

20
14

ANNUAL REPORT OF

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH • STILLWATER, MN





20
14

REPORT OF THE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

One of our greatest gifts from God might be the gift of self-awareness. In a perfect world, we will keep aligned with our strengths and thereby optimize God's purpose in our lives.

About ten years ago, I started paying more attention to situations that brought me energy and those that brought me into unhealthiness. Through StrengthsFinder, I was able to put language to this understanding. My strengths are Activator, Strategic, Command, Futuristic and Input. This combination enables me to thrive in situations of growth and new opportunity. It is not surprising that I have been a bit of a serial entrepreneur and risk taker throughout my life, willing to tackle new opportunities, and leading during times of optimism yet uncertainty.

It was this combination of strengths that also put me into a position of leadership at Trinity, starting with the Trinity for Tomorrow efforts and then the Congregational Council. As president of the Council for the last five years, our focus has been on rebounding from the effects of the global financial crisis and the departure of St. Croix Preparatory Academy from the Croix Center; consolidating our real estate holdings; and embarking on the Opening Doors campaign. This has kept me invigorated and energized — not surprising given my strengths.

I continue to be excited about the future of Trinity. With my term of service now ending, I can still see there is new work to be done that will require lay leaders with many different gifts. I'm imagining that individuals with strengths such as Arranger, Connectedness, Harmony, Maximize and Relator might find a calling. So many opportunities for Missions; so many new families bringing their children to Trinity; so many opportunities to connect people with their strengths and their calling.

I have been blessed by everyone with whom I have had the opportunity to serve. They have always had the best interests of Trinity in their hearts and minds as volunteer leaders of the church. It has been a true honor for me to be able to serve alongside these dedicated people, and I hope their contribution to the health and well being of the congregation is honored and appreciated.

In the end, we are all only human, with all of the attendant human strengths and weakness, hopes and dreams. As a community, we can accomplish much more together than we ever could individually. This community is to be honored, protected and cherished. Let us continue to work shoulder-to-shoulder, Bega Kwa Bega, in the years ahead. Onward and upward!

Grace to you and peace,
Eric Jackson , Congregational Council President



A year in the life and ministry of Trinity is more like a quilt or a photo album than it is a narrative or a story. As I begin to write this, I see snapshots of crazy, busy, wonderful Wednesday nights; beautiful, song-filled Sunday morning and Saturday evening worship services; groups of friends learning and sharing; families standing in line for Wednesday night pizza; Mexico Missionaries sharing stories; beautiful young people affirming their baptisms; a full-house Lutefisk dinner; tears shed in the hospital; communion services at Good Samaritan; amazing days at camp in northern Minnesota; a very wet VBS; spectacular Sunday mornings at the Drive-in.... This year was another amazing year of God-with-us, Spirit-filled days, weeks and months.

Like all years, this one also had its challenges, its struggles, its pain. We are not a perfect people, or a perfect community. Let us be lavish in our grace toward our neighbor, and toward one another. God blesses it all, and uses our best and our broken.

What I am most inspired by is the way in which Trinity continues to grow into a place in which we all are welcome. It is gratifying to see this community embody a sense of welcome, acceptance, and hospitality. Let us be diligent in our efforts to grow and mature into a community that reflects the Spirit of God.

As you page through this report, I hope you will see the miracles we have experienced God do in our midst, and that you join me in giving thanks for all of it. We are "blessed to be a blessing" in this world, and this congregation exists to remind us and the world that God has indeed come into this world to share love and abundance for all of God's creation.

Thank you for the ways you invest your self, your time and your resources in helping this congregation serve the world in Jesus' name. Your life and ministry is a vital part of this report. Thank you for being a brother or sister in Christ.

Praise God for another year of ministry!

Pastor Dan Poffenberger, Lead Pastor
dpoffenberger@trinitylc.org

20
14

LIFELONG LEARNING

What a wonderful year it has been at Trinity! I came on board last Thanksgiving and it has been a non-stop adventure and enjoyment since then. I am so grateful for the amazing community here — the deep connections, the brilliant questions, the way each of you makes such a difference in the world.

Adult Learning

We had a great response to Adult Learning in 2014. It began in Lent, with a series on the book of Job; in fall, we expanded our offerings to include classes every Sunday, with even greater attendance. Teachers include Pastor Dan, myself, Jody Thone, and professors from Luther Seminary.

Yoga

Another experiment that began during Lent has continued in full swing this fall: Yin Yoga every Wednesday night at 8 p.m. in the Garden Room. The classes have drawn solid participation from all age groups and ability levels, and allow participants to center themselves and fully experience God's presence in a different way.

Ministries

Hearts of the Home, GLOW, Working Moms, Couples Ministry and the Library have continued to thrive and grow! GLOW offered a wonderful Bible study this fall; Hearts of the Home has new leadership; the Library is focused on serving the community of Trinity in relevant and meaningful ways; and Couples experiences have continued to expand into teaching and small groups.

Narrative Lectionary

This fall we began to use the Narrative Lectionary, which is an amazing tool that helps the congregation align across various ministry areas, as well as provides a continuous arc throughout the year in worship so that we experience the whole of God's story as it's told in the Bible.

**Pastor Stephanie Vos, Pastor of
Lifelong Learning**
svos@trinitylc.org





20 14 CARE

As we said goodbye to Pastor Candace Moser in March, I said hello to a new, expanded role as Trinity's Care Coordinator. Originally designed to fill the gap until the new Care Pastor arrived, the role has now become a permanent part of our Care Ministry Team.

Working with our senior population is a natural progression for me: it builds upon the relationships I have nurtured over my nine years here at Trinity, allowing me to love and serve our older population. I have been richly rewarded in doing so.

I am so excited to be a part of the brand new Care Ministry team, which is composed of three people: in October, we called a part-time Pastor of Care Ministries to attend to the spiritual and sacramental needs of our senior population; we engaged a parish nurse to attend to the congregation's physical and spiritual needs; and we created my Congregational Care Coordinator role to attend to relational and spiritual needs.

While the current programs of BeFriends, Celebrating Seniors/Caring Friends, Knitting ministry, prayer group and prayer chain, Circle Groups, and Healing Touch are thriving, I'm looking forward to creating even more programs and opportunities for our seniors to embrace fun and fellowship, build relationships and integrate all generations with the expansion of the Care Team in November.

I am passionate about the people of Trinity and am so grateful to be here, sharing God's love and reminding all of us how treasured and valued we are, just because we are God's children.

Zanny Johnson
zjohnson@trinitylc.org

On Purpose Ministries continues to provide learning and experiential opportunities that connect us with our identity as a beloved child of God, uniquely designed to make a difference in this world.

We love exploring questions like: Who am I? What are my strengths? Where am I going? How can I find more meaning & purpose in my life? How do I connect with God? Do I have a call?

This year we are focused on growing our listening presence with classes on *Listening to God*, *Growing our Listening Presence with One Another*, and *Listening & Celebrating our Saints*. We partner with you to help you find your spiritual practices and to connect to a community of practice here at Trinity. We share a wide variety of ways to connect to God through our Spiritual Practice Tree: this year, we celebrate our seventh year of Thursday morning contemplative practice with a vibrant group that engages in lectio divina, silent meditation and this fall & winter-felted artwork inspired by our presence practice.

Leadership from On Purpose Team members provides consistent, vital learning within our congregational community: *Living your Strengths*, led by Walt Ogburn and Amy Karlstad; *Ask Gene: Resume and Interview Coaching* provided by Gene Ecker; and my regular co-lead on Enneagram classes, Tim Gillis, are all to be thanked for bringing their gifts and talents to Trinity.

This year I also step into an expanded role as Director of Organization Development. The development of Trinity's Faith Model and our Core Commitments are new additions to my work here at Trinity and I am blessed to be working with all of Trinity's Ministry Leaders to grow and develop our talent.

I give thanks for this beautiful community that together is working to unleash the creative power of faith by loving everyone, transforming lives through Jesus, and serving the world.

Jody Thone, Director of On Purpose Ministries
jthone@trinitylc.org



*God acts within every moment
And creates the world with each breath.
God speaks from the center of the universe,
In the silence beyond all thought.
Mightier than the crash of a thunderstorm,
Mightier than the roar of the sea,
Is God's voice silently speaking
In the depths of the listening heart.*

— Psalm 93

20
14

MISSIONS

This year was another busy time for Trinity's many missions at home and around the world.

Trinity missions are an inter-generational experience that provide access for all to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Together we experience the gospel message to love your neighbor.

Mission volunteers from Trinity and our community preached the love of Christ through their acts of service while feeding the hungry, visiting the imprisoned, clothing the naked, and comforting the sick. Thank you for your willingness to serve and support these ministries.

Whether your passion is to serve around town or around the world, there are many mission opportunities available for you. Every ministry requires a variety of skill sets and time commitments.

Just over a year ago we launched the Trinity Mission Alumni Association (TMAA) to continue the connection between our mission volunteers. Each volunteer carries a unique experience and perspective of being Christ's hands and feet, whether serving locally or globally. The TMAA wants you to gather together and share these stories! Please join us in imparting the wisdom, joy, and enthusiasm of your experience. Your stories are vital in the effort to encourage and empower future generations to live out their faith in Jesus Christ through a lifestyle of service. Everyone who has served is part of the association.

For more information about the TMAA, please log on to trinitylc.org and click on "Missions" then on "Alumni".

As always, every Trinity mission experience is open for all to serve!

02/16/2014 19

Tom Thiets, Director of Missions Ministries
tthiets@trinitylc.org

20
14

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY

The Children's, Youth and Families Ministries staff are committed to supporting each family on the great adventure of faith formation. As beloved children of God, we live out our baptismal promises and grow as followers of Christ.

It has been a privilege to work with the Faith and Family 2020 Vision Team as they poured their hearts and souls into the research of what it means for individuals to grow a faith that sticks for life. Some specific ways the CYF staff have implemented the team's recommendations include:

- Development of Keeping the Promises
- Formation of a Play & Pray Group for young families
- Implementation of Bible reading and exploration each week so that all ages learn God's story and how we fit into it
- Creation of a weekly bulletin insert, Sharing God's Story, to encourage Intergenerational conversations about each week's Worship lesson
- Establishing service opportunities so that all ages may participate in the Mexico Mission experience — from creating quilts to building roofs to taking prayer walks
- Formation of learning shifts that allow for more intentional interaction between all generations so that we can learn best faith practices from one another
- Distribution of Bibles to toddlers, kindergarteners, 4th graders, and 7th graders
- Designation of a Bible 101 classroom for 4th graders, dedicated to teaching them how to navigate the Bible
- Distribution of a monthly newsletter for families with children ages birth-three

Confirmation continues to be one of our largest faith formation opportunities. I have the privilege of leading this team and coaching the 7th grade confirmation students as we follow the church-wide narrative lectionary. Pastor Stephanie Vos is coaching 8th grade confirmation students about how God's unique design of each of us allows us to make a difference in the world. Pastor Dan Poffenberger coaches our 9th grade confirmation students in learning to articulate their Christian theological perspective.

The Children's, Youth and Families Staff are always eager to serve in whatever way best demonstrates and plants a faith that will stick for life!

Jody Nyenhuis, Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries
jnyenhuis@trinitylc.org





20
14

ADMINISTRATIVE

As you've undoubtedly noticed, Trinity has undergone a significant change in its landscape this year. At last year's Annual Meeting, the congregation approved the demolition of the old Post Office building. So, in January, 2014, the heavy equipment moved in and began demolishing the 50-year-old building, sorting out steel, copper, and concrete for recycling as they progressed. This has resulted in a fresh new look at a side of Trinity's facility that remained hidden until now! Final grading and seeding of the space, which enhances its appearance, prevents erosion and protects Trinity's present facility, was completed in early September.

Trinity's computer landscape also changed this year: we're now in the Cloud! After limping along for more than seven years with outdated computers and servers that failed frequently, we made the decision to move our computer network storage to the Cloud, purchase new hardware, and implement a new operating system in April and May. The new system has improved staff efficiency and collaborative communications, as well as reduced outside vendor repair costs. Thank you to Jim Brown for his assistance, donated time and materials.

Our indoor gardens also received a landscaping overhaul in late summer and early fall. The Landscaping Team, led by Sandy Wendt, freshened up our indoor gardens in the Commons, ramp, Narthex and Garden Room. Thanks to the labor of love by that team, and donations of plants and materials, we now have beautiful indoor gardens once more.

The Helping Hands Team, under the leadership of Lowell Saterbak, continues to share their gifts here at Trinity and throughout the metro. In addition to their ministry at Bethlehem Lutheran-Midway, Global Health Missions, Valley Outreach, and the Annual Community Meal-packing Event, the Team also finished Trinity's playground playhouse, worked on the Drive-In, and completed a multitude of repairs and projects at Trinity. Thank you!

We were blessed with new additions to our staff in FY2014, welcoming: Linda Flood (Food Services Manager), Meg Gerlach (Children's Ministries Coordinator), Kelsey Mans (CYF Specialist, Gr. 10-12), and Pastor Stephanie Vos (Pastor of Lifelong Learning). It is exciting to watch these new staff members fully engage in ministry, working alongside the multitude of volunteers involved in the many and varied ministries here at Trinity! We also bid a warm farewell to: Tim Hackbarth, Christine Lande, Martha Sather, Allison Siburg, and Jackson Weyrauch. We thank them for their many contributions to the ministries here at Trinity and wish them well.

Bob Eiselt, Parish Administrator
beiselt@trinitylc.org



The Worship & Music team are the music and worship makers, shapers, creators and deliverers, whispering, echoing and encouraging the beauty and holiness of the liturgy.

Our goal is to design and offer a diversity of worship events in which people experience, in many diverse ways —praying, singing, eating, listening, crying and rejoicing— being together as a body of Christ.

Our leaders and teams —choirs, bands, bells, keyboards, vocalists— have worked together to create worship that is always grounded in Lutheran theology and far-reaching in its depth and breadth. We have done this with our planning and implementation of :

- three unique worship services each weekend based on the Narrative Lectionary, as well as festival worship at Christmas, on Good Friday and at Easter;
- worship services that include amazing vocalists, like Roosevelt Credit's spirit-filled performance on Palm Sunday, and Ash Wednesday worship that incorporates all ages;
- intergenerational Worship opportunities, such as our Ash Wednesday service
- the children's choirs musical, *Jonah*, performed three times during worship the first weekend in May (to rave reviews);
- collaboration with confirmation leaders in bringing worship to Wednesday night learning once a month.

We are so aware we cannot do this on our own, and are grateful for:

- the support and encouragement the congregation has given us;
- the creative freedom from, and needed feed-back by, our pastors;
- the participation of singers, readers, poets, assisting ministers, artists, instrumentalists, ushers, greeters, those who set up communion, those who clean and straighten the space every week, those who set the scene for every season of the church year, and those who bake the bread;
- the talented team with whom we work —Debi Orff, Sonia Esch, Jane Strauman, Dave Goulette, Zanny Johnson, Craig Koehnen, Jake McBroom and Rob Frost— who sing and dance with us every step of the way.

Soli Deo Gloria – To God alone be the glory
(The words J. S. Bach penned at the end of every composition)

Carol Carver, Director of Worship & Fine Arts Ministries
ccarver@trinitylc.org

Phil Kadidlo, Director of Worship & Music Ministries
pkadidlo@trinitylc.org



Each of us here at Trinity participates in a Group and Team in one way or another. Whether you participate in one group or ten, you are living out your faith with your brothers and sisters in Christ, and spreading God's love wherever you go.

This has been a busy year for our Groups & Teams! Highlights include:

- **GLOW** (God Loving Outdoor Women) kicked off the year with indoor rock climbing, and later spent a day paddleboarding on the St. Croix, a weekend camping at Jay Cooke State Park, and another day hiking at Willow River State Park
- **AWE** (Active Women Events) and the **Retired Men's Group** joined forces in June for a packed-to-the-gills boat tour of the new St. Croix Bridge
- **MVP** (Men. Value. Purpose.) held their annual Game Dinner & Fish Fry in November, and featured myriad speakers throughout the year
- **Library** volunteers hosted a state-wide conference of ELCA Church Librarians at Trinity
- **Ruth Circle** held a spiritually nurturing retreat in Two Harbors
- Our **Book Groups** and **Bible Study Groups** continued to offer opportunities for learning and growth in the word of God

Our groups and teams are meant to draw you closer to God through interactions with friends. For more information about joining one, log on to trinitylc.org and click on "Connect" then "Groups & Teams"



20
14

STEWARDSHIP

Trinity's Annual Report is, in reality, an accounting of how we, as a community, stewarded the gifts God has given us: our strengths and passions; our time and energy; our material gifts of time and things.

In recognizing this, we also realize our individual stewardship is a whole-life exercise: every day, every interaction, every gift and investment is an act of stewardship.

Stewardship is based in trust, and blossoms with a lack of fear. Addressing his disciples, Jesus told them not to be concerned about anything because they knew God loved them and would provide for them (see Matthew 6:25ff).

Similarly, the Apostle Paul, caught up in Jesus' kingdom logic, argues against anxious living by urging his friends in the community of Philippi to "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). He goes on to tell them the following: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6).

Thanks be to God for all that we have and all that we are called to do!

Stewardship always results in joy. May we joyfully grow in our stewardship again this year!

Pastor Dan Poffenberger, Lead Pastor
dpoffenberger@trinitylc.org

20
14

SERVICE, BENEVOLENCE & OUTREACH

Every year, the community of Trinity answers the call of Jesus to love our neighbors. This service takes many forms, only some of which are recorded. Much of our service happens quietly in the lives of our members in their neighborhoods, workplaces, schools and travels.

Trinity actively serves its neighbors locally, in the metro, and around the world. These pages, and the work that they represent is, in my opinion, some of the best work we do together as a community of Jesus-followers. It is exciting and, in many ways, the clearest testimony of the impact Trinity has in living out Jesus' command to love our neighbor.

What this report cannot express is the countless ways we are shaped, transformed and loved through the relationships these projects represent. A person and, indeed, a whole community is shaped by the ways in which it gives itself away to the stranger and the neighbor. Trinity's beauty lies in its willingness to share itself with the world by providing our neighbors with water, shelter and education.

This report should serve to inspire us, as a community, to extend ourselves further, trust God more, go deeper into relationship with our neighbors. This year, like all those before, is just one more step in following the Way of Jesus — there are always more steps to take, more distance to gain.

For those of you who pay close attention to fiscal reporting, please know this booklet is not part of our financial reports: any dollar amounts indicated here are an approximation only. In many cases, values and dollars are conservative estimates; in others, the information may also have been reported in the budget or elsewhere.

Thank you to all who gave — it takes a congregation-wide effort, from youngest and newest to our oldest and most senior. May God be glorified in our serving!

Pastor Dan Poffenberger, Lead Pastor
dpoffenberger@trinitylc.org



**Trinity Completes first full year under fiscal year system**

- We finished our first complete non-calendar fiscal year on August 31, 2014. For reporting purposes, our financial reports return to a full 12-month comparative basis, showing a 12-month fiscal year 2014 alongside fiscal year 2013's comparative results.

Results of Operations fiscal year-end August 31, 2014

- Trinity's FY2014 Operating Income of \$2,202,878 reflects a 2.3% decrease compared with last fiscal year's \$2,255,070. FY2014 Operating Expenses of \$2,306,345 were virtually flat when compared to a like comparable amount for fiscal year 2013, adjusting for 8 months of Mortgage Interest Expense, \$116,448, brought back into Operating Expenses for FY2014. Contribution Income for FY2014 was off \$150,000 compared to FY 2013, resulting in fiscal year deficit of \$183,000.

Results of "Opening Doors" Capital Appeal through fiscal year-end August 31, 2014

- Income totaling \$1,720,377 has been received since inception through August 31, 2014 for the Opening Doors Capital Appeal. Appeal disbursements during the fiscal year of \$186,648 were made for planned expenditures of mortgage expense, design work, demolition and miscellaneous appeal expenses.

Budget Plan for fiscal year ending August 31, 2015

- The budget plan for FY2015 anticipates an operating income budget of \$2,409,000 and an operating expense budget of \$2,297,625, projecting a 2015 fiscal year operating surplus of \$111,375 and a balanced budget after capital funding and expenses.

Financial Reports

- Copies of our CPA's letter and audit results, as well as financial reports, a recap of last year's actual income and expense, a Treasurer's Report, a Balance Sheet summary and a proposed FY2015 budget are available online at www.trinitylc.org or in the Church Office.

Bob Eiselt, Parish Administrator
beiselt@trinitylc.org

20
14

ANNUAL REPORT OF

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH • STILLWATER, MN

