

Trinity Lutheran Church

Church Council meeting, Tuesday, January 23, 2018

Trinity Lutheran Church: Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by President Jeff Riddle.

Attendees: Jeff Riddle, Tim Gauerke, Nancy Johnson, Pastor Bryan, Pastor Andy, Pastor Dione, Charlene Kuenzi, Diane Opperman, Don Morgan.

Prayer: Pastor Bryan

Devotions: Jeff Riddle

Secretary's Report: Report was distributed and reviewed. Motion to approve by Char K., second by Nancy Johnson, approved.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report was distributed. Nancy J. reported that the budget is in good shape. An anonymous \$300,000 year-end gift contributed a positive end of year. The gift was to be distributed as follows: \$50,000 to the general fund, \$100,000 to building debt reduction, \$145,000 for special projects, and \$5,000 for the bell choir.

Pastors Reports:

► **Pastor Bryan:** A normal December in a congregation brings with it the preparations for Christmas celebrations, a looking forward to the ministries we hope to do in the upcoming year, close attention paid to the year-end balance sheet of ministry costs and gifts, and continued preparations for our upcoming annual meeting.

In these respects, December was a normal month at Trinity Lutheran Church, and a normal work month for me.

Along with helping to plan the ins and outs of our Christmas worship and contributing to special worship events, like the Men's Choir Cantata, I worked for our Mission and Stewardship Committee by helping to produce our financial stewardship materials and publicity. I also assisted with the drafting of our annual ministry budget for the upcoming year. Along with my normal duties of compiling and submitting employee work hours, I assisted with the job posting and communications related to our hiring of a new part-time custodian.

I know that reporting these elements of my work in December, makes the month sound mundane and rather boring, but let me assure you, my work in December was filled with wonderful and exciting things.

Trinity Lutheran was filled once again with music over the holiday season from a Shepherds Quarter concert, to our Men's Choir Cantata, to the combined work of all our choirs, and to the music filling our Christmas worship services. Beautiful music prepared us to celebrate the birth

of Jesus throughout the season of Advent, and our Christmas worship services were joyful, happy, and at times, quite crowded.

The good news of Christ's birth was heard at Trinity Lutheran.

The work of pastoral ministry also continued. Like my colleagues, I continued to teach Confirmation classes, attend to the sick and dying, comfort those grieving the death of loved ones, assist with worship and preach. I was able to continue teaching an adult education class on "The American Protestant Experience," and I took some vacation days at the beginning of December to recharge for the work ahead.

This was a great month for ministry at Trinity Lutheran, and I am thankful for the way all our staff pulled together to accomplish all the work that needed to be done. With this fresh in my memory, I look forward to our work ahead of us.

► **Pastor Andy:** The past two months have been yet another unfortunate stretch in which we lost far too many Trinity members—nine have died since our Nov. 28 Council meeting, including **Louise Dayton**, who died this morning (Jan. 23, 2018) after a 13-year battle with cancer. Our prayers are with all those mourning these losses, as well as those grieving the deaths of so many others in the past year.

Thankfully, we have the promise of the resurrection to lean on, and in the midst of these sad days we, of course, were able to celebrate Christmas, when Jesus was born to bring us second birth. One notable development from this past Christmas season was our first successful effort of ecumenical Christmas caroling through the streets of Waupaca. A dozen of us from local Lutheran, Methodist, and Catholic churches started and ended the hour of caroling at Trinity before enjoying some cookies and hot cocoa. I'm thankful to Pastoral Minister Lauri Wenninger from St. Mary Magdalene for coordinating this with me—the Catholics really carried us.

On a similar note of religious unity, the Jan. 3 confirmation presentation, featuring panelists from Moses Montefiore Synagogue and the Fox Valley Islamic Society and moderated masterfully by Pastor Dione, was one of our best yet. In the high-schoolers' Crossover Bible study, **Jake Foss** offered a meaningful presentation of his own on Jan. 17, and fellow youth-group alum **Maddy Frank** will follow suit by telling her own story on Jan. 31.

The biggest youth event of the past month was the annual Middle School Lock-In on Jan. 20-21. Numbers were up, with 37 middle-schoolers turning out for their second lock-in since Kim Miller became our youth coordinator. Kim did a typically tremendous job, with help from another super group of almost 20 high-schoolers. **Becca Mortensen** and the interns from Crossways Camps offered invaluable round-the-clock help with Bible study, activities, and the worship service that the middle-schoolers themselves crafted. Incoming President **Tim Gauerke** once again showed up in full Roman soldier garb to continue the tradition of leading the wee-hours game of Romans and Christians—sacrificing sleep on his birthday for the second straight year—and **Dean Sondrol** pulled another all-nighter in his usual superhuman fashion.

My personal highlight of the last two months was our eighth-graders' amazing output to make up the massive deficit we were running in sponsoring our Compassion International child, Geoffrey, in Kenya. **Patsy Hunter** accomplished a minor miracle in inspiring the eighth-graders to generate more than \$300 in the closing months of 2017, and she and two other adults matched the final week's proceeds to provide more than \$150 in addition. With God all things are possible! We'll shift our students' attention locally for the annual Souper Bowl of Caring to benefit the Waupaca Area Food Pantry, along with the help of the larger congregation, Jan. 31-Feb. 4.

In travel-related news, repairs on the Trinity bus prompted us to cancel the Jan. 3 edition of FeFiFoFUN (even though the bus managed to return prior to that day—oh, well). On the brighter side, Kim Miller and **Susan Elandt**, coordinating her third straight ELCA Youth Gathering trip with Trinity, will travel to Houston for the ELCA's annual Extravaganza for youth workers, where they'll benefit from educational opportunities and familiarize themselves with the coming summer's host city for the national gathering.

Finally, a big word of thanks to outgoing Council members **Mike Claussen, Char Kuenzi, Marshall Lysne, Nancy Ross**, and especially **President Jeff Riddle** for your service these past three years!

► **Pastor Dione:** With the end of one calendar year and the beginning of another, it has been an exciting time around Trinity since our last meeting in November.

Advent has come and gone. It seemed to go by especially quickly on my end since I spent the middle of the season on Trinity's service trip to Rockport, Texas. Most of our time was spent cutting and moving trees that had been damaged during Hurricane Harvey. It was a great joy to be able to be a part of Trinity's long tradition of packing the bus and trailer with tools of all kinds as people filled with enthusiasm set out to serve people who have been through tragedy. Our group of eight was filled with talented people with a passion for helping others. As a pastor, it was extremely meaningful to get to know everyone and exciting to see people using their gifts and passions in ways that really show what it means to live vocational lives – lives in which our passions and talents meet the world's deep need. I am thankful for being part of a pastoral team and congregation where we encourage each other to take these opportunities (even during Advent) to be with our congregation members as they teach us what shape service takes outside the walls of the church.

After returning from the service trip, Christmas was upon us quickly. Given the uniqueness of how the church calendar fell, we had seven worship services in a 36-hour timeframe. This was the first time we have gone through the Christmas lineup since our new administrative staff began, but we all pulled together and had a wonderful time of worship. It is in the busy times when all the work our worship support staff and volunteers do is most apparent, and I am thankful for all they did and continue to do to help support our congregation's worship life. Pastors are the most visible worship leaders, but the musicians, ushers, readers, elders,

custodians, PowerPoint operators, sound booth techs, Sanctuary Stewards and acolytes, are all essential. Their contributions and dedication do not go unnoticed.

Just before Christmas, we welcomed our newest addition to the administrative staff, Cindy Enyart. I have been helping in the training process as she settled into her position. She will work largely with volunteer coordination. In the coming month or so, we will have a Meet Your Administrative Assistants Day during worship so both Lori Niemuth and Cindy can meet more of our members and to see how their work supports the worship services.

Confirmation continues to march on after our brief break at Christmas. We kicked off the second half of our confirmation year with an interfaith panel that I facilitated. I spent the majority of the fall building relationships and connections with our interfaith neighbors to make the panel possible. Panelists were members of the Fox Valley Islamic Society and Moses Montefiore Synagogue. With the confirmation students, their parents, and quite a few members of the congregation, who are not directly connected with the confirmation program, we had around 200 people in attendance. I had a lot of fun and learned quite a bit myself. The discussions we had the following week were thoughtful and enlightening.

This month, I started attending required synod meetings for first-call pastors, which will take place on the third Tuesday of each month for the next two years. It seems like a good group so far, and I look forward to journeying with first-call colleagues in the synod as I live and grow more fully into my pastoral identity in this place.

As you may have noticed, the theme of my report this month was based around making connections and building relationships. As God continues to call us to be together, learn from each other, and see one another as Jesus sees us, I pray that the coming year will be one of spiritual and relational growth for us all.

Council Reports:

Buildings and Grounds: Don M. reported that the Tiny Treasures entry remodel project scope of work has been tabled. The estimates came in at \$28,000. This is approximately \$13,000 more than was set aside for the project. They will be exploring possible less expensive options.

Don also reported there are some upcoming needs that will need to be addressed. They have an estimate to cover the tiled floor in the multipurpose room with carpet. There is a problem with tiles popping up that needs to be addressed. The estimate ranges \$12,000 - \$14,000. The windows on the south side also are old and should be looked at to be replaced in the near future.

The committee is exploring options to address the freeze up of the sprinkler system which occurred during the last cold spell.

Personnel: Pastor Bryan reported they are continuing to update the employee manual.

Health: Jeff R. reported there was no meeting.

Membership & Evangelism: No report.

Mission Stewardship: Pastor B. reported that they were sending out thank-you letters to all pledge card contributors.

Parish Education: Diane O. reported the committee had no meeting.

Worship & Music: Char K. reported there were no items for Council approval. Reminder of the Music Spectacular coming up Feb. 11.

Family & Youth Team: Pastor Andy reported on the start of focus groups for the Saturday 6 p.m. worship and the Sunday 10:30 a.m. service on how engagement matters for younger families and what we can offer for families with young children.

Due to the low congregation support, the Scrip program will be discontinued.

The eighth-graders met their commitment for their Compassion Child sponsorship, Geoffrey.

Information & Technology: Pastor Bryan reported they are working on getting the TLC database and web hosting on the Cloud. This will result in better security, automatic backups and higher productivity when fully operational.

Future planning: No report

Old Business: President Jeff R. reminded Council members of our desire to have pictures, bio and contact info of all Council members publicly viewable on the web and here at the church for all congregation members to get to know who their representatives are.

Jeff also reported the audit of the church finances was complete and reported all was in order.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: Motion by Nancy J., seconded by Diane O. to adjourn. Motion Approved (7:49 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted, Tim Gauerke

Devotions for February 2018: Tim Gauerke

Next meeting: Feb 27, 2018, at 7:00 p.m.