

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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PASTOR'S REPORT

It was eye-opening to look back through my calendar and the 2021 editions of the Weekly Update email as I prepared this report. In many ways, the past year was a blur – as I've said many times over the past two years, "time has no meaning!". I find myself thinking of the first six months of 2021 as an extension of 2020, with online-only worship, distanced outdoor visits, and curbside communion. I was reminded of the effort to connect folks with available COVID vaccines – it was a joy to help you schedule appointments and get more information about vaccine availability, and a joy to see some familiar faces at the vaccination sites, both administering and receiving vaccines. I am in awe of the power of science and medicine – how wonderful that God gifted so many people with the creativity, intelligence, and determination to develop vaccines and other life-saving treatments.

As things began to open up with our return to the sanctuary on June 13, we had to re-imagine yet again what it would look like to worship together in person while also continuing to include those not able to worship in the building. In this year in particular, I have been so very grateful for your patience, understanding, and commitment to safety and care of neighbor as you continued to faithfully mask up for worship, forgo singing beloved portions of the liturgy, and roll with the changes of plans as they came.

A highlight of 2021 for me was definitely our outdoor worship for Easter Sunday. It was the first time in over a year that many of us saw each other face-to-face, and singing joyfully and communing together was a fitting celebration of the resurrection. For me personally, it's been such a delight to sing with John Ivey in worship once a month this year, beginning with our outdoor services in the spring and early summer, and continuing in the sanctuary through the end of 2021.

I am also so grateful that Lutherlyn was open for camp this summer. After months of online Confirmation classes, it was wonderful to spend time with four of our Confirmation students in person and out in creation as we learned, played games, sang, worshiped, and ate together at Confirmation Camp in June.

As I write this in December 2021, I do so knowing that I will no longer be your pastor by the date of the Annual Congregational Meeting in January 2022. As I think about my tenure as your pastor over these past seven years, I am so grateful for the time we had together and the lasting memories we shared. God has indeed been at work in and through us as we worshiped, learned, and served together, and as we encouraged, comforted, and challenged one another. Thank you for answering the Holy Spirit's call to be part of this community – for sticking with it when things are difficult, for giving faithfully of your time and resources, for supporting one another through joy and sorrow. I am eager to see from afar what new things God will be doing in this place as you embrace what comes next.

With hope,
Pastor Kerri Clark

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES 6/2021

The annual congregational meeting to review 2020 was postponed from January 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and was held in person on Sunday, June 6, 2021 following the outdoor service.

Opening of meeting: President Alan Sandusky opened the meeting at 11:15am. The Secretary established that at least 20 members were present, constituting a quorum.

Pastor Kerri highlighted things going on during the pandemic, including baptisms, Confirmations, funerals, and new members.

Presentation of minutes from 2020 meeting: Minutes were approved as presented.

Review of 2020 Annual Report and 2021 Financial Plan: Rod Gunderson presented both and the information was in the packet.

Congregational Council elections: Jim and Cindy Workman, Donna Welsh, and Jim Gearhart reached the end of their allotted terms, and must sit out for a year before becoming eligible for re-election.

Nominated for Council:

 Ginny Beecher, Diane Ratai

Nominations from the floor: Don Herbert, nominated by Jim Workman

 Kevin Helms, nominated by Donna Welsh

There were no other nominations. The ballot was cast by the Secretary.

Old Business: None

New Business: Information on boiler repairs: A few leaks were reported and all have been taken care of.

Pastor suggested that there be a nominating committee of out-going council members to help select new council members.

A motion to make out going council member be the nominating committee was made by Ron Kerns and seconded by Jim Cessna. 1 no vote, all others approved. The motion carried.

Motion was made by Jim Workman and seconded by Ron Kerns to adjourn.

Sally Stoots,
Secretary

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Worship for the beginning of 2021 continued to be offered online only. Curbside Communion was offered twice per month after the online worship service and occasionally on a Wednesday. Those who wished could drive up to the rear entrance of Trinity to chat with Pastor Kerri, receive Communion, and drop off their offering envelopes. For the season of Lent, Pastor Kerri worked with three colleagues to record a series of Vespers services centered on the Beatitudes, which was shared via Zoom and on Facebook.



For Easter, we made plans to gather for worship in person, outdoors on Cameron Court (across Carnegie Ave. from Trinity). John Ivey provided music on guitar and set up a sound system, a folding table served as our altar, and congregation members brought their own chairs. It was a joy to be together, and especially to sing together. Additional outdoor services were held one Sunday in May and one in June, which included the 2021 Annual Congregational Meeting.

Worship in the sanctuary resumed on June 13, 2021. With no regular organist, various musicians filled in throughout the rest of 2021. After the in-person service each week, Pastor Kerri led an additional online service from Pfeifer Chapel, which was streamed to Zoom and Trinity's Facebook page, and later uploaded to Trinity's YouTube channel.

At the end of the summer, new equipment was purchased so that the service in the sanctuary could be livestreamed. This purchase totaled around \$5,000 and included a PTZ camera, camcorder, laptop, and various cables and connectors. A desk was set up behind the choir loft, and the system was designed for one person to be able to stream the service to YouTube each Sunday.

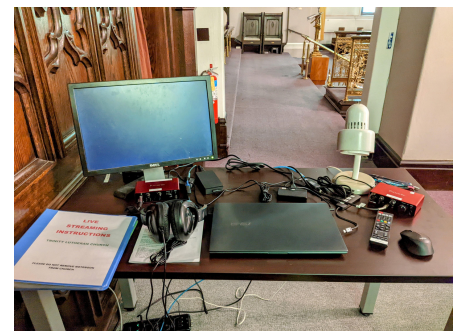
In November, Albert Dell was hired as the regular organist, to begin January 2, 2022.



Harvest Home Sunday



Decorating the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas



New livestream equipment was installed in the sanctuary, with two cameras in the balcony and computer up front.

FAITH FORMATION

For Lent, Pastor Kerri put together a resource bag, which included ashes and liturgy for Ash Wednesday, a devotion book, Holy Week Nature Walk activity, palm cross, small bar of soap, “praying in color” template, and a recipe for soft baked pretzels.

Pastor Kerri’s weekly Facebook videos for Bible Storytime and Night Prayer concluded in April and June, respectively, after over a year of production. Old videos continue to be available on Trinity’s Facebook page.

The Confirmation program met monthly on Zoom in the spring and in person in the fall. Four students and Pastor Kerri spent a week at Lutherlyn together in June, learning about the early Church through stories in the book of Acts. Caleb Connors, Colleen McGinley, Chase Sankovich, and Derek Soforic were confirmed in October.

The book study group continued to meet on Zoom for most of the year, finishing “Inspired” by Rachel Held Evans, working through part of “Womanist Midrash” by Wil Gafney, and beginning “I’m Still Here” by Austin Channing Brown.



Chase Sankovich, Caleb Connors, Derek Soforic, and Colleen McGinley were confirmed on October 31, 2021, Reformation Sunday.



Colleen, Nate, Caleb, Maggie, Jen (St. Paul's), and Pastor Kerri at Lutherlyn in June.

SOCIAL MINISTRY

It was very sad for this committee, and the congregation as a whole, to lose Beckie Merchant in early 2021. She was a faithful member of the Social Ministry committee, unfailingly generous, and instrumental in running the Back-to-School Clothing Giveaway. Many donations in her memory were directed toward the Giveaway this year.



Beckie Merchant, pictured here in 2019

The Back-to-School Clothing Giveaway was held on August 14, 2021, serving over 145 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. As in 2020, volunteers were limited, masks were required, and the check-in table was outside. In November, we held the Chicken and Biscuit Dinner (carry-out only) and raised \$1,387 for the 2022 Back-to-School Clothing Giveaway.



Above: Many volunteers helped stuff backpacks with school supplies to prepare for the Giveaway.



Top Right: Donna Welsh and Kevin Helms staffing the shoe room.

Bottom Right: Volunteers at the November 2021 Chicken and Biscuit Dinner.



PROPERTY

The property committee continued to maintain the church properties, although some projects were delayed (like many things) because of the pandemic. The major boiler repair was completed in June at a cost of about \$3,500. That may seem expensive for a repair, but replacement could have been closer to \$30,000. In late fall we solicited bids to have the front steps repaired and found a contractor to do the work. Unfortunately, his schedule prevented him from being able to complete the work before winter weather came. We anticipate him doing the work in the spring. We purchased “retro-fit” LED replacement lights for the downstairs chapel with volunteer installation planned for the coming month.

The office copier began to work poorly over the summer months and after several attempts for our service contractor to repair it, it became obvious that the copier was too obsolete to be repaired. Fortunately, we were able to locate a refurbished machine with very little usage and were able to purchase it along with a new service contract at a savings compared to our previous service contract.

Our biggest project was the sanctuary live stream system. Though the Zoom platform Pastor Kerri used through most of the pandemic was very good, it did not allow folks online to experience the full sanctuary worship service, and was quite time consuming. With the help of Alan Sandusky’s nephew, Nathan Ivey, we came up with a plan to live stream the service from the sanctuary. With a budget of \$5,000 (all of it donated and used only for the equipment), we were able to purchase and set up a two-camera system run through a program called OBS that we began using just before the Advent season. Alan Sandusky and others ran ethernet cables through the ceiling from the balcony to both the router in the pastor’s office and the choir loft. Alan also built a platform around the existing steps at the rear of the choir loft to make space for the desk, and new carpeting was installed over it.

After a few hiccups during the first weeks, Chandler Daugherty stepped up and skillfully has guided us through a much-improved way to reach out to a very wide audience of both members and non-members. Thanks goes out all who made monetary donations toward this project, and to members Sue and Don Thompson for donating a desk to anchor the new equipment, and Beth Brady-Smith and Jason Smith for donating a monitor and cables.

Moving forward, we will be purchasing and installing a new door handle and “comfort-height” toilet with accompanying grab bars in the main floor restroom, along with continued preventive maintenance and necessary repairs to our church properties.

FINANCE

"A budget is normally developed from more reliable and consistent information than what is available." That is what I said when I gave the 2021 Financial Annual Report almost halfway through 2021.

The 2020 budget was used for 2021 which planned for expenses of \$130,525 to be covered by \$105,505 from current giving of all types and \$25,000 from our reserves (investments).

The financial report shows that the total income for 2021 was \$105,806 and the total expenses were \$131,665.

In early 2020 we took money out of our reserves, and later in 2020 we received the PPP grant money. With regular giving and memorials throughout 2020, the bank balance on January 1, 2021 totaled \$36,730. Because it appeared that the bank balance would drop below \$10,000 before the end of 2021, we withdrew \$10,000 from Northwestern, which gave us a balance of \$16,881 at the end of the year.

Because of the uncertainty that we face in 2022, we are estimating that we will have income of \$101,600 and expenses of \$92,995. This estimate anticipates paying supply pastors throughout the year, but not necessarily a permanent called pastor.

We still have good reserves. Current balances for our investments total \$43,716 in the ELCA Endowment fund and \$128,948 is in the Northwestern Mutual Fund.

A summary budget for 2022 is included with this packet. If you have any questions, please call me.

Rod Gunderson, Treasurer
724-366-0046
Or email rodgun@zoominternet.net

2021 STATISTICS

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ginny Beecher, Kevin Helms, Don Herbert, and Diane Ratai were elected at the June 2021 Annual Meeting to serve a three-year term. They joined current Council members Chrissy Dusha, Joe Dusha, Ken Goucher (Vice President), Rod Gunderson (Treasurer), Alan Sandusky (President), Sally Stoots (Secretary), and Jeff Williams.

NEW MEMBERS

Ron Enos joined the congregation by affirmation of baptism on August 15, 2021

DEATHS

Albert "Butch" Sandusky, Marlene Eicher, Beckie Merchant, Greg Schroyer, Ron Filburn, Beverly Schroyer, John Shartzter, Michelle Ridgely, Dolores Groh, Susie Kachmarek, Dan Doppelheuer, Tom Hoak

BAPTISMS

Alyssa Virgillo & Lucas Virgillo

CONFIRMATIONS

Caleb Connors, Colleen McGinley, Chase Sankovich, Derek Soforic

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

June - December average weekly in-person worship attendance: 29

January - June (no in-person worship) average weekly online views: 51

June - December (in-person worship resumes) average weekly online views: 19

GIVING

67 individuals/families made contributions to Trinity

4 individuals/families utilized online giving through Tithe.ly

7 individuals/families utilized automated giving through their bank