

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

In the packet for the January 2020 annual congregational meeting, I wrote in my pastor's report: "More than anything else, 2020 will be a year of big changes as we continue to discern how we might be faithful stewards of our resources while continuing to share the good news of God's love and grace."

Though we were expecting 2020 to be a different kind of year for us at Trinity, we never could have imagined just how different - and not only for us, but for the world. Over this year we've been reminded that the Church is not a building, or a specific style of worship, but rather God's people - joined to one another through the waters of baptism, and gathered around word and sacrament.

I am so grateful for your flexibility and faithfulness and generosity over the past year. Thank you for your patience as we made adjustments to technology; for your willingness to connect in new ways and check in on one another; and for your steady giving. Over this past year, we've been reminded of our resilience, and of God's faithfulness even in the midst of challenging times. I'm not sure what the year ahead will hold for us, but I know that God will continue to be with us, strengthening and equipping us for life together.

I've always appreciated this prayer, from Evangelical Lutheran Worship: "O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through joys and perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

With hope,
Pastor Kerri

EARLY 2020

With an eye to the changing realities of Trinity, including our membership and finances, and based in the work of the Visioning Team in 2019, we began 2020 with big changes to our budget and staffing. These changes included eliminating the position of paid secretary and shifting the janitor to hourly rather than salaried pay. We planned for office work to be covered by volunteers.

After the retirement of organist Ellen Dell at the end of 2019, we were fortunate to quickly find a new musician to lead worship. After a trial period in January, we hired Valerie Stipcak as organist for an 8 month contract, based on the prior year budget for that position. Worship time changed from 9:15am to 9am to accommodate the organist's schedule (she was also playing for a church in Mt. Pleasant after Trinity's service).

Confirmation students and their families hosted our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner on February 25.



MARCH 2020

With increasing concern about the spreading COVID-19 pandemic, adjustments were made to worship for March 15 (no communion, canceled fellowship meal, streamed service via Zoom platform), and then worship was canceled going forward, first for a period of 2 weeks, and then indefinitely, to be reviewed on a monthly basis.

The Executive Committee (Pastor Kerri, Alan Sandusky, Cindy Workman, Rod Gunderson, Sally Stoots) began meeting weekly to count offerings mailed to the church and prepare a mailing for those without internet access, which included the bulletin for the coming Sunday and a print copy of the weekly email newsletter.

WORSHIP

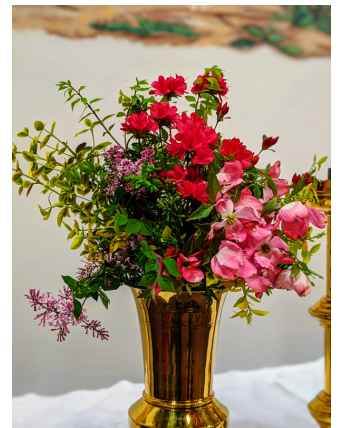


When in-person worship was suspended in mid-March, we moved to offer worship online on Zoom, which allowed people to connect via telephone or tablet/computer, and as a live video on Trinity's Facebook page. Pastor Kerri led the service from the empty sanctuary. Later, the online service was expanded to include a PowerPoint and recorded music, as well as a lay reader for each week. Over time, updated and additional technology was added - a new laptop, upgraded webcam, and studio lighting.

Music for the worship services included recorded piano pieces from Valerie Stipcak as well as organ accompaniment for hymns from the "music box" recorded with vocals by Pastor Kerri. To allow for a wider variety of music in our streamed worship service, we added a streaming license to the reprint license we already held through OneLicense.net after the free expansion ended.

A few times in the year we utilized free resources for worship in place of a livestream from Trinity's sanctuary, like recorded services produced by the SWPA Synod office staff and the group Lutherans Restoring Creation, as well as stunning virtual choir pieces from the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians.

Many thanks to Linda Ruth, who faithfully provided altar flowers from her garden throughout the year. We purchased new oil-filled altar candles with money given in memory of Fred Sandusky.



In August, Jacob Sandusky was baptized in the presence of his family in a brief service on the front steps of Trinity.



"Curbside Communion" began in September, and continued twice monthly.

FAITH FORMATION



Beginning in the spring, Pastor Kerri offered Night Prayer on Tuesday evenings and Bible Storytime on Thursday mornings on Trinity's Facebook page. In July, Pastor Kerri worked with Pastor Sarah Rossing (St. James Lutheran, Youngstown, PA) to provide video-based VBS. "Mission Machine" VBS included Bible stories, crafts, songs, and other materials, available on Trinity's YouTube channel for at-home use.

A book study group met every other week on Zoom, beginning in late summer. "Christ in Our Home" devotion books were distributed regularly.



William Schwarz, Edward, Stephenson, Emma Tikey, and Madison Wadsworth were confirmed in October in brief services on the front steps of Trinity.

New Confirmation students met in early October to hike up to the Jumonville cross, and classes on Zoom began in early 2021.



A "Christmas Eve Worship Bag" was distributed in mid-December, which included the liturgy and candles for Christmas Eve worship, as well as candy canes and Christmas notecards.

SOCIAL MINISTRY



The Back-to-School Clothing Giveaway was held on August 22, 2020, serving over 140 students in the Connellsville Area School District. Participants were asked to sign up for an appointment ahead of time using a Google Form or by phone, which eliminated the usual long line on the morning of the Giveaway. Volunteers were limited, with the goal of having fewer than 20 people in the building at a time, and the check-in table was outside. Through a \$3,000 COVID grant through our SWPA synod from Lutheran Disaster Response for care of at-risk populations during COVID, we were able to offer a wireless computer mouse, batteries, and a pair of headphones in addition to the usual backpacks, school supplies, shoes, and clothes. In October, we held the Chicken and Biscuit Dinner (carry out only) and raised \$1,335 for the 2021 Back-to-School Clothing Giveaway.



COMMUNICATION

In place of the monthly newsletter, we started a weekly newsletter through MailChimp at the end of March, which was emailed and posted on Trinity's Facebook page each Wednesday morning. The email included a brief reflection from Pastor Kerri, along with announcements, worship log-in information and bulletin, prayer list, and daily Bible readings. A print copy of the weekly newsletter was mailed, along with the liturgy for the coming Sunday, to those without internet access (24-30 copies each week). Pastor Kerri and Council members checked in with members by phone at various points during the year.

PROPERTY

Though we were not able to meet for most of 2020 we continued with the upkeep of our properties. Dusk to dawn lights were replaced on the Carnegie Avenue side of the church. Several plumbing leaks were repaired, roof leaks were repaired (along with the clean-up of ceiling damage), boiler leaks repaired, two of three thermostats replaced, routine maintenance at the parsonage, and preventive maintenance on the heating and air conditioning units at the church and parsonage. Our sexton, Andrew Culver, kept the church cleaned and sanitized as directed. Our thanks go out to Ron Kerns, Jim Gearhart, and Alan Sandusky for their participation in making sure the repairs and maintenance were completed.

We will continue to maintain our properties as we move through 2021. Projects planned for the future include: a major boiler repair, comfort height toilets and grab bars, front church step repairs, roof leak repairs, ceiling repairs, as well as plaster and painting repairs. As we return to in-person worship, the church will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis.

2020 STATISTICS

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Chrissy Dusha, Joe Dusha, Ken Goucher, Rod Gunderson (Treasurer), Alan Sandusky (President), and Jeff Williams were elected at the January 2020 Annual Meeting to serve three-year terms. They joined current Council members Beckie Merchant, Jim Gearhart, Sally Stoots (Secretary), Donna Welsh, Cindy Workman (Vice President), and Jim Workman.

FUNERALS

Sharon Flynn Pletcher, Dee Mowry, Alberta Everitt, Barbara Murphy, Stanley Welsh, Fred Sandusky, Dolores Enos, Margaret Ringer

BAPTISMS

Jacob Sandusky

CONFIRMATIONS

Emma Tikey, William Schwarz, Edward Stephenson, Madison Wadsworth

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

January - March 2020 average in-person worship attendance: 42

Average online worship attendance: 119

Online "attendance" is more challenging to track; the metrics we used try to account for folks watching on different platforms, as well as multiple people watching from the same device.

GIVING

82 individuals/families made contributions to Trinity

4 individuals/families utilized online giving through Tithe.ly, new in 2020

8 individuals/families utilized automated giving through their bank

2021 FINANCIAL PLAN

The following information for 2021 is being presented as a plan instead of a budget. A budget is normally developed from more reliable and consistent information than what is available. Because the pandemic in 2020 and so far this year, that was not possible.

The 2020 budget assumed in income of \$130,525 which was made up of an expected \$105,505 from current giving of all types and taking \$25,000 out of reserves. The actual giving for 2020 was \$111,401. This was due to more special gifts than were budgeted.

Early last year we took \$20,000 out of the reserves when the pandemic started to unfold. What was not planned for was the \$18,400 PPP Loan/Grant (forgiven) we received as well as the \$4,000 Synod Grant.

The 2020 budget assumed expenses of \$130,023. The actual total expenses were \$130,560. Although these totals happened to come out very close, the actual expenses varied in a number of areas and differed much more than the totals indicate and were able to offset each other.

The net result of all of the activity was that our bank account balance started at \$14,472 on January 1, 2020 to \$36,730 on January 1, 2021.

The decision was made at the beginning of 2021 to continue to use the 2020 budget numbers until circumstances changed and an Annual meeting could occur. Since the beginning of this year the income and expenses have been below last year's averages.

Through the end of April actual regular income was \$29,704 compared to "budgeted income" of \$37,184. If that average level of giving happens for the whole year, the 2021 giving would be \$89,112 compared to the 2020 giving of \$111,401.

Through the end of April actual expenses were \$39,178 compared to "budgeted expenses" of \$43,341. If that average level of expenses happens for the whole year, the 2021 expenses would be \$117,537.

2021 FINANCIAL PLAN

That level of difference between income and expenses could be covered with the money in the bank. However, a further decrease in income, or a further increase in expenses from calculated, which I believe is likely, or a combination there of could require taking further money from our reserves. As of the end of March 2021 the reserves with Northwestern Mutual are \$129,353 and we have \$42,430 in the ELCA Endowment Fund.

Updates will be made on a regular basis and if significant changes occur.

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P.S. Please feel free to ask any questions about this information and/or about the detailed information behind these numbers.