is now attended to by members who are working to organize our collection, have more theological resources available and get the word out to others that the library is available to them. Kate Schaefer is assisting with this project and Kristin is the staff liaison.
- Kristin, Cindy and Gale were integrally involved with the Fall **Women's Retreat** at Trinity. A wonderful day of worship, reflection, learning and connecting was enjoyed by those who attended. All of the women joined in a special outreach project making Spicy Black Bean Soup kits for the recipients of Heartside Gleanings program in downtown Grand Rapids. Debbie Lown helped facilitate that connection.
- In 2023, we secured three Thrivent Actions grants! One for the Food for Thought event and two for the Women's retreat. These provided an additional \$750 to our budget!

We look forward to providing more opportunities for supporting our mind, bodies and spirits in the New Year!

Respectfully submitted,

Your Trinity Health Ministries Committee

Corina Dulecki (Chairperson), Michelle Morin (Council Liaison), Kristin Bradley (FCN), Tricia Diener, Maddy Krueger, Kristen Lamprich, Debbie Lown, Kate Schaefer, Mary Schira, Rebecca Ulrich, Gale Volkerding, Kay Zeaman and Cindy Zientarski.

"Continued thanks to the Trinity Quilters for the prayer quilts, to the Trinity Card Makers for all the handmade greeting cards, and to the Trinity crafters for the pocket hearts and prayer squares. Being able to share these handmade, tangible 'touches' with others is a privilege and blessing." ~ Kristin

The Helping Hands Ministry seeks to lead Trinity efforts to care well for our congregation's members through programs and coordination of volunteers such as providing meals, rides, or flowers to members at times of illness, grief, or special circumstances. Works in coordination with staff and pastors to facilitate the "Trinity in Touch" ministry. Participated in welcoming new members in May and November.

This year a Helping Hands Committee was formed to help support this ministry. The committee has met four times this past year and plans to meet every other month on the 2nd Thursday at 10 am. The committee members are; Pastor Kari Fast (staff support), Kristin Bradley (staff support), Susan Knoll (Council Liaison), Sandra Sudak (Secretary), Brenda Conway, Mark Hagbom, Lynn Hagenbush, Emily Keller, Gayl Kessel, Sally Mahoney, Bob Pfau, Cheryl Rosen, Rebecca Ulrich, Linda Zabel, and Jeanne Becker (Helping Hands Coordinator).

I want to thank each of the committee members for their support, willingness to help, and their patience as we navigate the direction of this committee.

Meals and Rides: Meals were provided for eight families in times of medical issues, blessing of a new baby and loss of a family member. Regular rides to church service/events have been sought for three homebound members.

One Trinity member was provided short-term help with housecleaning after surgery.

Poinsettia Delivery: We had 14 faithful volunteers deliver 60 Poinsettia's to homebound members and those who have lost loved ones as another "Trinity Touch". The Trinity Lutheran quilters provided beautiful quilts to 12 of the Poinsettia recipients.

Medicare/Medicaid Consultation: Once again, Trinity member, Jo Murphy donated her time and expertise to 16 Trinity members to assist them with enrolling in 2024 Medicare/Medicaid.

Trinity in Touch: We have volunteers providing communion and companionship to four homebound members.

Connect, Receive, Give-Finding a Place at Trinity Handbook: The handbook was created in coordination with Carrie Lamb with the help of many staff members as a tool that lists all the possibilities to make a difference within the church, our community, and within the world while providing you a sense of belonging. The handbook includes all volunteer and fellowship opportunities at Trinity.

New Members: In May, Trinity welcomed 81 new members and in November 16 new members. Helping Hands coordinator connected the new families with a Trinity mentor to serve as a short-term, connecting presence.

I want to extend my thankfulness to all Trinity members who have volunteered within this ministry, Council, the Helping Hands Committee, and to the wonderful Trinity staff I have the pleasure of working with.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Becker, Helping Hands Coordinator

Thank you to all who so generously made financial contributions as well as gifts-in-kind and the many volunteer hours. It is such a blessing to have a very generous congregation!

The TLC Outreach Committee provides a financial help, tangible gifts, and volunteer help to local agencies. This dedicated committee consists of: Laura Norton, (Discipleship and Outreach Coordinator), Cheryl Love (Chairperson), Dan Butler (Council Liaison), Amy Stephan (staff), Kathy Bush (staff), Jan Curry, John Fox, Kathy Noble, Don and Judy Otten, Sandy Rothfuss, Martha Carter, and Diane Ardolino.

As part of Trinity's 2023 budget, a total \$27,000 was approved for Trinity's Mission Endowment Fund. Some of the criteria used in forming these recommendations include the essential nature of their work to successful living, their reputation for success in the community and having Trinity members who serve in some way through the organizations. The following are recipients of this year's Endowment Fund:

In the Image	\$3,375	Family Promise Room to Grow	\$6,750
Safe Haven Wish List	\$3,375	Heartside Gleaning	\$6,750
ELCA Disaster Response International	\$6,750		

Lutheran World Relief Quilters (LWR) created and shipped 115 quilts and 10 school kits for International Relief. The Quilters made 120 drawstring bags for Congress Elementary. These bags were filled with personal care products which were kindly donated by Trinity members. One blanket was made for Auntie with Christophe's Children. Numbers too high to count of undergarments were sent to Christophe's Children as a result of a Bunco night fund raiser. Donated material, thread and other sewing supplies were sent for the girls of Christophe's Children.

Kathy Bush, Coordinator of IHN, reports Trinity has hosted IHN weeks in March, June, September, and December housing a total 27 adults and 35 children during 2023. It takes 60+ volunteers during an IHN week to make this important program run at Trinity. Kathy is very grateful for the volunteers who help make this ministry a success.

Food Pantry donations are collected year round to be donated to SECOM to supplement their pantry which serves over 4,500 adults and children.

Outreach Collections; Cleaning products collected January and February, Personal Hygiene products collected March and April, Diapers and Undies collected May and June, Bus Tickets collected June and July, School Supplies for Congress Elementary collected July and August, Coats and Blankets collected in September and October were all a great success. Christmas presents were collected for 104 children with the Samaritas Christmas Angel program.

Highlights of Outreach campaigns:

- Safe Haven Church certification 1/28/23
- 100 Ham Challenge – collected 165 Easter hams and distributed to SECOM and Green Apple
- Distributed blankets made by Pastor Dan and middle school students to Veterans Home and Exodus Place
- Established a group to help at In the Image twice a month
- Helped Home Repair Services build a ramp in July
- Helped with Habitat for Humanity build in June
- Gods Work, Our Hands raised money to purchase 159 basketballs which volunteers inflated and delivered to Kent County Juvenile Court, Grand Rapids Police Department and Boys & Girls Club of Grand Rapids.

It is with much gratitude to Trinity members and their generosity with helping this ministry achieve it's goals.

Respectfully submitted,
Outreach Committee

This has been an active year for the Property Committee. The following is a summary of the status of projects and the ongoing work and assessment for future needs.

A. West Parking Lot Lighting.

Buist Electric has completed the west parking lot lighting project which involved the installation of two light poles, lighting for the "Night Flight" sculpture and the installation of a power source for outside events in the west parking lot and on the west lawn. This was a much-needed improvement.

B. Roof Leaks.

We have been struggling with multiple leaks at different locations. We waterproofed the south wall of the sanctuary as a possible cause of the chronic leak which has damaged the southwest column in the sanctuary. Grand River Builders was since also retained to perform a thorough review of the various flat and pitched roofs and associated downspouts. The downspouts on the south wall of the sanctuary were generally found to be in good condition, however, at least one of the downspouts was significantly plugged. This has been resolved. Grand River has assessed with infrared technology, whether the continuing leaks are occurring within or near the column in question. There has been no evidence of continuing leaks despite the heavy rain we have experienced.

Grand River Builders was retained to repair gutters and flashing on the south side of the sanctuary and on the east side of the church. They also completed masonry repairs in different areas. Grand River Builders has successfully completed their work. We have been pleased with their timeliness and professionalism.

Buist Electric is in the process of completing the installation of a new heat tape system. The old system was patched together and did not work in all areas. The new system will have integrated controls and should substantially reduce the possibility of ice dams which previously led to substantial leaks over the course of the past few years. The project should be completed by the end of this week.

Weather Shield conducted its annual inspection of the roofs and the gutters. They have indicated that our roofing system is generally in good shape with the exception of the small flat roof over the south entrance to the sanctuary and have recommended that we consider replacing the roof over this area. We will work to obtain quotes for the work by the end of January.

C. Plaster Repairs / Painting of Sanctuary.

Since it appears that the leaks on the south side of the sanctuary have been resolved, we were able to arrange for a plasterer that we previously have used, Wyvon Gaddie, to remove the damaged plaster in the most southwesterly column to determine whether repairs other than new plaster would be necessary. There was no evidence of structural damage. Wyvon was therefore given the go ahead to complete repairs. He did a nice job of replastering the column and the ceiling around the column. He was not able to commit to completing any plaster work which is necessarily on the wall above the column nor on the wall in and around the stained-glass windows above the choir loft. We were planning to have him repair the damaged plaster on the north side of the sanctuary near the choir loft, however, we were not able to have him complete those repairs prior to Christmas. The Property Committee plans to obtain estimates for the additional plaster work and estimates for painting the sanctuary which has not been painted in some time. We should have those estimates by the end of January and will provide recommendations to the Council.

D. Removal and Replacement of Pneumatic Valves and Replacement of Controls/Thermostats.

Earlier this year, our mechanical contractor, Pleune Service Company, replaced antiquated controls and thermostats in the sanctuary and children's wing with some asbestos abatement in the boiler room. This project has been successfully completed.

E. Development of Operations and Maintenance Manual.

Mary Minich-Carwell and her husband Bob have been collaborating with Frank Remsburg, Dave Mester and other committee members and our Sexton, Grace Gohl, to develop a maintenance manual/user guide/checklist covering Trinity's infrastructure and general operations. All involved are making progress with this extensive project and will report after the first of the year.

F. Modesty Wall.

The choir previously requested that the modesty wall in the sanctuary be removed from the choir loft. The wall has been removed and final repairs have been completed by Gene Gunderson. We very much appreciate Gene's assistance with this project.

G. South Entry to Sanctuary.

There has been an ongoing need for some time to have the south entry of the sanctuary repaired and updated. The concrete at the entry is cracked and offset to the point that it is unsafe and unsightly. We have asked Progressive A & E (PAE) to develop an initial assessment of potential cost. We are also in the process of contacting contractors directly. We will continue to develop a plan for this project which will be submitted to the Council for its approval. Our goal is to have this work completed in 2024.

H. Assessment as to the Need for Attic Insulation and Ventilation.

The Property Committee obtained approval to retain PAE to assess and develop a plan for attic insulation and ventilation above the sanctuary. The consensus is that the attic lacks proper insulation and is in need of a new ventilation system. The current ventilation system which was designed for the structure when it was built is no longer operational. The issues uncovered by PAE likely causes substantial inefficiency and extra expense and is also a likely culprit for the ice damming we have experienced. A copy of the report can be obtained from the office. PAE has recently completed an initial assessment with recommendations for additional analysis and substantial work. PAE has been given the go ahead to place a "Data Logger" in the upper lantern area per their recommendation. They will also conduct a thermal scan of the building's exterior and interior to obtain a clear indication as to where heat loss occurs. The results of these studies should provide PAE with enough information to make final recommendations. The Committee will then obtain a cost analysis of the various options and proposed approaches to develop recommendations for the Council to act upon.

I. Security Camera Expansion.

The Property Committee previously recommended and the Council approved the expansion of the security camera system based upon recommendations by the Security Task Force. This project has been successfully completed. We now have a fully operational and up to date security camera monitoring system.

In summary, we have been able to complete several significant projects in 2023 in addition to the routine maintenance which is necessary to keep our wonderful church in good repair. Many thanks to our staff, our contractors and all of those who have been involved.

Rick Radke-Property Committee Chair

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 October 2023, Pastor Bob gathered a group of twenty members to envision a new spiritual growth initiative in our life together at Trinity. Of this group, a dozen members agreed to meet with regularity to care for the spiritual and programmatic life of our congregation through serving on the Spiritual Growth Committee. Director of Family Ministry Rachele Battreall will offer staff leadership and Bill Bush will continue to serve as the Congregation Council liaison.

2023 activity highlights:

Lenten Grace Groups: Grace groups are Trinity's small group Bible studies that take place during Lent. From Ash Wednesday to Holy Week, groups meet weekly for fellowship and conversation on the assigned reading. The Grace groups met on a variety of days, times and either in person or via Zoom. Trinity members served as small group facilitators using the booklet "Water and Spirit: Devotions for Lent 2023" published by Augsburg Fortress.

Book Clubs: Trinity's book clubs met throughout 2023. The Tuesday evening book club meets the second Tuesday of the month. This group is multi-gender and multigenerational. They meet in homes, at Trinity, or via Zoom. The Friday morning women's book club meet in club member's homes the second Friday of the month from September through May. Both clubs are open to new members.

Men's Breakfasts: Men of Trinity assembled for a quarterly breakfast followed by brief Bible study and guest speaker. Speakers included G.R. Police Chief Eric Winstrom, NW Lower Michigan Synod Bishop Craig Satterly, author and organizational coach Ray O'Laughlin, and Edward Postma of Exalta Health.

Women's Retreats: In February women of Trinity and St. Luke's gathered for a two-day retreat themed *WonderFull World* at Maranatha Conference Center in Norton Shores. In October, women gathered at Trinity for a one-day retreat called *Just Love*.

Advent Devotional: Devotionals for Advent 2023 were written by and for the members of Trinity. The devotional was printed in a booklet and also distributed via daily emails and social media. Themes are present in the selected scripture and writer's expressions as we prepared during Advent for the arrival of the newborn Savior.

Study Groups: Women's Bible studies are offered on both Tuesday and Friday mornings from September to June. Experienced lay leaders have delved into studies including *Heaven on Earth: Studies in Matthew* by Janelle Hooper; and a LifeGuide® Bible Study by Jack Kuhatschek exploring both sides of hope.

Pastor Bob offered Bible studies throughout 2023 during Wednesday morning forums. The themes and selected studies during 2023 included *Embracing a Life of Meaning* by Kathleen Norris; and a study of the seven deadly sins inspired by a course taught by Dr. Brad Binau of Trinity Lutheran Seminary.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Bush, Congregational Council liaison and Rachele Battreall, Director of Family Ministry

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 caring hand of a Stephen Minister.

Trinity has been a Stephen Ministry congregation since 1996. We have sent 20 members to leadership training and equipped 99 members to become Stephen Ministers. This Christ-centered, confidential, caring ministry has assisted 197 individuals during trying times.

We appreciate all who established and grew this ministry to where we are today! We are dedicated to continuing to care for the people of Trinity for many years to come.

We currently have 5 trained Stephen Leaders shaping the continuing education and peer support of our team of 17 Stephen Ministers. This year, we put God's love into action by walking alongside 14 individuals during a time of need.

Continuing Education is an integral part of our ministry and the topics this year included seminars on divorce, aging, dying, and long-term care. We also read and discussed a book on empathy to enhance our skills. We included personal spiritual growth opportunities by learning how to walk a labyrinth and discussing the practice of contemplative prayer. We invited the congregation to join us to gather more information about addiction and the services Pine Rest has to offer. We especially enjoyed a presentation from Dr. Kuperus on the role music can play in our caring relationships.

One of our Stephen Ministers facilitates the 'Journeying Through Grief' booklet ministry. This set of 4 booklets is sent at intervals throughout the first year after the loss of a loved one and has brought comfort and hope to those experiencing grief. We have shared 108 books with people who have known loss this year.

A new addition to our ministry this year is to be a part of IHN. Two members of our team are available to pray with and/or pray over our guests one evening during their stay. It is a wonderful experience to pray together for their specific requests.

Stephen Ministry is available to adults in our congregation and community who are experiencing a crisis, difficult circumstances, or everyday stress. It's a gift you can give yourself when life seems a bit overwhelming. Connect with any of our Pastors, our Faith Community Nurse, or a Stephen Leader to get connected or learn more.

Be on the lookout for anyone who might benefit from having a Stephen Minister. You can refer to us at any time and we'll take it from there! We maintain strict confidentiality.

Our team is looking forward to the Fall of 2024 as we prepare to offer another Stephen Minister Training class. You are most welcome to consider this an invitation to discern if Stephen Ministry is a place where you can cultivate your God-given gifts.

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

Submitted by:

Beth Vanderwall, Stephen Ministry Program Director

Kristin Bradley, Faith Community Nurse and Stephen Ministry Referral Coordinator

Trinity's current Stephen Ministers:

Kris Baker, Kim Brock, Sue Coates, Renee Fisk, Emily Keller, Krista Knight, Susan Knoll, Patti Mutch, Pastor Karen Niemeyer, Laura Norton, Norm Palm, Bob Pfau, Kris Racek, Sheila Talsma, Beth Vanderwall, Dale Volkerding, and Terry Zabel.

Committee Members: Amy Stephan (Chairperson), Tess Lundgren, Joni Korb, Michelle Morin, Elizabeth Derbin, Dakota Morin (Youth Rep.), Amy Fox, Kara Day

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

The Youth Ministries Coordinator position is currently posted. It is a part time position. Please contact Pastor Dan for the job description if you or someone you know is interested.

2023 In Review

Service Opportunities – Both high school and middle school youth had opportunities to serve both within our church walls and in our community. Some of the highlights were:

- **VBS Volunteers** – VBS was back at full capacity and many of our middle/high schoolers volunteered in a variety of ways: snack helpers, station assistants, photography, tech board and small group leaders.
- **Set up/Serve/Clean Up at Events** – Annual Meeting, Easter Breakfast, Rummage Sale, Food Packing
- **Urban Family Ministries** – Meals prepped at church and delivered for their Tues/Thurs weekly meals
- **Kids Coalition Against Hunger** – helped other members of the church pack over 35,000 meals
- **Trinity Nature Trail** – spreading mulch, maintaining trails
- **Christmas Cookie Decorating/Delivering** – 20+ middle/high school youth and parents gathered at church to decorate Christmas cookies and then set off delivering them to 30 different congregational members.
- **College Care Packages** - Jamie Kuntzman led the effort this fall to send boxes of goodies to our college students. The packages included food items, Starbucks gift cards and letters from Pastor Dan and Pastor Bob.
- **Easter Breakfast** – set up, decorating, food preparation, serving food and clean up were all parts of this service to our congregation.

Mission Trip – This high school event took place June 24-July 1 as 10 youth and 4 adults teamed up with a group from Immanuel Lutheran in Mt. Pleasant and traveled to East Bank, WV to build ramps, paint homes and dig deeper into their faith.

Stony Lake Camp – July 16-21 middle and high school youth joined our elementary kids for a week at Stony Lake complete with ropes courses, waterfront time, campfires, bible studies and many more faith building activities.

CHARGE! – This middle/high school youth gathering took place the first weekend of November Eighteen youth and 4 adults traveled to Traverse City for this weekend long event lead by Living Waters Ministries staff.

MS Youth

Confirmation – Confirmation classes took place on Sunday afternoons lead by Pastor Dan, Christian and many adult small group leaders, September through April. On May 7th, thirteen 8th graders were confirmed as our newest church members.

Youth Group Events: Middle school met from 2-3, just prior to confirmation class and was a combination of service and fun.

HS Youth

Youth Council Member – Alaina Lundgren finished up the school year as our rep and Dakota Morin took over the position.

Sunday Morning Bible Study – first Sunday of the month gathering with Pastor Dan (includes donuts and juice!), averaging 6-10 youth in attendance.

High School Youth Group – Gathered on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8pm.

Graduation Sunday – Trinity celebrated graduates with special bulletin inserts and honored them at a spring service.

Fundraisers for Mission Trips – Wreath Sales, Easter Breakfast and the Annual Rummage Sale helped fund our Mission Trip. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped us pull it all off and for your generous financial support.

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



*Treasurer's Report - 2023 Budget and 2024 Projected
February 2022 to November 2023 Actual plus December/January 2024 Projected*

Treasurer Report

How are we doing this year?

		2023 - 2024 Budget	Actual Giving and Expenses (10 actual + 2 estimated)
50000	BENEVOLENCE	\$ 143,408.00	\$ 143,408.00
51000	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$ 11,300.00	\$ 8,269.00
52000	MUSIC	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 13,569.00
52500	WORSHIP	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,756.00
53000	EVANGELISM	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,191.00
54000	STEWARDSHIP	\$ 4,200.00	\$ 3,610.00
55000	YOUTH AND FAMILY	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,490.00
56000	FELLOWSHIP	\$ 15,825.00	\$ 16,600.00
57000	PROPERTY	\$ 56,125.00	\$ 59,800.00
58000	UTILITIES	\$ 77,155.00	\$ 73,800.00
59000	LEASES	\$ 25,244.00	\$ 24,600.00
60000	OFFICE AND ADMIN	\$ 56,628.00	\$ 74,350.00
61000	PAYROLL	\$ 706,443.00	\$ 658,890.00
62000	STEPHEN MINISTRY	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 1,100.00
63000	RESERVES	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00
64000	HEALTH MINISTRIES	\$ 1,850.00	\$ 1,690.00
65000	OUTREACH	\$ 1,150.00	\$ 910.00
66000	HELPING HANDS	\$ 825.00	\$ 455.00
67000	SPIRITUAL GROWTH	\$ 2,150.00	\$ 2,260.00
70000	FINANCING COSTS	\$ 50,496.00	\$ 46,800.00
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,198,399.00	\$ 1,161,548.00
70100	LOAN PRINCIPAL	\$ 63,120.00	\$ 66,312.00
40000	REVENUE (REGULAR GIVING)	\$ 1,261,519.00	\$ 1,308,240.00
	Estimated Surplus		\$ 80,380.00

Treasurer's Report
Comparison of 2023 Financials and Proposed 2024 Budget

Proposed Budget for 2024-2025

February 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025

		Proposed 2024-25 Budget		Projected Current Year (10 actual + 2 estimated)
50000	BENEVOLENCE	\$ 145,788.00		\$ 143,408.00
51000	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$ 9,925.00		\$ 8,269.00
52000	MUSIC	\$ 12,840.00		\$ 13,569.00
52500	WORSHIP	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 4,756.00
53000	EVANGELISM	\$ 1,200.00		\$ 1,191.00
54000	STEWARDSHIP	\$ 3,600.00		\$ 3,610.00
55000	YOUTH AND FAMILY	\$ 7,075.00		\$ 7,490.00
56000	FELLOWSHIP	\$ 15,825.00		\$ 16,600.00
57000	PROPERTY	\$ 57,325.00		\$ 59,800.00
58000	UTILITIES	\$ 77,825.00		\$ 73,800.00
59000	LEASES	\$ 26,500.00		\$ 24,600.00
60000	OFFICE AND ADMIN	\$ 70,344.00		\$ 74,350.00
61000	PAYROLL	\$ 710,525.00		\$ 658,890.00
62000	STEPHEN MINISTRY	\$ 2,400.00		\$ 1,100.00
63000	RESERVES	\$ 18,000.00		\$ 18,000.00
64000	HEALTH MINISTRIES	\$ 1,850.00		\$ 1,690.00
65000	OUTREACH	\$ 2,150.00		\$ 910.00
66000	HELPING HANDS	\$ 825.00		\$ 455.00
67000	SPIRITUAL GROWTH	\$ 2,150.00		\$ 2,260.00
70000	FINANCING COSTS	\$ 44,250.00		\$ 46,800.00
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,215,397.00		\$ 1,161,548.00
70100	LOAN PRINCIPAL	\$ 69,366.00		\$ 66,312.00
40000	REVENUE (REGULAR GIVING)	\$ 1,284,763.00		\$ 1,308,240.00
	Supporting total cash flow			
				\$ 80,380.00

Simplified Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	As of 11/30/2022	As of 11/30/2023
Cash and Investment Accounts		
Checking and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,023,549	\$ 1,213,675
Mission Endowment Fund	\$ 701,050	\$ 715,655
Building Endowment Fund	\$ 582,940	\$ 606,719
Total Cash and Investments	\$ 2,307,539	\$ 2,536,049
Fixed Assets		
Land and Building (original cost)	\$ 6,173,950	\$ 6,173,950
Capital Improvements	\$ 6,759,171	\$ 6,759,171
Total Fixed Assets	\$ 12,933,121	\$ 12,933,121
Long Term Debt - Mortgage	\$ 1,145,354	\$ 1,054,238

General Comments

- There is a projected budget surplus this year. Both higher than budgeted giving and lower expenses have contributed to the expected surplus.
- Payroll and benefit expenses were below budget due to efficiency of staff and open positions. This budget assumes all staff positions are filled.
- Our technology needs continue to grow. Office and Administration expenses include significant improvements to technology infrastructure and additional ongoing expenses to maintain our systems.
- We have about three more years under our current mortgage terms.
- Our cash position includes \$906,686 in Designated and Memorial Funds including \$415,214 in our operating and capital reserves.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

Son of God, Eternal Savior

1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,
2 As you, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, so may we for oth - ers live.
3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and Prince of peace;
4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,

Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race,
Free - ly have your gifts been grant - ed; free - ly may your ser - vants give.
hush the storm of strife and pas - sion, bid its cru - el dis - cords cease.
Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race:

you our head, who, throned in glo - ry, for your own will ev - er plead:
Yours the gold and yours the sil - ver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
By your pa - tient years of toil - ing, by your si - lent hours of pain,
by your pray - ing, by your will - ing that your peo - ple should be one,

fill us with your love and pit - y, heal our wrong, and help our need.
we but stew - ards of your boun - ty held in sol - emn trust will be.
quench our fe - vered thirst of plea - sure, stem our self - ish greed of gain.
grant, oh, grant our hope's fru - i - tion: here on earth your will be done.

Text: Somerset C. Lowry, 1855–1932

Music: IN BABILONE, *Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenlities en Contradansen*, 1710; arr. Julius Röntgen, 1855–1932

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://elca.org/SOFIA).



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America