

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF

Trinity Lutheran Church

Stillwater, Minnesota

1871 – 2021



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IN HOPE AND CONFIDENCE

Introduction

by the Rev. Dr. Chris Bellefeuille

At any given time in history, there are those in the position to give voice to an event, a moment, a marking of time. And yet there are, in our case, 150 years' worth of God encounters, human experiences, celebrations, triumphs, disasters, sorrows, missteps and giant leaps forward. Each person involved across our history has their own story to tell, their own perspective on the truth, their own understanding of how events should be remembered.

This carefully constructed collection of memories and reflections is simply a snapshot of that history, captured on the occasion of Trinity Lutheran Church's 150th anniversary in the year 2021.

We do this work not only to celebrate what has been and where we are now, but to inform our call into the future. And to celebrate the joy of being the living Body of Christ, alive and risen in the world—bearing the Gospel news of love, grace, forgiveness, and belonging.

Effort was made to tell stories thoughtfully, carefully, and accurately. And still history functions like memoir: reflecting what was remembered and how it was remembered, as much as what happened. We give special thanks to Susan Goerne Stow for her diligent and professional approach to capturing the stories, sifting through records, and fact checking wherever she could. She and our other contributors have created for us a narrative that helps us reflect on God's work throughout our history.

As a teacher once said: "We should be less concerned with being great and more concerned with being faithful." In this our 150th year, we celebrate the rich history of faith that has carried us well into the 21st century. And we live in hope that the ministry and community of this congregation will continue to faithfully pursue God's work into the future.

Happy birthday, Trinity, you grand girl.

And thanks be to God, for being the foundation of all that is and all that will be.

As part of our celebratory reflections, the events of 2020 and the racial uprisings have demanded that we revisit aspects of our history that have too commonly been overlooked by a dominant white culture. To that end, careful work has begun to determine the presettlement, Indigenous history of the valley we inhabit. It is important that we both practice our confession and repentance of that part of our history and document it here to assure that our future remains one of reconciliation, justice, reparation, and true equity.

Thanks to Marilee Poe Tangen, Publications Manager, for drafting the confession, land acknowledgment and commitment; and to the Racial Justice Ministry Team for shepherding the effort.

CONFESSION LEADS TO HEALING

Prologue

by Marilee Poe Tangen

CONFESSION

We are called to love and serve our neighbor, and participate in healing ourselves, the church, our community and planet. Our church is deeply rooted in Scripture, the tradition of word and sacrament and the Lutheran Confessions. Our church is both resilient and always being reformed. We are called to share the peace of Jesus, participate in God's work of reconciliation in the world and creation, and seek justice for all people.

We are one humanity, created by God, enslaved to sin and set free through the cross. Therefore we confess our sin.

We confess that we have not learned our history as it relates to Indigenous peoples, or taken the time to listen to their stories. We acknowledge and ask forgiveness for the church's role in the colonization of the land from which our wealth has been established. This land was not given away to settlers. The seizure of this land through force, displacement and broken treaties has harmed and continues to harm Native nations, governments and individual members. We continue to dwell on stolen land.

We have treated Indigenous Peoples as invisible, and not as sovereign nations. We are unaware of ongoing and vibrant Native nations, and fail to recognize we have much to learn.

We have participated in the environmental degradation that began with European settlement.

When George Floyd was murdered 30 miles from our church, we did not rise up as one to support our Black neighbors as we do for victims of natural disasters. We acknowledge that he was one victim among so many.

We do not fully understand the extent of the harm caused by our own and institutional racism, nor have we joined the struggle. We have not honored and

understood BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) wisdom and courage. We have yet to lift the voices of our BIPOC siblings to address today's crises.

Confession leads to healing.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A significant part of our confession, and necessary to include in a book about our settler history, is an Indigenous Land Acknowledgment. This acknowledgment is an opportunity for the whole community to increase their awareness and learn the truth of the history of the land on which Trinity Lutheran Church was built.

Trinity Lutheran Church is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ (translated as Seven Council Fires) Dakhóta people, specifically the Wahpekiye Nation (translated as Shooters Among the Leaves). We are on Dakota and Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) land. This land holds spiritual and ongoing importance for its original stewards, the Native nations and all Indigenous peoples of the St. Croix Valley region. We give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

The 1837 Land Cession Treaties between the Ojibwe and Dakota Peoples and U.S. government opened up the present-day St. Croix Valley including Stillwater to colonial settlement. Government officials pursued these treaties to enable large-scale logging of forests. Native peoples entered into treaties as a means of survival from the genocide, ethnic cleansing, cultural erasure and forced removal enacted upon them. Treaties are spiritually binding for Indigenous Peoples. Further, they are and continue to be the law of the land, despite the U.S. government's failures to meet its obligations.

We honor and affirm the sovereignty of Native nations who independently govern for the good of their people.

COMMITMENT

We are called to keep the faith. We do this through commitment.

Trinity Lutheran Church members are taking steps individually and as a faith community towards understanding, confronting and dismantling the racial bias and systemic racism that is around us, among us, and within us. Trinity is a community of practice, aspiring to the ongoing awareness and action that will allow us to live out our commitments. This work is not easy, convenient or comfortable.

We recognize that we are just beginning this process. Work on the commitments outlined below has only slightly begun at Trinity and with the partnerships required to make change. We acknowledge that our commitments need to become more specific and accountable. Trinity members have recently established the Racial Justice Ministry Team and ABIDE (Accountability, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity,

and Equity) Readers small group. We are partnering with many organizations and people already committed to this work, such as our larger church the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) including our Saint Paul Area Synod, and the Minnesota Council of Churches.

Our commitment includes Truth, Education, Relationship and Action (Reparation leading to Reconciliation).

We commit to truth telling by deep listening to the voices of our BIPOC siblings; as well as honest learning around our own, our church's, and our government's harmful ideology and policy toward these siblings. Acknowledge the horrific truths of our history to promote healing and wholeness. We commit to the narrative change when all voices are listened to and acknowledged. When wisdom is heard, it is a powerful resource to unite people of all backgrounds and move us forward.

We commit to education. Build our collective understanding of the history and ongoing effects of white privilege and the pervasiveness of racism. We will continue to invite BIPOC voices (speakers, authors, advocates, and more) to teach our faith community. We will do our own hard work of learning and compensate those we ask for help.

We commit to building relationships with the BIPOC community. Live the mission that we proclaim to love our neighbor—with Jesus' intent of loving those who do not look like us (a mostly white congregation). We will continue to celebrate the gifts of diverse voices in our worship and compensate fairly. We will continue to use inclusive language in worship and invite continuing progress in showing respect and honor. We will continue to share and partner with people and organizations doing the work of racial justice and look for new opportunities. Strive for equity that grows out of love, not guilt.

We commit to action that leads to reparation and reconciliation. Look to the wisdom and guidance of our BIPOC neighbors in carrying out meaningful reparations. Advocate for the rights of all Black, Indigenous, and people of color through organized and effective change to structures, laws and policies. We commit to continuing our work in land acknowledgment that recognizes the Indigenous as the past, present and future caretakers of this land. Transcend the paralysis of guilt and shame with engagement, accountability and responsibility. Follow God's work of reconciliation in the world, seeking justice for all people and celebrating our diversity within Christ's unifying love.

Further, we commit to engaging and equipping our young people in this work.

Resources:
<https://native-land.ca/>

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Ethnic-Specific-and-Multicultural-Ministries/American-Indian-and-Alaska-Native>

<http://treatiesmatter.org/treaties/land/1837-ojibwe-dakota>

CHAPTER ONE

Mother Smith

by Larry Loyer



Ingri Christina Smith
“Mother Smith”

Sven Peterson Smith and Ingri Christina Smith were the first Swedish inhabitants of Stillwater. She was known for many years as “Mother Smith” and is the founder of the Swedish Lutheran Church—now known as Trinity Lutheran Church in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Although we have little information about Mrs. Smith’s early life, there are reports from other emigrants from Sweden the year her family emigrated. One of the reports comes from “Wood-John” who immigrated with a group of five families in the summer of 1853 from Jonkøpings Lan to Chicago. They had a difficult journey due to lack of wind and had to ration drinkable water. That winter, the men found work on a railroad and the next summer the men came to

Stillwater and were employed in the lumber industry.

The Smith (Smed in Sweden) family also immigrated in 1853 from Jonkøpings Lan to Chicago. That winter, Mr. Smith worked on the railroad and the following summer he came to Stillwater. They might have traveled with “Wood-John” or perhaps Pastor Carlsson who made the same journey in 1853 with 17 members of his parish on a boat with 176 other emigrants.

Swedish emigration to the United States was well organized in the 1850s. American-based companies advertised in Swedish newspapers, visited Swedish villages and attended county fairs. Most immigrants arrived in Gothenburg a week before their departure date in order to make all the necessary arrangements. The emigrants were often housed in cheap, overcrowded accommodations. They were required to submit a Certificate of Change of Address signed by their parish priest to

the local authorities. Also, they needed to purchase food, clothing and mattresses for their voyage.

After all arrangements were made, they boarded a small steamer ship in Gothenburg bound for an English port, usually Hull, England. This part of the journey took two days and the passengers were crammed into tight quarters. Each berth averaged 6 feet by 6 feet and accommodated four people. Often the space was not high enough to stand up in. Once they arrived in England, they boarded a train to a larger port, often Liverpool. They then traveled to America on ships usually carrying cargoes of iron. The length of the voyage averaged about seven weeks. Upon arrival in New York, they boarded trains bound for Buffalo where they would board a boat bound to Toledo, Ohio. At Toledo, they could take another train to Chicago, Illinois.

The year after the Smith family arrived in Chicago, the city was ravaged by a cholera epidemic. It is estimated that two-thirds of the immigrant population of the city died that year. The Smith family lost four of their six children during the epidemic. Many immigrants, including the Smith family, left Chicago for less infected places. There are accounts, from this period, of immigrants on boats witnessing wolves digging up the corpses of victims who had been buried along the shores of the rivers.

In 1855 when the Smith family arrived in Stillwater, the town had 88 dwellings and a few public houses that accommodated 900 to 1,000 people—none of them Swedish. The Smith family built what has been described as a “shack” near Nelson and South Main streets. The family became ill with cholera and were nursed by their 14 year-old daughter. Residents of Stillwater brought them food and left it nearby as they feared contracting the disease. Mrs. Smith and her two children survived, however Mr. Smith died.

At this point in her life, Mrs. Smith was in her early 40s, most likely spoke very little English and was widowed with two children to raise. She had left her home country and family with no means to return to them. She had buried four of her children in a foreign city, most likely in unmarked graves. Her new home was a frontier town with a population mostly of men who worked in the lumber industry.

Subsequently, Mrs. Smith opened a boarding house which soon became a community center for the growing Swedish population of Stillwater. It was here that the first Lutheran services were held in Stillwater. This was conducted in the autumn of 1855 by the Rev. Pehr Anderson Cedarstam, one of only two ordained ministers in the Minnesota Conference. At this point, there were estimated to be 30 Swedes in Stillwater. Itinerant pastors welcomed into Mrs. Smith’s home were the Rev. Erland Carlson, the Rev. P. Carlson and the Rev. E. Norelius.

In 1868, it was reported in the *Minneapolis Daily Tribune* concerning the Lutherans that “they have no permanent organization as yet; their preachers being selected not

by regular church authority. We are informed that the mother church will soon be called upon to formally organize the Swedish Lutheran Church of America.”

After 16 years of Mrs. Smith hosting Lutheran services in her home, the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Stillwater was organized on July 28, 1871. The charter members consisted of 34 adults and 13 children. The acting chairman being the Rev. P.A. Cedarstam of Chisago Lake. Andrew Olson was elected the first secretary. John Booren, John G. Nelson and Andrew Olson were the deacons. For the next six years, the church was supplied with preachers from adjoining churches, but mostly by the Rev. J. Ausland of St. Paul. The Ladies’ Aid Society was also founded in 1871.

At the first organization meeting, it was decided to either purchase or build a new church. A building committee was elected, consisting of the trustees together with A. Peterson, C.P. Stromberg, John V. Smith (Mrs. Smith’s son), F. Raiter, Alex Johnson and John Werner. By September of that year, the congregation was seeking bids for erecting a church at the corner of South Fourth and Oak streets.

The church building was completed in 1872, but was not consecrated until July 18, 1875. It was dedicated by the President of the Swedish Lutheran Evangelical Synod of North America, the Rev. E. Norelius—one of the itinerant pastors Mrs. Smith had earlier welcomed in her home to conduct services. The church was decorated for the ceremony with flowers and oak leaves. At this point, the church had a membership of around 70 communicant members. The offering of \$190 on the dedication day nearly canceled their debt.

Music was an important part of worship from the onset. Erick Olson was hired as the song leader and janitor with a salary of \$60 per year with extra pay for “wood-sawing and scrubbing.” He resigned in 1877 and was replaced by Bengt Molander who also received extra pay for sawing wood. It was decided in 1877 to use the Swedish Hymnal on Sunday and the “Hemlands Sanger” at midweek services. The controversy over which hymns to use continued for many years.

The first resident pastor was the Rev. A.F. Tornell, who served from 1877 to 1887. It was under his pastorate that the present church property on Third Street was acquired for \$22,000. A new edifice was built in 1883. The church building committee included many of the original members, including Mrs. Smith’s son, John V. Smith. The original Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church was sold to the Salem German Lutheran church and has since been converted to condominiums.

“Mother Smith” lived to see all of these changes to the church that in all rights could be said that she was the founder. She was in her early 70s when she died on April 3, 1885. Her obituary in *The Stillwater Messenger* stated, “...not a few of our most esteemed citizens will hold her in loving remembrance because of her motherly care and kindnesses on their behalf when they were strangers and pilgrims in the land of their adoption.” *The St. Paul Globe* published that “She was a mother to those coming from Sweden, and all went to her for advice.”

CHAPTER TWO

Pastors & Parsonages

by Marie Liberda

Pastors of Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Minnesota

P.A. (Pehr Anderson) Cederstam, 1871-1872

C.A. Hultkrans, L.A. Håkanson, L.O. Lindh, 1871-1906 Supply Pastors

Jonas Ausland, 1872-1877

C.B.L. Bohman, J.B. Swanbom, Fremling, L.J. Lundquist, 1875-1878 Interns

A.F. (Adolph) Tornell, 1877-1887

Joel L. Haff, 1887 Intern

John Ternstedt, 1887 Supply Pastor

A.P. Montan, 1888 Supply Pastor

Joel L. Haff, 1888-1895

Philip G. Thelander, 1895-1902

A.W. (August Williams) Edwins, 1902-1905

C.E. (Carl Ernest) Benson, 1906-1923

Pastors of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Minnesota

C.E. (Carl Ernest) Benson, 1923-1946

Norman Wold, 1946-1969

Howard Fehr, 1948-1950, 1952

Roy Dorn, 1969 Supply Pastor

George Lundquist, 1969-1970, Interim Pastor

Forrest Chaffee, 1970-1972

Dennis Cook, 1970

Pastors of Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Minnesota

Tim L. Cowen, 1971-1972
Dan Johns, 1973-1993
Tim L. Cowen, 1973-1977
John A. Berntsen, 1974-1975
Philip Peterson, 1975
Steve Melander, 1976
Dan Ellefson, 1977
Tom W. Wersell, 1977
Dean J. Wigstrom II, 1977-1979
Leman Olsenius, 1977-1995
Betsy Dolmar, 1979-1980
Bruce R. Carlson, 1980-1986
Betsy Dolmar Dartt, 1980-1995
Peter K. Johnson, 1986-1989
Frank Steinhauer, 1988-1989
Philip Boe, 1989
Rich Melheim, 1989-1993
Leonard Nadeau, 1989-2001
Charles (Chuck) Claus, 1993-1994
Lee Sather, 1995-2002
Norris Erdal, 1995-1996, 1998
Lynn Pagliarini, 1996-2004
Tim Coltvet, 1996-1997
Charles (Chuck) Claus, 1997
Tim Coltvet, 1998-2002
Christine Bingea Berthelsen, 2001-2004
Larry Johnson, 2001-2003
Siri Erickson, 2004-2013
Dan Poffenberger, 2004-2015
Kris Linner, 2006-2010
T.J. Anderson, 2008-2013
Candace Moser, 2011-2014
Stephanie Vos, 2013-2015
Debra Ost, 2014-2018
Mark Bents, 2015
Stefanie Fauth, 2015-2016
Paul Svingen, 2015-2017
Christine Bellefeuille, Dec. 12, 2016-Present
Karri Anderson, 2016-2017

Peter Weston Miller, Jan. 14, 2018–Present
Steve Hokonson, 2019
Don Fultz, 2019–2021

Parsonages

Northwest Corner of Third Street North and Myrtle Street West

Northwest Corner of Fourth Street North and Mulberry Street West:
306 Fourth Street North

1610 McKusick Lane

1855-1870

Records have the following offering services with Mother Smith:
Erland Carlson, P. Carlson, E. Norelius, Hedegran

1871-1923

Pastors of Svenska Evangeliska Lutherska Forsamlingen, Stillwater, Minnesota
Translates to Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church.

P.A. (Pehr Anderson) Cederstam 1871-1872

Born Feb. 14, 1830 in Sweden. Came to America July 17, 1853 through New York City. Confirmed at age 15 and ordained in the fall of 1856. "Until the spring of 1858 he was the only Swedish Lutheran pastor in the whole State of Minnesota... While he was in Center City he was chosen a member of the convention called to prepare a Constitution for the State of Minnesota. During 1870-1871 he was a traveling pastor." He "organized the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Stillwater, Minnesota on July 18, 1871 and served as its pastor during the first year of its existence." Died July 21, 1902.



C.A. Hultkrans, L.A. Håkanson, L.O. Lindh 1871-1906 (no photos available)

Supply pastors served the congregation when they were without a full-time pastor. They often traveled to Stillwater from other areas.

Jonas Ausland 1872-1877

Born July 12, 1843 in Sweden. Ordained in 1870 at the Synodical Meeting in Andover, Illinois. Lived in St. Paul, Minnesota and traveled once a month to supply services to this congregation. Died April 26, 1878.



C.B.L. Bohman 1875, Intern (no photo available)

J.B. Swanbom 1876, Intern (no photo available)

Fremling 1876, Intern (no photo available)

L.J. Lundquist 1877, Intern (no photo available)

Interns served the congregation as part of their seminary training. An internship was often the third of four years of seminary education.

A.F. (Adolph Frederick) Tornell 1877-1887

Born Jan. 1, 1844 in Sweden. "Through the influence of friends he was enabled to pursue his studies for 3 years until 1869, when having the ministry in mind, he on the advice of a pastor friend went to the United States and entered the Augustana Seminary in Paxton, Illinois, from which he graduated in 1872 and was ordained" at the Synodical Meeting in Galesburg, Illinois. First settled (resident) pastor. Served Aug. 10, 1877 through mid-year 1887. The church at 118 North Third Street was built in 1883, so during his tenure. Died in Monticello, Minnesota on Jan. 11, 1910, as a result of pneumonia.



Joel L. Haff 1887

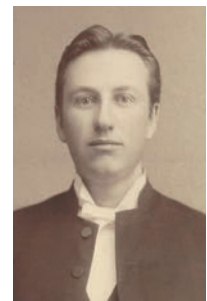
Intern who preached during summer vacation period of 1887.

John Ternstedt 1887 (no photo available)

Supply pastor mid-year 1887 to Jan. 1, 1888.

A.P. Monten 1888 (no photo available)

Supply pastor Jan. 1, 1888-July 1, 1888



Joel L. Haff 1888-1895 (see photo above)

Joel Laurentius Haff was born Nov. 2, 1862 in Sweden and came to the United States in June of 1871 with his parents. He was confirmed in 1876 at Friends Home Lutheran Church, Kansas and graduated from Augustana College in 1886. He was hired as a seminary student and preached during the summer vacation period of 1887. A call was extended the following June, upon ordination. He was ordained June 24, 1888 at the Synodical Meeting in Galesburg, Illinois and served Trinity

July 1, 1888 through March 1895. He asked for five months leave of absence in 1893 due to ill health and traveled to Israel during this time. He accepted a call to Rockford, Illinois in March 1895. He died Feb. 7, 1896 in Stillwater, Minnesota during a visit here and is buried in Rockford, Illinois.

Philip Gottfried Thelander 1895-1902

Born Feb. 8, 1858 in Sweden. Baptized by his maternal grandfather. He was confirmed on May 6, 1873. Emigrated to the United States in the summer of 1884. On June 24, 1888 he was ordained into the Augustana Ministerium in Galesburg, Illinois. He served Trinity (then SELC) March 1895-1902. Preached at both the 40th and 60th anniversary celebrations. Retired in Chicago, Illinois by 1931. Died April 29, 1940 in Augustana Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. His son Roy wrote a family history in 1966 (a copy is in the Trinity Library). His great-great grandson Andrew Thelander was elected to Trinity Lutheran Church Council on Nov. 17, 2019 and became president of Trinity Lutheran Church Council on Nov. 21, 2021.



A.W. (August William) Edwins 1902-1905

In 1905 he left as pastor of our church to take charge of missionary work of the synod. Pioneer missionaries to China. Prisoner of war in China. Spoke at 40th (1911), 50th (1921) and 65th (1936) anniversary celebrations at Trinity. Died at sea in 1942 on return from China. Memorial service held at Trinity Oct. 11, 1942.



C.E. (Carl Ernest) Benson 1906-1923

Born Dec. 7, 1874. Married to Mabel on Aug. 26, 1905. Served Aug. 2, 1906 through Sept. 1, 1946. Due to retire in 1944 but asked to stay for another one and a half years. Retired Sept. 1, 1946. Died Sept. 6, 1967 and buried in Madrid, Iowa.



1923-1971

Pastors of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Minnesota

In 1923 the church changed its name, no longer using the Swedish language.

C.E. (Carl Ernest) Benson 1923-1946 (see photo and details on previous page)

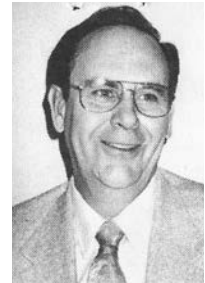
Norman Wold 1946-Sept. 1, 1969

Born March 2, 1907. "Graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College in 1931, the University of Minnesota School of Mortuary Science in 1932 and Augustana Lutheran Seminary in 1936." "A few of the highlights of Pastor Wold's twenty-three years at Stillwater probably would include: Five young men from Trinity became ministers, the building of the Educational Unit, the development of outstanding choirs, an excellent youth program and his inspirational singing of 'Beneath the Cross of Jesus' after each Lenten service. His co-workers gave him the honor of presenting the first devotional radio series on WAVN." Died Feb. 21, 1974. Memorial service at Trinity Lutheran Church Feb. 23, 1974. His daughter Connie Rome is currently a member of Trinity.



Howard Fehr 1948-1950, 1952

Born Aug. 24, 1928, baptized and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah. Attended Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter, Minnesota and Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois. Summer intern at Trinity 1948-1950 and 1952. Married to Doris Larson on Sept. 8, 1952, a daughter of Trinity. Ordained June 20, 1954 in Los Angeles, California. Died Feb. 27, 2020 in Osseo, Wisconsin.



Roy Dorn 1969 (no photo available)

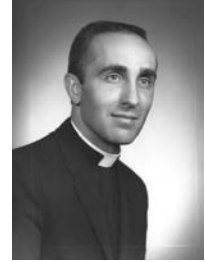
Born July 5, 1935. Worked at the Stillwater prisons. Supply at Trinity. Died Jan. 9, 2015.

George Lundquist 1969-1970 (no photo available)

Interim Pastor

Forrest Chaffee 1970-1972

Born April 23, 1932. Graduated Gustavus Adolphus College 1954 and Augustana Theological Seminary in 1958. Ordained in Augustana Synod on June 22, 1958 in Jamestown, New York. Employed at Trinity Jan. 18, 1970 through September 1972. He “loved preaching and ministering to his congregations and he certainly fulfilled his life’s ambition to spread the word of God.” Retired in 1996. “He published two books that grew out of his leadership of adult Bible studies, focused on the miracles of John’s gospel, and the study of Simon Peter.” Died March 4, 2019 in St. Peter, Minnesota.



Dennis Cook 1970-1971

Born Sept. 5, 1946. Graduated Winona State University. Attended Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary and was Intern Pastor at Trinity 1970-1971, before graduating in 1972. Served several parishes. “He was a humble and patient pastor. He loved teaching people and had a special affection for children and youth.” Died Jan. 29, 2016, after a battle with ALS.



1971-Present

Pastors of Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Minnesota

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church became Trinity Lutheran Church in 1971.

Tim L. Cowen 1971-1972

Born Aug. 15, 1947. Seminary intern at Trinity from summer 1971 to summer 1972, which was during Trinity’s 100th anniversary celebration.



Dan Johns March 1973-1993

Born Feb. 18, 1937. Graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College in 1959 and Lutheran School of Theology in Rock Island, Illinois in 1963. Ordained at Minnesota Synodical Convention in St. Peter, Minnesota in 1963. Senior Pastor at Trinity from 1973-1993. In 1980, Pastor Johns writes: “‘Behold, I have put before you an open door’ (Revelations 3:5) This states our theme and rationale for anticipating the completion of a facility to house the worship, educational and fellowship



life of this parish. Buildings are bare without pulsating, vibrant ministries and programs. I am excited when I see children eager to learn, young parents grappling with issues of life, adults relating their faith to meaningful relationships, and older people looking forward to eternal life. These relate to our programs and ministries which are celebrated in worship, enhanced through education, and nurtured through fellowship.” In March 1996 Pastor Johns reports his experience at Trinity as “significant membership growth, three building programs, staff developed, variety of programs for all ages, with strong focus on youth and family.” Currently living in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Tim L. Cowen 1973–1977 (photo on previous page)

Born Aug. 15, 1947. Graduated from Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1969. Tim worked at Trinity during his senior year at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota (after a year of internship at Trinity) and was hired upon graduation. Ordained June 1973. Installed at Trinity on July 8, 1973 as Assistant/Associate Pastor, with 50 percent time to be spent working with the youth of Trinity. In May of 1996 Tim writes: “While at Trinity, Tim concentrated on Youth Ministry, Church growth (Croixwood was just starting), Prison ministry and working with seriously ill parishioners. Three people in youth groups during Tim’s stay at TLC went into the ministry as ordained Pastors (Kris Linner, Kay Herzog and Dave Risendal).” Currently living in Florida.

John A. Berntsen 1974–1975

Born Jan. 24, 1948. Graduated St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota in 1970 and Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut in 1973. Seminary Intern at Trinity 1974–1975. Ordained in the Lutheran Church of America in 1980.



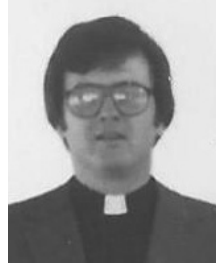
Philip V. Peterson 1975–1976

Born Jan. 14, 1951. Graduated Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1973 and Seminary Intern at Trinity 1975–1976. Graduated Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota May 1977. Ordained in 1977. Retired from 28–year tenure at Faith Lutheran in Forest Lake, Minnesota on Oct. 1, 2021.



Steve Melander 1976-1977

Born Jan. 24, 1943. Graduated Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1968. Seminary Intern at Trinity 1976-1977. Graduated Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota 1978. Ordained 1978. Currently retired and visitation pastor at Faith Lutheran in Forest Lake, Minnesota.



Dan Ellefson 1977 (no photo available)
Seminary Intern.

Tom W. Wersell 1977

Born March 8, 1917. Graduated Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota in 1938. Graduated Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Illinois in 1942. Ordained at Augustana in 1942. Call by Minnesota Synod, Special Service February 1977-December 1979 as Associate Pastor at Trinity. Father-in-law of Tim Cowen. Retired in January 1980. Died Jan. 25, 2003.



Dean John Wigstrom II 1977-1979

Born Aug. 21, 1945. Graduated St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota in 1967 and Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1971. Ordained LCA 1971. Associate Pastor at Trinity November 1977-December 1979. Died October 2019 in the state of Washington.



Leman Olsenius 1977-1995

Born Sept. 11, 1912. Graduated Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota in 1934 and Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Illinois in 1938. Ordained at Augustana June 26, 1938. Retired September 1977. Associate Pastor at Trinity 1977-1995. In 1980, Pastor Olsenius writes: "Trinity has always recognized the pillars of its' church! To minister to all ages is its' mission. To see that our Senior Members are given real consideration in the new building plans addition is a thrilling thing. The aged friends of Trinity express their gratitude to God for this progressive spirit!" "Pastor Olsenius will be remembered at Trinity for his inspirational midweek Lenten dramas, for his heart-felt singing of the Lord's Prayer, and for his good humor with Lutefisk jokes. We appreciate the hospitality which Leman and Doris bring to Hilltoppers and the compassion of Leman's pastoral care at hospitals and in private communions." Died at the age of 100 on Oct. 6, 2012.



Betsy Dolmar 1979–1980

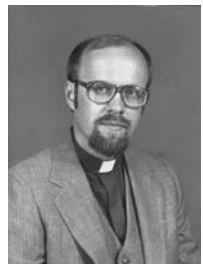
Born Jan. 19, 1950. Seminary Intern at Trinity 1979–1980 and continued to work at Trinity during senior year at seminary.



Bruce R. Carlson June 1980–May 1986

Born Dec. 18, 1942. Graduated Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota 1964 and Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1968. Ordained LCA in 1968. Installed Associate Pastor at Trinity June 15, 1980 and served to May 1986. In 1980, Pastor Carlson writes: “Education is a lifetime experience. One of our responsibilities is to continue our growth beyond confirmation and Sunday School.

Our plans include space and variety for Adult Education. To improve this important facet of our ministry is an exciting part of our building plan.” In 1996 Pastor Carlson writes, “Memories of Trinity: The Building project!, Bethel Bible Series, Youth Trip Ministry—beginning of the Annual Aspen trips, Easter Breakfasts!, Youth Activities such as the Mobile Lock-ins, Ski Trips, other ongoing events, the quality of the youth leadership committee, the delightful group of Bethel teachers, The December Birthday group!, the incredible music of Trinity!, the hard working staff, a variety of talents, personalities, energy levels, but all dedicated! Life at TLC was very good!”



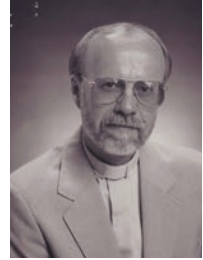
Betsy Dolmar Dartt 1980–1995

Born Jan. 19, 1950. Graduated University of Minnesota, Minneapolis in 1972 and Lutheran Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1981. Ordained LCA June 1981 at Synod Convention in St. Peter, Minnesota. Associate Pastor at Trinity July 1981 to October 1995. Married in 1994. In 1996, for the 125th church anniversary Betsy wrote: “Memorable occasions: Preaching the last sermon under the title Building for Strength and watching the youth and congregation carry the pulpit, font, hymnals, etc. outside and around the corner, into the gym where worship would be held under phase II of the construction in 1982. ...Climbing up the scaffolds to help roof the sanctuary...Dedication of the new building in 1983 and plans for the new organ for anniversary...Breaking a leg and an arm in the service of the church!...Wonderful music, wonderful music, extraordinary prayer support and love.” Currently living in Rochester, Minnesota and is visitation pastor at Our Savior’s in Spring Valley, Minnesota.



Peter K. Johnson 1986–1989

Born May 14, 1954. Graduated University of Minnesota in 1976 and Christ Seminary (Seminex), St. Louis, Missouri in 1980. Ordained LCA 1982. Associate Pastor of Trinity November 1986 to 1989. In 1996, Peter writes, “[I had] responsibilities in Stewardship, Pastoral Care and Junior High Ministries.”



Philip Boe 1989 (no photo available)

Born July 15, 1954. Graduated Concordia College in 1975 and Luther Theological Seminary in 1981. Ordained 1981. Interim Pastor and Summer Assistant at Trinity 1989.

Rich Melheim 1989–September 1993

Born Oct. 10, 1955. Graduated University of North Dakota 1977 and Luther Theological Seminary in 1981. Ordained 1981. Associate Pastor at Trinity 1989–September 1993. “Upon leaving Trinity in September of 1993, Rich received a specialized ministry call from the St. Paul Area Synod–ELCA, to teach pastors and youth workers how to redesign confirmation into small group systems that involve parents.”

He has developed a three-year confirmation course that is widely used in the ELCA today. Currently Executive Director of the Faith Incubators Project. Currently resides in Stillwater, Minnesota.



Leonard Nadeau 1989–2001

Ordained in 1981. Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care and Outreach at Trinity. Died Dec. 19, 2010 in Stillwater, Minnesota.



Charles (Chuck) Claus 1993–1994

Born April 17, 1931. Graduated Wagner College, Staten Island, New York in 1953 and Luther Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in 1957. Ordained ULCA 1957. Interim Pastor for 15 months in 1993–1994. Currently resides in Stillwater, Minnesota.



Lee Sather 1995–2002

Born May 18, 1944. Graduated St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota 1966 and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota 1970. Ordained 1970. Lead Pastor at Trinity 1995–2002.



Norris Erdal 1995–1996, 1998

Born April 6, 1925. Graduated St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota 1948 and Luther Theological Seminary 1952. Ordained in 1952. Interim Associate Pastor, Visitation and Old Adult Ministry from 1995–1996 and 1998. Died Nov. 8, 2017.



Lynn Pagliarini 1996–2004

Born April 25, 1954. Graduated Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota 1976 and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota 1981. Ordained in 1983. Interim Associate Pastor at Trinity May 1996 to December 2004.



Tim Coltvet 1996–1997

Born January 13, 1972. Intern at Trinity from fall 1996–fall 1997.



Charles (Chuck) Claus 1997 (see photo on previous page)

Born April 17, 1931. Graduated Wagner College, Staten Island, New York in 1953 and Luther Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in 1957. Ordained ULCA in 1957. Interim Pastor at Trinity in 1997.

Tim Coltvet August 1998–2002

Born Jan. 13, 1972. Graduated Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota 1994 and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota 1998. Ordained July 12, 1998 and installed at Trinity in August 1998 as Associate Pastor—Children, Youth and Family Ministries.



Christine Bingea Berthelsen 2001–2004

Ordained at Trinity July 21, 2001. Pastor at Trinity 2001–2004.



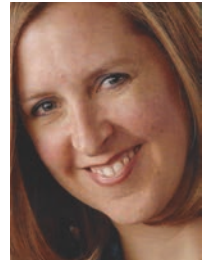
Larry Johnson 2001–2003

Born June 23, 1949. Graduated Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota 1971 and Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota 1975. Ordained LCA in 1975. Interim Senior Pastor at Trinity from 2001–2003.



Siri Erickson 2004–2013

Associate Pastor at Trinity October 2004–August 2013. Currently Chaplain at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, August 2013 to present.



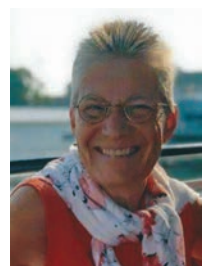
Dan Poffenberger 2004–2015

Born Sept. 10, 1959. Graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota and Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota 1986. Ordained LCA in 1986. Lead Pastor at Trinity from December 2004–January 2015.



Kris Linner 2006–2010

Born Aug. 11, 1958. Daughter of Trinity Lutheran Church. Graduate of Bemidji State College, Bemidji, Minnesota 1981 and Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary 1987. Ordained June 7, 1987 at Trinity. Pastor of Care Ministries at Trinity July 2006–December 2010. Author and photographer of several books including *My Brother Dave: Living Through a Loved One's Death*. Currently living in Stillwater, Minnesota.



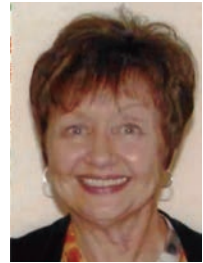
T.J. Anderson 2008–2013

Associate Pastor at Trinity from Nov. 21, 2008–Feb. 14, 2013.



Candace Moser 2011–2014

Associate Pastor at Trinity from May 2001 to February 2014.



Stephanie Vos 2013–2015

Pastor of Lifelong Learning at Trinity. Served Trinity Dec. 13, 2013 to Sept. 14, 2015.



Debra Ost 2014–2018

Born March 15, 1955. Graduated St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, Minnesota in 1977 and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 2005. Associate Pastor of Care Ministries at Trinity from November 2014 to June 2018.



Mark Bents 2015

Born Oct. 5, 1950. Graduated Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota 1972 and Luther Theological Seminary 1976. Ordained in 1976. Interim Senior Pastor at Trinity in 2015.



Stefanie Fauth 2015–2016

Interim Pastoral Associate at Trinity September 2015–October 2016.



Paul Svingen 2015–2017

Born April 20, 1947. Graduated St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota 1969 and Luther Theological Seminary 1975. Interim Senior Pastor at Trinity from Sept. 11, 2015 to May 23, 2017.



Christine Bellefeuille Dec. 12, 2016–Present

Born May 10, 1960. Graduated Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota 1982 and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 2003. Ordained Aug. 24, 2003 at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minnesota. Doctor of Ministry degree from Luther Theological Seminary in 2018. Lead Pastor at Trinity from Dec. 12, 2016 to present.



Karri Anderson 2016–2017

Interim Pastor at Trinity Dec. 29, 2016 to Oct. 6, 2017.



Peter Weston Miller Jan. 14, 2018–Present

Born March 15, 1987. Graduated Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota 2010 and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota 2014. Pastor of Lifelong Faith Formation at Trinity Lutheran from Jan. 14, 2018 to present.



Steve Hokonson 2019

Born April 10, 1945. Graduated Washington State University, Pullman, Washington 1969 and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, California 1979. Ordained Aug. 12, 1979. Led Bible studies at Trinity 1988–present. Led Bethel Series, Men’s Studies, Book and Lenten Studies. Visitation Pastor at Trinity for three months in 2019 (resigned due to health issues).



Don Fultz 2019–2021

Born March 31, 1938. Graduated Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota 1961 and Lutheran School of Theology, Rock Island, Illinois in 1965. Ordained June 2, 1965. Joined Trinity in 2016 “after a ministry journey at Forest Lake till 2000, a 13–14 year ministry journey in Tanzania, a final retirement in 2013, and a move to Stillwater.” Visitation and Supply Pastor at Trinity from 2019–2021.



Parsonages



Northwest Corner of Third Street North and Myrtle Street West

“In 1881, two lots to the north of City Hall were purchased and in 1882 a parsonage was built on the south lot and in 1883 the present church structure was erected on the north lot.”

In 1896, old parsonage was renovated and an addition was added.

In 1931, this parsonage was cleaned and rented out as \$25 per month.

In 1943, this old parsonage, south of the church, was razed.



306 Fourth Street North

Northwest Corner of Fourth Street North and Mulberry Street West

In 1908, lots were bought on the corner of North Fourth and Mulberry streets for \$1,100. A parsonage was built, with Mr. Bolmgren, Minneapolis, as architect and Linner and Company, builders. Total cost amounted to \$9,700.¹¹

In 1947, parsonage renovated at a cost of \$2,360.

In 1951, parsonage was insulated and painted.

In 1957, Board of Administration authorized to find suitable lot for new parsonage.

In 1958, the building committee reported that a lot on Greeley and Abbott streets had been purchased for the new parsonage. There was \$8,000 in the building fund. A resolution was adapted that a new parsonage be built beginning in 1959, a congregational meeting to be held when plans and estimates were completed.



1610 McKusick Lane

In 1959, the new parsonage was constructed during the summer on two lots purchased on the south shore of McKusick Lake, rather than on the Greeley street site which was subsequently sold. The building was to be ready by Dec. 1.

In 1973, the parsonage was sold and a housing allowance was given to the pastors.

CHAPTER THREE

Daughters & Sons of Trinity

by Marie Liberda

Daughters & Sons of Trinity Lutheran Church

*And others ordained with a Trinity Connection

Hugo Thorene – June 17, 1906
Oscar Sandahl – June 14, 1908
Roy Fredrick Thelander – after 1909
V.G. (Verner) Ogren – June 13, 1915
Wilbert Benson – June 18, 1933
Willard Albertson – June 6, 1960
Paul S. Fransen – May 27, 1962
Richard Landeen – May 28, 1968
Gary Langness – May 28, 1968
Raymond S. Larson – May 28, 1968
*Dave Wall – June 1983
Dave Risendal – Aug. 19, 1984
Kris Linner – June 7, 1987
Kay Herzog-Tostengard Wittman – Sept. 10, 1988
Frank Granquist Steinhauer – August 1992
*Christine Ann Bingea Berthelsen – July 21, 2001
Matthew Peterson – June 26, 2004
Jessica Rivera-Walker – Jan. 15, 2006
Luke Holsten – Aug. 25, 2018
*Amy Kippen – July 23, 2020
Matthew Garavalia – Aug. 3, 2020

Ordinations

Daughters and Sons of Trinity Lutheran Church
& Others Ordained with a Trinity Connection

Hugo Thorene

Son of the congregation. Ordained June 17, 1906.



Oscar Sandahl

Son of the congregation. Ordained June 14, 1908.



Roy Fredrick Thelander Ordained after 1909 (no photo available)

Son of the congregation. Born May 5, 1887. Oldest son of Pastor Philip and Betty Thelander. His father was pastor of Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church from 1895 to 1902. Confirmed at SELC in April 27, 1902, when his father was pastor. Wrote a family history in 1966, which includes many stories of his life at the first parsonage of Trinity in Stillwater. In his family history he writes, "Sunday, April 27, 1902, I, together with a class of over thirty members, was confirmed. I can truly say that I felt God's presence when we knelt by the altar to receive the special benediction in connection with 'the laying on of hands' by Father. My first Communion was also a very sacred occasion. I was called on at the oral examination to give the parable of the prodigal son and to define the three different kinds of death; namely, the physical, the spiritual and the eternal."

Studied at Gustavus Academy in St. Peter, Minnesota and graduated 1906. Studied at Gustavus Adolphus and then Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. Graduated Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota. Seminary. Ordained. Wrote a two-volume history of his family in 1966, which includes history of moving to Stillwater and living in the first parsonage (copy in church library). Died July 1971. Buried at Fairview Cemetery in Stillwater.

V.G. (Verner) Ogren

Son of the congregation. A childhood friend of Roy Thelander in Stillwater. Roommates with Roy Thelander at Gustavus Adolphus College. Ordained June 13, 1915.



Wilbert Benson

Son of the congregation. Oldest son of Pastor C.E. and Mrs. Mabel Benson. His father became pastor of Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church in August 1906. Wilbert was born October 12, 1906. Confirmed in Swedish in 1921 at the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church. He graduated from Stillwater High School in 1924. Wilbert is a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College and has theology degrees from Augustana Theological Seminary and Yale University. He was ordained June 18, 1933 at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. He served as the Supply Pastor for Trinity in 1934 when his father and mother were on vacation. Pastor Benson had great interest and concern for senior citizens. He died in 1995.



Willard Albertson

Son of the Congregation. Son of Walter and Loretta Albertson. Born and raised on the family farm north of Stillwater. Confirmed in 1946. Graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College and Augustana Theological Seminary. Ordained June 6, 1960. Served as a missionary in British North Borneo from 1961-1964. Had great compassion for the underprivileged youth and for those with special problems.



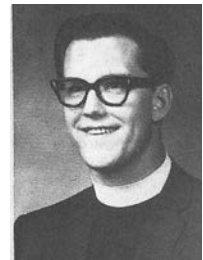
Paul S. Fransen

Son of the congregation. Son of Edna and Knute Fransen. Born Nov. 11, 1936. Confirmed 1950. Paul was the 1954 Salutatorian of Stillwater High School. A graduate of the University of Minnesota and Luther Theological Seminary in 1962. While at seminary he taught a Bible class for students at Trinity. Three of the students (Landeem, Langness, Larson) were later also ordained. Ordained May 27, 1962 at Trinity Lutheran Church. Died Aug. 15, 2012.



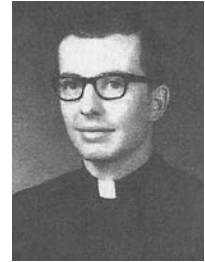
Richard Landeen

Son of the congregation. Son of Hoyt and Grace Landeen. Born Nov. 12, 1942. Graduated from Stillwater High School in 1960. Studied at Gustavus Adolphus College and graduated from Augsburg College and Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1968. Ordained May 28, 1968 at the Minnesota Synod Convention of the Lutheran Church in America. Served in Forest Lake, Minnesota as a co-pastor with Don Fultz. Cousin of Eric Trosdahl, a member of Trinity. Currently lives in Florida.



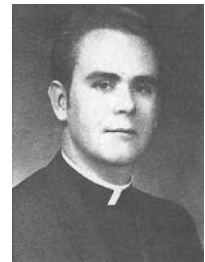
Gary Langness

Son of the congregation. Son of Orlo and Alma Langness. Born July 25, 1941. Graduate of Augsburg College in 1964 and Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1968. Served as Youth Director at Trinity during the 1965–1966 school year. Ordained May 28, 1968 at the Minnesota Synod Convention of the Lutheran Church in America. Has had a long-time interest in stewardship. Has a special interest in Bega Kwa Bega and the Iringa Diocese of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Currently lives in Lilydale, Minnesota.



Raymond S. Larson

Son of the congregation. Son of Marget and Gilbert O. Larson. Confirmed at Trinity and was very active in the Luther League. Graduated from Stillwater High School in 1960. Studied at the University of Minnesota and graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College and Northwestern Theological Seminary. Ordained May 28, 1968 at the Minnesota Synod Convention of the Lutheran Church in America. Known as “Parson Larson” by his parishioners.



Dave Wall

Employed at Trinity. Born Aug. 29, 1951. Graduated Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota in 1973. Dave joined the Trinity staff as Minister of Youth and Families in August of 1978 and was on staff until leaving in September of 1981. Graduated from Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1979 with a MA degree. Graduated from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1983 with a Master of Divinity degree. Ordained June 1983. “I learned at Trinity that ministry is both privilege and challenge. Thanks be to God that the privileges outweigh the challenges most of the time.”



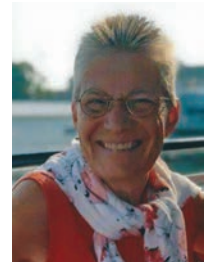
Dave Risendal

Son of the congregation. Son of Carl and Borge Risendal. Born July 1, 1957. Baptized at Trinity on Aug. 25, 1957. Confirmed at Trinity on Oct. 15, 1972. A graduate of University of Minnesota in 1980 and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1984. Ordained at Trinity on Aug. 19, 1984. Has served in Arizona and is currently in Colorado.



Kris Linner

Daughter of the congregation. Daughter of Evie and David Linner. Born Aug. 11, 1958. Baptized Oct. 12, 1958 at St. Andrew's in Mahtomedi. Ordained June 7, 1987 at Trinity. Employed at Trinity Dec. 23, 2004 to Jan. 20, 2015. Currently lives in Stillwater, Minnesota.



Kay Herzog-Tostengard Wittman

Daughter of the congregation. Daughter of Bill and Carol Herzog. Written by Kay in 1996: "I was a member of Trinity from 1965 until I transferred my membership to my first parish in Spokane, Washington in 1991. My first impression of Trinity was through the eyes of a third grader who was totally in awe of the children's choir and couldn't wait to join. I stayed active at Trinity until I graduated from high school, singing in the choir, teaching Sunday School, participating in the youth group. After I graduated, I went to Golden Valley Lutheran College for two years and then worked a year. I graduated from Augustana College and also graduated in 1988 from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. I was ordained on September 10, 1988 at the Saturday evening service at Trinity. I think back so fondly of my years at Trinity, how I became a person of faith there. The nurture of the Sunday School and youth program is still so vivid to me and I find myself patterning my thoughts about ministry on what happened to me at Trinity. I pray for Trinity's ministry as you enter the 21st century! May you kindle the spark of faith in all your members as you did in me!"



Frank Granquist Steinhauer

Son of the congregation. Grandparents, Emma and Frank Granquist, were members of Trinity; as well as Aunt Gerrie Granquist and Aunt Jan and Uncle Lynn Most. Baptized at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Stillwater. Joined Trinity around 1981. Roommate with Dan Laitinen, youth director at Trinity. Did contextual education at Trinity under Pastor Johns. Graduated from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul in 1992. Ordained at St. James Lutheran Church, Lake Forest, Illinois in August 1992. "Parts of my family have attended Trinity probably since the 1880s...My great grandfather John Granquist roofed the original church building."



Christine Ann Bingea Berthelsen

Employed at Trinity. Ordained at Trinity July 21, 2001. Employed at Trinity February 2001–December 2004.



Matthew Peterson

Son of the congregation. Son of Todd and Sue Peterson who became members of Trinity on Dec. 22, 1974. Matthew was born on June 7, 1978 and baptized July 30, 1978 at Trinity. He was confirmed April 18, 1993 at Trinity. He graduated from Stillwater High School in 1996 and Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota in 2000. Graduated from Luther Theological Seminary in 2004 and was ordained at Trinity June 26, 2004. Pastor Rich Melheim was influential in Matthew's decision to enter the ministry. Currently serving at Trinity Lutheran Church, Moorhead, Minnesota.



Jessica Rivera-Walker

Daughter of the congregation. Daughter of Jenn Rivera and Roland Rivera. Born Oct. 27, 1979 in Oxford, England and baptized Dec. 30, 1979. Became member of Trinity in 1986 after moving to Stillwater. Graduated from Augsburg College in June 2001 and Luther Theological Seminary in 2005. Ordained Jan. 15, 2006 at Trinity. Currently serving at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Holland, Michigan.



Luke Holsten

Son of the congregation. Son of Mike and Tami Holsten. Baptized and confirmed at Trinity. "Inspired to ministry by his experience on Trinity's Mexico Mission trips, he also participated in Trinity's mission work in Tanzania." Ordained at English Lutheran Church, LaCrosse, Wisconsin on Aug. 25, 2018. Currently serving at Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Hudson, Wisconsin.



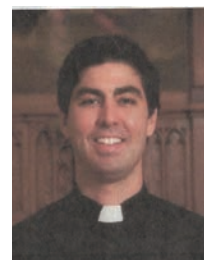
Amy Kippen

Sister of Trinity member Arlyce Melheim. Ordained at Trinity July 23, 2020. Currently serving at First Lutheran Church, New Rockford, North Dakota.



Matthew Garavalia

Grandson of Trinity member Marlys Foley. Ordained at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Jackson, Minnesota on Aug. 3, 2020.



CHAPTER FOUR

Timeline of Trinity Firsts

by Susan Goerne Stow

- 1855** | First Swedish family, Sven and Ingri Smith moved to Stillwater and held worship services in their home.
- 1871** | First year of an organized congregation, named Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church.
First church home was a one-story structure on the northwest corner of S. Fourth and Oak streets.
First voters were men, age 21 and older.
- 1872** | First annual meeting. Church dues of \$2 for males and \$1 for females.
- 1873** | First free-will offerings collected for benefit of church treasury. Reported total income of \$748.63, total outlays were \$781.30 with a deficit of \$32.67.
- 1874** | First rentals of church by Norwegian-Danish church group, \$1.50 per service.
First election of three auditors to check accounts of church treasurer as the deficit was \$124.37.
- 1875** | First money difficulties continue as expenditures far exceeded contributions.
- 1876** | First time the church was insured at a cost of \$45.
First reading of meditations from a book of sermons by church deacons until a new pastor was hired.
First sale of candle remnants at 15 cents per pound.
First church exterior painting—two coats of light gray, corners and cornices in darker gray.
First blinds installed on all church windows.
- 1877** | First resident pastor, the Rev. A.F. Tornell.
- 1878** | First year of Sunday school classes—in Swedish.
First church celebration—a strawberry festival to raise funds.
First increase in yearly church dues, \$6 male members, \$4 female congregants.
First organ purchased for the church.

- First free-will offering for young congregation in Dahlsborg, South Dakota
 Their crops had frozen, and the next year grasshoppers ravaged their farms.
- 1879** | First assessment of 25 cents per member for Gustavus Adolphus College.
 First addition to church building was 20 feet by 28 feet and 10 feet tall.
 First seminary students hired to teach Swedish school over summer months.
- 1880** | First Swedish Language School—two months in winter and two months
 in summer.
 First Young People's Society organized.
 First church choir sang for services with hymns from the Svenska Psalmbok,
 or gospel tunes from Hemlands Sanger.
- 1881** | First site on Third and Myrtle streets, purchased two lots from Mr. McKusick
 for \$2,500 to build an 80 feet by 46 feet church. The congregation at that
 time was 228 members.
- 1882** | First confirmation class—six students.
 First church at Fourth and Oak streets sold to Salem German Lutheran
 for \$2,650.
 First three young men of Trinity became pastors—Oscar Sandahl,
 Hugo Thoreen and V.G. Ogren.
- 1883** | First building committee of ten decided on basement construction, the
 distance of the church from Third Street, and church specifications.
 First year in the “brick” church on Third and Myrtle streets.
- 1884** | First special donations by individual congregants of a chandelier and clock.
- 1885** | First altar communion ring would be made of red oak and ash in an arc.
- 1887** | First flooding of the church basement.
- 1888** | First Sunday school classes in English.
 First year there was a worship service in English—once per month.
 First English hymnals were used.
 First Ladies' Aid organized.
- 1889** | First year six ushers were appointed to meet people and escort them to
 their seats.
 First new furnace to be installed before Oct. 1.
 First permission granted to Ladies' Aid to paint the church interior.
- 1890** | First year the congregational membership was more than
 300—388 adult members.
 First time offerings went to missions on the first Sunday of the month.
- 1891** | First presentation of five dozen testaments by the Young People's Society.
 First distribution of “Barnens Tidning” at Sunday school each month.
 First time change for Swedish summer school—8 a.m.–noon for older
 children, 1:30–5 p.m. for younger children.
 First charge for summer school at 25 cents per child each week.

- 1892** | First church baptismal font—donated by the Young People’s Society.
First notification in annual report that Ladies’ Aid had paid the interest on a church loan for years. In addition, contributed \$635 on the principal.
First Thanksgiving Festival to celebrate retiring the church debt.
- 1893** | First recognition that the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Stillwater was second in size of the 225 congregations in the conference.
First sermon by Pastor Haff speaking about members who patronize the saloon.
First recommendation to read “The Augustana” for a broader picture of world need.
First year church services were held Sunday morning and evening.
First leave of absence requested by Pastor Haff—due to poor health.
First extension of confirmation classes from one to two years.
- 1894** | First Barckhoff pipe organ purchased by the Ladies’ Aid Society costing \$2,000. An amazing gift considering the economic depression at that time.
First church “loan” library established by Young People’s Society with 80 volumes.
First employment of a collector of membership dues. Paid 5 percent of amount recovered.
- 1895** | First sizable increase in membership to 508 adults and 370 children.
- 1896** | First decrease in Swedish summer school schedule from two months to six weeks.
First basement meeting room created by Young Peoples and Ladies’ Aid Societies.
First 25th anniversary of the church.
- 1897** | First Sunday school class in English with 34 classes in Swedish.
- 1898** | First new piano donated by the Younger Women’s Group.
- 1899** | First committee of ten appointed to raise \$1,000 to pay debts of the Minnesota Conference of the Augustana Synod.
First gifts for children given at the Sunday school festival—candy, nuts and apples.
First collection of \$50 for the Vasa Orphanage by the Sunday school.
- 1900** | First loan of \$1,000 to Gustavus Adolphus College at 5 percent per annum.
First charge to Ladies’ Aid to have the church cleaned and renovated.
- 1901** | First celebration of an anniversary to commemorate 30 years as congregation.
- 1905** | First resignation of Pastor Edwins to become a missionary in Honan, China.
- 1906** | First year of the Rev. C.E. Benson’s ministry that started in August.
First Boys Church League was formed.
- 1907** | First Dorcas Society was organized.

- 1908** | First lots purchased at Fourth and Mulberry streets to build a new parsonage. First year Pastor Benson served as the Protestant Minnesota State Prison Chaplain.
- 1911** | First two-day celebration, Sept. 29 and 30, for 40th church anniversary.
- 1913** | First new heating system installed.
- 1915** | First division of choirs into Senior and Chapel Choirs.
- 1916** | First Boy Scout Troop formed.
- 1917** | First two-service schedule per Sunday, one in English, one in Swedish.
- 1918** | First Willing Workers Women's Society founded.
- 1920** | First Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society began.
- 1921** | First Sunday school picnic at Wildwood Amusement Park with two chartered street cars transporting.
- 1922** | First year of Junior Mission Band, elementary girls—no musical instruments were involved. One Saturday per month they raised money to educate Chinese girls. (This group started in 1913 was formerly called the Magnheld Society.)
- 1923** | First year our church name was changed to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.
First year confirmation classes were held only in English.
First year church was canceled due to two-day snowfall in March of 18 inches. No streetcars were running and plows were clearing roads for three days.
First Father & Son Banquet at Trinity.
- 1924** | First major renovation of church—west end addition for sacristy, choir room; plus stained glass windows, high altar and an \$8,000 pipe organ.
First suspension of Swedish summer school classes.
First use of individual communion glasses.
- 1925** | First Luther League Orchestra began with 11 musicians.
First dedication concert of Bennett organ with professor J. Victor playing music by Bach, Handel, Widor and Liszt. Entire cost of organ covered by C.J. LaVine estate.
First dedication of memorial gift high altar, and chancel art glass window.
- 1926** | First time the church steeple was struck by lightning.
First mimeographed church bulletin.
- 1927** | First advertising of local businesses on reverse of "The Church Messenger."
- 1928** | First repair of parsonage funded by Ladies' Aid and Willing Workers Women's Societies.
- 1929** | First gathering of funds for the Conference Board of Service. The Augustana Synod goal was \$500,000 of which Trinity contributed \$12,235.

- 1930** | First time Minnesota Conference was held at Trinity—April 1–6.
- 1931** | First time total church member census was more than 1,000—1,150 in fact.
First Mother & Daughter Banquet.
- 1932** | First time the pastor wore a robe—Easter Sunday service.
First recommendation of the Doctor of Divinity degree by Augustana Theological Seminary to the Rev. C.E. Benson.
- 1933** | First request to Minnesota Conference to reduce the quota assignment from \$2,300 to \$1,600 due to decreased offerings during the Depression.
- 1934** | First time Trinity is unable to pay the Minnesota Conference.
- 1935** | First renovation and painting of the church parlors by Willing Workers Women's Society.
First new roof on the Trinity parsonage.
First journey to Europe for the Rev. and Mrs. Benson for their 30th wedding anniversary. Reception for the Benson's anniversary on their return to Stillwater.
- 1936** | First time the Swedish traditional Julotta service was changed from 5:30 a.m. on Christmas Day to midnight on Christmas Eve.
First 65th anniversary of Trinity celebration dinner.
- 1937** | First Midsummer's Eve (a national holiday in Sweden) Sunday school celebration at Wildwood Amusement Park.
First Girl Scout Troop organized.
First installation of pew cushions.
First time church pledges and the amount paid were printed for each church member in the Annual Report.
- 1938** | First 50th anniversary celebration of the Ladies' Aid organization.
First time trustees asked those who had been giving 10 to 20 cents per week, and now in better circumstances, to increase their pledges.
First pastor encouragement for everyone in church to belong to one of nine societies.
- 1939** | First Senior Luther League was formed. The Junior Mission Band has 35 members.
First money disbursed by the Penny Bond Committee for conference debt.
- 1940** | First time eight vesper services held with theme—Christian Life in Action.
First "Prayer Week" observed in January with visiting pastors.
First acquisition of property to the north—due to their delinquent taxes.
- 1941** | First Archive Committee was appointed by Pastor Benson to preserve church records, pictures, pamphlets and reports.
First field study of community and surrounding area by three church members and pastor for the purpose of increasing membership (822 members).

- First substantial increase in offering receipts in 10 years!
 First junior offering envelopes were started to defray Sunday school costs.
- 1943** | First parsonage south of church was razed.
 First year services in the Swedish language were discontinued.
 First indebtedness of church in amount of \$4,360.80.
 First time the rationing of food, tires and gas has changed church routine and that of volunteers.
 First Service Men's Correspondence Committee to write to congregation's military men.
- 1944** | First group of 175 Trinity young men were in service to U.S. in WW II.
 First two Trinity military men have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country—Lt. Robert Madsen and Pvt. Carl Cedarbloom.
 First In Memoriam Fund was established.
 First installation of racks for offering envelopes in pews.
- 1945** | First WW II victory services—May 8 V-E Day, Aug. 15 V-J Day.
 First return of Conrad Danielson as Sunday School Superintendent after his discharge from the Navy.
- 1946** | First final payment of church debt in December. Ladies' Aid worked tirelessly to raise funds for paying the debt.
 First of September celebrations for Pastor Benson's retirement after 40 years.
 First request by the Trinity WW II letter-writing committee to declare their work complete. If any servicemen wish to continue receiving letters let them know.
 First formation of two age groups with Hi League and Senior League for youth.
- 1947** | First year Pastor Norman P. Wold leads Trinity Lutheran Church.
 First combined Good Friday service with pastors from Trinity, St. Pauls, Our Savior's, and Bethlehem churches speaking on the Seven Last Words of Christ.
- 1948** | First purchase of the Jacobson property on Fourth Street known as the "Barn." It was used for Boy Scouts, storage and parking space. Part of the building was rented. There were plans for an ice skating rink in winter for the Hi League.
 First dissolution of the Men's Sick Benefit Organization, founded in 1891 as health insurance for the congregation's needy and aged members. Members went from 100 to 24.
- 1949** | First plans made to build a parish hall education building.
 First year Trinity published Memorial Trust Funds by names of members, bonds, property, bank funds and the usage of these.
- 1950** | First Cradle Roll sending birthday cards to babies and children up to age 5.
 First purchase of junior choir robes bought by the Ladies' Aid Society.

- 1951** | First 80th year of Trinity celebration theme—Continuing the Faith of our Fathers.
First 80th anniversary celebration was broadcast on the local radio station WSHB.
First year Every Member Visitation group held four dinners for stewardship pledging. Roll was called of members who received offering boxes and made their pledges.
First baseball team sponsored by Lutheran Brotherhood of Trinity.
First year the Trinity men's Lutheran Brotherhood sold Christmas trees.
First translation of early church records from Swedish to English.
- 1952** | First six-day Bible conference was hosted by Trinity.
First congregational meeting to vote on building a parish hall.
- 1953** | First ground-breaking ceremony for parish hall on May 31.
First weekday religious school on Wednesdays at 2:30 p.m. from October to May.
- 1954** | First year all women's organizations were combined into the Ladies' Guild (Ladies' Aid, Willing Workers, Martha Society and 13 Bible study circles).
First year memorial chimes were installed.
First year of "Advance for Christ" theme designated by Augustana Lutheran Synod.
First year that communion was served on the first Sunday of each month.
- 1955** | First parish worker, Joyce Sundblom, began office and youth program duties.
First time congregation asked to pay the conference allocation of \$5,714 and the Lutheran World Action fees of \$1,275 in-time payments.
- 1956** | First illuminated outdoor church sign was built.
- 1957** | First amplifying system was installed in the sanctuary.
First senior communion services at 2 p.m. on last Tuesday each month, September to June.
- 1958** | First purchase of lot on Greeley and Abbott streets to build parsonage.
- 1959** | First vote to build a new parsonage on Lake McKusick, rather than on Greeley and Abbott streets (lot was sold).
First Altar Committee formed to assist Conrad Danielson in preparing communion.
- 1960** | First petition from junior confirmation class presented at annual meeting requesting class on one week night rather than Saturday.
- 1961** | First year the fiscal church year became Nov. 1 to Oct. 31.
First year of Don Norell's volunteer commitment. Every day Don came to Trinity with a paint brush ready to touch up where it was needed. This continued into the 1970s.

- 1962** | First time member names, addresses and phone numbers replace the weekly envelope amounts given by parishioners printed in the annual church report.
- 1963** | First year the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) Constitution replaced the Augustana Synod Constitution.
- 1964** | First year the 18-member Church Council replaces the nine deacons and nine trustees, meeting once instead of holding two separate meetings.
First missionary from Trinity to serve in Borneo, Pastor Willard Albertson, a son of the congregation. A donation was made to aid his work in that mission field.
- 1965** | First year record of 450 pupils enrolled in Sunday school.
First “Hootenanny” Senior Luther League musical program by four seminary students.
First reports of actions of each organization rather than list of expenses.
- 1966** | First year with two Sunday school sessions per Sunday.
First Bible study on the book of Revelations guided by teachers of Lutheran Bible Institute in six sessions. Attended by 75, with requests to plan further studies.
First dedication of 22 memorial “Life of Christ” stained-glass windows.
First 50-year celebration of Boy Scout Troop, No. 116.
- 1967** | First ventilation system installed in the sanctuary.
First memorial gifts church library organized with 124 books.
- 1968** | First vinyl record cut by the Senior Choir under the direction of Denis Brown.
First hearing aids and microphones purchased for sanctuary.
First daily devotional books mailed to Trinity members.
First skit titled “Challenge of the Cross” presented by Lutheran Church Women.
First ventilating system of three large fans installed in the tower.
First congregational and Sunday school outing on Big Marine Lake.
- 1969** | First year of Pastor Wold’s retirement after serving Trinity for 23 years.
- 1970** | First full-time intern, Dennis Cook, from Northwestern Seminary.
First centennial meetings were organized by Pastor Forest Chaffee.
First events of newly-formed Couples Club—a steak fry and progressive dinner.
First confirmation change from a two to three year program set by LCA.
First communion served to Trinity 5th graders, per the LCA.
First rechartering of Boy Scout Troop No. 116 after more than 50 years.
First congregational and community study completed by sociologist Paul Anderson, with recommendations for future planning.
First centennial plans include a choir concert, picture directory and historical document.
First church newsletter entitled *Parish and Pastor*.

- 1971** | First commemoration of 100 years of Trinity as a congregation with two concerts by Gustavus Adolphus College Choir, souvenir plate depicting Trinity with inscription: 1871-1971 Stillwater, MN, and Centennial Bridal Pageant beginning with brides from 1971 back to 1896.
First remodeling of the church parlors into a Centennial Memorial Lounge.
First woman on Trinity Church Council, Mrs. Raymond Kern.
First acolytes. Only boys served at this time.
- 1972** | First families bringing children to altar during communion for a blessing.
- 1973** | First year the Rev. Dan Johns became lead pastor of Trinity.
First associate pastor called to serve Trinity—Timothy Cowen.
First Drive-in summer worship service at the Hilltop Drive-in in Houlton, WI.
- 1974** | First combined church bulletin and newsletter.
First “Day of Renewal” event for Lutheran Church Women from 33 churches.
First year of Warm World Nursery School at Trinity.
First Saturday evening worship services began.
First designation of Norman P. Wold Memorial Library.
- 1975** | First offering of three services per Sunday—8:30, 9:45 and 11 a.m. Drive-in summer worship averages 90-95 cars.
First sponsorship of a Hmong family—Rop and Minh Dinh and their two children.
- 1976** | First acquisition of Croix property for additional parking.
First ramp to sanctuary for easy access.
First radio devotional program on local station WAVN.
First electronic organ purchased.
First one-page advertisement in the bicentennial issue of The Gazette newspaper.
- 1977** | First three octaves of handbells were a memorial gift to Trinity.
First junior-high-age handbell choir directed by Glenda Bjorum.
First year of retirement for Conrad Danielson, after 40 years as Sunday School Superintendent, caring for our altar paraments and serving communion.
First completion of Croix Center rented by Warm World and Family Service.
First feature article in The Lutheran magazine titled “Challenged by Change.” The Temple Choir photo was on the magazine cover.
- 1978** | First L.I.F.T. (Life and Faith Together) adult ministry group.
First count of worshipers more than a thousand per Sunday—1,100 in fact.
First initiation of idea that Trinity needs more worship space.
- 1979** | First woman intern pastor—Pastor Betsy Dolmar (Dartt). This was early, even in the synod.
First introduction of Lutheran Book of Worship.

- First Sunday morning Adult Forums.
First sponsorship of Vietnamese brothers—Minh and Binh Cam Quach.
- 1980** | First “Trinity Country Cuisine” cookbook published by Lutheran Church Women.
First female president of the Church Council—Gerrie Granquist.
First Laos refugees sponsored by the congregation—Chan and Ngoc Nguyen, three children, and Chan’s mother.
- 1981** | First female Associate Pastor installed—Betsy A. Dolmar.
First Temple Choir record was produced titled “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken.” With 62 Trinity members in the choir, directed by Denis Brown, the record also featured organist Dave Goulette and pianist, Yvonne Danielson. The record was dedicated to the memory of Marian Carlberg.
- 1982** | First five parcels of land donated to Trinity were sold—two in outstate Minnesota, one in Burnett County, Wisconsin and two in Stillwater.
First special congregational meeting voting on major remodeling of church and addition, construction was authorized. The sanctuary was planned to seat 800. First groundbreaking for the building project on Oct. 3, 1982.
First parking lot added on Third Street across from Trinity.
- 1983** | First sponsorship of Dr. Mark Jacobson as a medical missionary to the Maasai people in Arusha, Tanzania.
First construction of the Resurrection Wall in the Worship Center.
First International Yule Fest.
First year the Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner was reinstated with men in charge.
- 1984** | First year celebrating worship in the new sanctuary (100 years after the first brick church was built on Third and Myrtle streets).
First Bethel Bible Series began in October with 210 adults enrolled.
First dedication Sunday on Nov. 18 for the Resurrection Wall made of cut stone of various colors from the Mankato Stone Quarry.
- 1985** | First mission trip to Eagle Pass, Texas and Piedras Negras, Mexico.
First four parcels of land owned by Trinity in Washington County were sold.
First “Trinity Friends Day” with members encouraged to invite friends to worship.
First Temple Choir direction by Ken Hannah after untimely death in January of choral director, Denis Brown.
First five-day Community Bible School cooperatively taught by 11 valley-area churches. More than 750 preschool and elementary-age children attended, 233 from Trinity.

- 1986** | First “Heritage Cookbook” was published for the 115th anniversary of Trinity. First presentation of Faure’s “Requiem” on May 19 by the Temple Choir and the Godspell Singers in honor of the music ministry of Denis Brown. All memorials were dedicated to the organ fund.
- 1987** | First Mom’s Day Out program was available.
First “Come Alive” contemporary Sunday service at 11 a.m. featuring Witness musical ensemble.
- 1988** | First “Year of the Family” designation for the Sunday Morning Forum.
First merger of American Lutheran Church (ALC), Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and American Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) with 5.3 million members and 11,000 local congregations.
First senior high singing group called the Straight Ahead Choir.
First new paraments for Trinity Lutheran Church.
First congregational involvement in the Loaves and Fishes mission preparing and serving meals six times per year at Faith Lutheran Church in St. Paul’s Frogtown neighborhood.
- 1989** | First Saturday evening worship with the Straight Ahead Choir, high school singers under the direction of Ken Wanovich.
First TNT (Tuesday Nights at Trinity) with support groups for stress management, dealing with divorce, job transition, grief and loss, alcoholism, effective parenting, and the 12 Steps for Living.
- 1990** | First formulation of a long-range plan for Trinity by the Rev. Fred Lee after interviewing several hundred members.
First Mexico Mission trip to Yucatan, Mexico.
First class of organized fitness program FFF (Faith, Fitness, Fellowship).
First Release Days for 9th grade confirmands on topics: death and dying, dealing with alcohol and drugs, and growing in faith.
First production of “A Little Bit Touched” by New Christian Comedy Theater.
- 1991** | First expansion of Mexico Mission trip to a young adult work group.
First four dinner theater comedy presentations.
First broadcast of the 11 a.m. service on local cable TV channel 50, Thanksgiving and Christmas services as well.
First full-length “Witness TLC” album recorded raised music program funds.
- 1992** | First hymnal supplement “With One Voice” was introduced.
First purchase of Stillwater’s U.S. Post Office property at 102 N. 3rd St.
First setback for the Lutefisk Dinner by the Halloween blizzard. Still served 800 people.
First program on “The Star of Bethlehem” by Dr. Kaufman is hosted by Women of the ELCA (WELCA).

- First of three Habitat for Humanity houses built by Trinity members under the coordination of Don Ronning, Tom Thiets and Wilma Edhlund.
- 1993** | First 15-month interim leadership by Pastor Chuck Claus.
First pre-quasiquicentennial souvenir edition profile of Trinity in the Stillwater Gazette newspaper.
First Trinity involvement with Hope House, a foster care facility for those with HIV/AIDS.
- 1994** | First high school drama production of “A Great Life” by Pete Erickson and the Rev. Marsh Drege.
- 1995** | First year Pastor Len Nadeau holds weekly Bible study at Rivertown apartments for seniors.
First TCBY (Trinity Church Board for Youth) for senior high youth to plan, provide and take ownership of their own group.
First production of “The Cotton Patch Gospel” dinner theater. From March 17-19, 500 guests were entertained by a cast of 40 adults and children.
- 1996** | First participation in a 30-hour famine lock-in event for youth.
First sponsoring of Bosnian refugees, Dervo and Franka Kutinic, sons Denis and Alen.
First “Forward in Faith” theme was selected by the 125th Anniversary Committee.
First installation of the Schantz pipe organ with a dedication festival on April 21 with guest organist David Cherwien.
First Faith Inkubators confirmation program by Pastor Rich Melheim.
First watercolor painting of Trinity view from Third Street by artist and member Elaine Frederickson.
First organized activities for Prime Time Friends, ages 50 and up.
First computers, hardware and software installed in Trinity’s church office.
First St. Croix Valley Press historical article on 125th anniversary at Trinity.
First carillon purchased, programmed to play various tunes at certain times.
- 1997** | First Vision to Action event pinpoints ten visions for a greater Trinity ministry.
First “Faith Alive” worship at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays before classes—singing and prayers.
First senior high musical “Godspell” presented twice in May and toured in summer.
First baby blankets sent to Mexico by Trinity’s Knitting Group.
First S.S. Y.A.C.H.T. Club (Second Sunday Young Adult Christians Hanging Together) for 20-30 age group. They met at the Daily Grind.
- 1998** | First year of Sine Nomine (no name) girls choir, directed by Carol Carver.
First change of Wednesday school name to Koinonia, which means community.

- 1999** | First year of free Rivertown Car Care with “backyard mechanics” from Trinity.
 First seven Breakfast Clubs for senior high youth with seven adult leaders.
 First Bible Sunday for 3rd graders who received Bibles in November.
 First R.O.C.K. (Recreation activities for Christian Kids) for grades 1 and 2. Set up by 12 dads as non-competitive basketball, soccer and games.
 First new altar and cross installed in the Worship Center.
 First activities for pre-confirmation 5th and 6th graders, called Club 56.
 First Summer Stretch on Thursdays for junior high service projects and fun.
 First Advent Pause, pre-Christmas devotional gatherings for women held in homes.
 First Retired Men’s Group established by Pastor Claus.
- 2000** | First Good Friday worship service especially for children.
 First year gym remodeling project was completed.
 First move of Warm World Child Development Center to Boutwells Landing Senior Community.
 First scholarships awarded from the estate of Jeanette Johnson to graduating Trinity high school students.
 First expansion of library, renamed Living Library.
 First Angel Tree ministry with tags specifying Christmas gifts or gift cards needed for donation.
- 2001** | First 130th Trinity Annual Meeting of the Church Council.
 First “Positioning for Purpose” staff reorganization plan.
 First special project to alter Luther Hall into a user-friendly large group space.
 First preparation to computerize a facility usage calendar.
 First year Drive-in worship was extended from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
 First Book of Genesis Bible class each Thursday.
 First time TLC Prime Time Friends donated Bibles and devotionals to prisoners, plus gifts to 150 children of prisoners.
 First Sunday in Advent an intergenerational station visiting approach was used to teach children about the meaning of Advent.
- 2002** | First year Interim Pastor Larry Johnson begins.
 First duplex property on Third Street was purchased as part of Trinity’s plan to remain downtown.
 First mission outreach locally for junior high kids visiting nursing homes, cleaning local parks and shelving at Goodwill.
- 2003** | First dedication of the new cross at the front of the Worship Center.
 First junior high service project to fund a cow, two goats, and a water buffalo for Tanzania missions.
 First junior high “Souper” Bowl collecting money for local food banks on Super Bowl Sunday.

- First Donuts and Discussion open to grades 7-12 Sundays at 9:45 a.m.
 First Youth Center for senior high students to relax, listen to music and hang out.
- 2004** | First joint concert of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Valley Chamber Chorale at Trinity.
 First purchase of a defibrillator for church emergencies.
 First pairing of grandparents/grandfriends as prayer partners.
 First junior high SNL (Sunday Night Light) added to the confirmation program.
 First senior high summer mission trip to Native nation reservation land in South Dakota.
 First involvement with Jesus Delivers food program. Trinity volunteers served six times per year.
- 2005** | First addition of an adult learning component to Wednesday nights.
 First “The Color of Me” summer reading program sponsored by the Living Library.
 First “Circle of Youth” Bible study and discussion for senior high students.
 First DIBS (Dig Into Bible Stories) for junior high students.
 First new mutual care groups formed: Support for Caregivers, Comforters (grief support), Home Communion Friends, and neighborhood small groups.
 First *Explore Trinity* four-color brochure produced for visitors and new members.
 First Tanzanian missionary song and devotion book published.
 First collection of warm winter clothing for kids in Stillwater and St. Paul.
- 2006** | First St. Croix Concert Series concert by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.
 First year the Church Council was reduced from 16 to six members.
 First debut of new church website.
 First Fine Arts Team established by Carol Carver that implements the plants and flowers, banners and more for the worship season.
 First three-ring binder dubbed the *Lutefisk Bible* by Donna Dielentheis covering every facet of the Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner.
 First new portable stage platform built at the Drive-in.
 First year Children’s Ministries works with expectant parents and toddlers.
 First baking of communion bread by Carol Smith, Karen Gieseke’s mother, with a recipe from Luther Seminary.
- 2007** | First new pew hymnals, Evangelical Lutheran Worship.
 First installation of large wide screens in front and back of Worship Center.
 First community meal packing event at Feed My Starving Children, proceeds going to Dr. Mark Jacobson in Tanzania and 285,120 meals assembled.
 First Guatemalan mission trip to Lake Atitlan to build a hospital.
 First mission trip to New Orleans to help flood victims in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

- 2008** | First Kids Against Hunger community meal packing in Croix Center with 35,000 pounds of supplies and 276,000 meals packed.
First option to go paperless for the monthly *Trinity Today* newsletter, now also published electronically.
- 2009** | First year of decisions to purchase Drive-in, move U.S. Post Office and swap some Trinity property with the City of Stillwater for a municipal parking lot.
First fall musical performance of the Children's Choir "Dinner for 5,000."
First celebration of Carol Carver's 20 years of choral leadership with gift of a new choral work by Aaron David Miller "Creator Spirit, Who Gave Us Life."
First switch to projecting worship service order on the large screen in the Worship Center.
First debut of Trinity's Facebook page.
First "Take on Hunger" golf tournament fundraiser for missions.
- 2010** | First renovation of sound system to amplify and improve quality.
First class of "Building Your Personal Theology" held on the banks of the St. Croix River.
First 25th year anniversary of Trinity Mexico Mission trips.
- 2011** | First "Opening Doors" capital appeal.
First new roof after hail and wind damage paid by church insurance.
First trip of the Sine Nomine girls choir to Tanzania.
- 2012** | First community Thanksgiving meal served at Trinity in partnership with other local churches.
First playground installation by Helping Hands men's group.
First new home for Stillwater's U.S. Post Office in the Croix Center.
First rain gardens installed as part of new Croix Center parking lot.
- 2013** | First change to the church fiscal year calendar to end Aug. 31.
First collection of school supplies for students living in the Cimarron community by the women's circles and book clubs.
- 2014** | First council decision to demolish the old post office building on Third Street.
First special task force of council votes to end the "Opening Doors" campaign.
First spring Children's Choir musical "Jonah" performed.
First time Trinity Library hosts state conference of ELCA church librarians.
First June boat tour of new St. Croix Bridge by AWE (Awesome Women's Events) and Retired Men's Group.
First landscaping of the Green Space after the post office building was removed.
- 2015** | First Holy Cow! Congregational Assessment survey.
First year of leadership by interim Pastor Paul Svingen.
First Talk & Tea gathering for Trinity women.
First year the Croix Center is fully leased to provide steady income.
First giving of baptismal shawls knit by Trinity Knitting Group at baptisms.

- 2016** | First new member information guide written by Care Pastor Deb Ost.
 First challenge to pray through the church directory by Prayer Group.
 First organization of the handyman Tuesday Guys started by Ron Hagen.
 First TrinityFEST on the Green Space with Roosevelt Credit as soloist, 600 people attended.
 First community vigil on the Green Space with musician Peter Mayer.
 First meeting to call the Rev. Chris Bellefeuille, our first female lead pastor.
 First 11 cottage meetings for Pastor Chris to meet and get to know members.
 First mental health workshop training to become a Dementia Friendly church.
 First council approval of 3 Gratitude Days, a gift of time off for Trinity staff.
 First participation in “God’s Work. Our Hands.”—a denominational-wide service work day.
- 2017** | First Anuak refugee project, helping with winter clothing and household items.
 First “Roots of the Reformation” Bible study in recognition of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.
 First removal of stained glass Baptismal Doors at Fourth Street entrance due to fragility concerns.
- 2018** | First Vitality Survey of congregation as step in planning for future of Trinity.
 First Longest Night service, an alternative service for those grieving, or not able to participate in joyous Christmas worship.
 First Doctor of Ministry degree conferred on the Rev. Dr. Chris Bellefeuille.
 First Green Team (environmental group) meeting.
 First SOLO 55 Plus group started for fellowship of singles age 55 and up.
 First Worship Arts Team formed to bring beauty to our Worship Center, Fine Arts Team now focuses on bringing art exhibits to Trinity.
 First year of the Rev. Peter Weston Miller’s ministry—Pastor of Lifelong Faith Formation.
 First changing of 1,225 light bulbs to LED resulting in energy savings and clearer lighting.
 First new efficient thermostats for the 11 furnaces keeping Trinity warm.
 First Halloween Trunk or Treat for families with decorated trunks, candy, and costumes in the small parking lot.
- 2019** | First commitment as day and night warming space for people experiencing homelessness, Feb. 1 to March 7.
 First noting of participation of 700 adults in small groups and studies.
 First planning team for the 150th anniversary of Trinity was organized.
 First Benefit Concert for Anuak Refugees. Three choirs performed to raise funds for a van and gift.
 First Hasty Nativity during worship where children and adults dressed as favorite nativity characters.

First team of 13 from Trinity Tired Men's Troupe volunteered with Habitat for Humanity.

2020 | First "Seven Cruciform Compositions" art exhibit by Trinity member and artist Elaine Frederickson on display for Lent.

First time Trinity was locked down due to a worldwide pandemic—COVID-19.

First state stay-at-home order began on March 28. March 8, 2020 was the last in-person worship service before quarantine.

First widespread use of technology to participate in worship via the Trinity website and Facebook, and use of Zoom meetings to conduct church council business. First online Annual Meeting.

First Zoom small group meetings for middle school confirmation (or outdoors in favorable weather), with confirmation service held at the Drive-in in May due to COVID-19 restrictions.

First introduction of Pause & Pray each day for 5 minutes at noon on Facebook, as a way to connect during pandemic.

First COVID-19 death of Dave Goulette, organist for more than 40 years, made the epidemic real.

First need for all the Trinity staff to work from home.

First postponement of High School Puerto Rico Mission trip.

First sewing and distribution of 350 face masks by Trinity quilters.

First "Love Drop" goodie bags delivered to Trinity shut-ins.

First 100 pounds of blankets donated to Bridging, a local organization assisting those transitioning out of homelessness.

First Sunday Faith Forum on Zoom with Dr. Bob Boyd focusing on the Apostle Paul.

First "Attitude of Gratitude" Talk & Tea gathering for women on Zoom with Pastor Kris Linner.

First outdoor drive-through, drop-off Pledge Parade with Stewardship Team greeting donors.

First partnership of Green Team and Sunday Faith Forum for Earth Day awareness events.

First worship attendance expands to 522 online views, 169 at the Drive-in.

First drive-through of six Bethlehem vignettes from Christmas story viewed by 80 carloads.

2021 | First amazing count of 9,285 books in the Trinity Living Library.

First Trinity podcast "An Encouraging Word" with Pastors Chris and Peter.

First family Earth Day celebration outdoors with reading of "The Tree Lady."

First cancellation of the High School Puerto Rico Mission trip.

First Retired Men's Group six-mile kayak adventure from William O'Brien State Park into the St. Croix Islands State Wildlife area.

First Senior Recognition Sunday at Drive-in worship with special blessing of 47 high school seniors.

First release from the ELCA of a 30-minute documentary on Dr. Mark and Linda Jacobson's 38-year ministry in Tanzania.

First formal sabbatical policy for pastors and deacons of Trinity for up to 10 weeks of paid time off after five years of full-time service.

First celebration of Trinity's 150th anniversary on July 19 with an ice cream social on the Green Space.

First fundraiser to build a tiny home as shelter for a person overcoming homelessness, as part of the Sacred Settlements program in the metro area.

First post-pandemic Trinity Art Show in the fall with paintings, ceramics and poetry by members and friends of Trinity.

First 150th celebration at TrinityFEST at the Houlton, Wisconsin Drive-in on Sept. 19, 2021.

CHAPTER FIVE

125th Anniversary History

1871 – 1996

by Susan Goerne Stow

Please note the 125th Anniversary History was written in 1996
and is reprinted here with some edits.

The Gathering

“Ty havarest två eller tre äro församlade i mitt namn,
där är jag midt ibland dem.”

“For where two or three are gathered in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.”

– Matthew 18:20

The gathering of members which led to the organization of Trinity Lutheran Church began with one Swedish family who settled in Stillwater in 1855, expanded to include 34 adults and 13 children as charter members at the time of the organization of the church in 1871 and now, 125 years later, encompasses 3,148 adult members and 1,974 children.

Statistics from the U.S. census records of 1850 indicate that there were only four people born in Sweden who were living in Minnesota. Those Swedish settlers who had come to the Minnesota Territory had gravitated to farmland north of Stillwater in Scandia and Lindstrom. By 1855 Swedish settlements around Center City or the Chisago Lakes area included about 600 Swedish immigrants. None of that number located in Stillwater, so how did our burgeoning congregation begin?

When the John Smith family emigrated from Jonköping, Sweden in 1853 to Chicago, Illinois, a cholera epidemic in Chicago caused the deaths of four of the

six Smith children, and precipitated the family's decision to move on to Stillwater in 1855.

Sven Peterson Smith (John Smith) and his wife Ingri Christina were the first Swedish family to remain in Stillwater. Tragically, Mr. Smith died in 1855 leaving a wife and two children. Out of a need to support her family, Ingri Christina established a boarding house near the Main Street stairs on South Main, and was known to all as "Mother Smith." John and James Smith, present members of Trinity, are descendants of Sven and Ingri Smith.



Ingri Christina Smith
"Mother Smith"

It is quite understandable that those so far from their homeland would find comfort in mutual language, customs and beliefs. Scandinavians coming to Stillwater to settle, or those passing through, found comfort and companionship at the Smith boarding house where divine worship, in the Swedish language, was held whenever a Swedish pastor came to town. Lutheran pastors Erland Carlson, P. Carlson, P.A. Cederstam and E. Norelius offered worship to those who gathered at Mother Smith's from 1855-1870. Services were occasionally on Sundays, but most frequently during midweek. Baptisms and weddings waited until a pastor was available. Sometimes the Rev. L.O. Lindh traveled from Marine Mills to administer communion or hold a funeral

service. In a local news column from the *Stillwater Messenger* newspaper, dated July 25, 1866 we read, "About 7,000 Scandinavians have passed through Chicago this season for Minnesota and more are expected." Expectations of owning property and achieving financial independence motivated some, while others were moved by political or religious needs to seek a new home.

From that influx, a nucleus of 34 adults, who lived in Stillwater and had been confirmed in the Lutheran faith, proposed the establishment of a congregation. They felt they could support a pastor, that the community of Swedes of the Evangelical Lutheran Confession was growing and would continue to grow. These thirty-four were ordinary people who accomplished the extraordinary. Checking in the first City Directory, 1876-1877, for Stillwater we find occupations of some of these 34 members listed as: policeman, clerk, night watchman, teamster, painter, carpenter, laborer, boot and shoe dealer, confectioner and proprietor of the Wexio Hotel. Other than "Mother Smith," who ran a boardinghouse, wives worked alongside their husbands in business and at home. Charter members who signed the incorporation letter were: Andrew Olson, wife Christina and one child; John Booren, wife Carin and two children; John G. Nilson, wife Johanna Sofia and two children; Ingri Christina Smith, widow; John W. Smith, wife Charlotte Helena and one child; John Warner, wife Carolina; Johanna Mathilda Sjogren; Christin Peterson;

Anna Johnson; August Liljegren; John Olson, wife Anna Elizabeth and three children; Frank Reiter, wife Lisa and two children; Allrick Johnson; Peter John Stenstrom; Andrew Peterson; Anders P. Bostrom; Charles Cesar; Johan August Hallen; N.P. Kronstedt; Cary Johnson; Johan Ljungquist, wife Eva Maria and four children; C.P. Stromberg, and wife Emelie.

Establishing a congregation took a fair amount of time as a pastor was needed to officiate in the process. Notices for the meeting of incorporation needed to be given over three successive Sundays so that all who wished to attend could do so. Then the Augustana Synod for the Swedish Lutheran Church needed to approve the incorporation at the annual meeting held in Illinois. It was agreed on July 18, 1871, that the name of the church would be Svenska Lutherska Forsamlingen, the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation at Stillwater, Mn. Trustees and deacons were elected at that meeting where the voting age for the men in the congregation was set at age 21. Finances for running expenses of the new congregation were determined via membership fees—\$2 for men and \$1 for women. Money collected as offering was in addition to the membership donation. The Rev. Pehr Anders Cederstam was asked to serve the congregation when possible, although his main duties were with the church in Center City. Pastor Cederstam was held in high regard as he had been the only Swedish Lutheran pastor in Minnesota until 1856 and had been on the committee to write the state constitution. It was further resolved at the organizational meeting that six members of the congregation be selected, along with the three trustees, to either purchase the German Catholic Church building at a reasonable cost, or “take immediate steps to build a church on the lot which Andrew Olson bought for this purpose.” The committee was authorized to decide the size and architectural style of the church building. Since the trustees had only been directed to spend \$25 on behalf of the congregation without a special meeting, the committee was empowered to collect unpaid subscriptions, solicit donations and secure loans, if necessary, to see that the new congregation had a home. At the close of the organizational meeting, Pastor Cederstam offered the prayer, “May the Great Shepherd, Himself, watch over this little planting, to the praise of His Holy Name and the salvation and bliss of many.”



The Rev. P.A. Cederstam and the First Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church built on South Fourth and Oak Streets, used from 1871-1883.

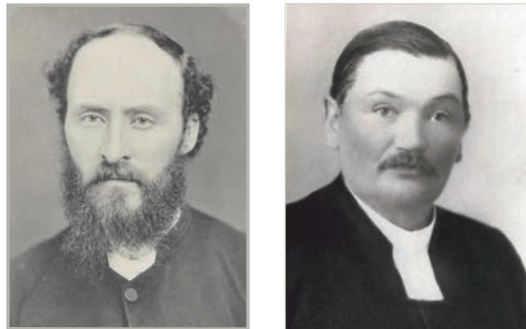
The Building

Sermons were always held in the Swedish language when the pastor could travel to Stillwater, as were the annual meetings and reports. Despite the official organization of the congregation and the building of the 50 by 36 feet wooden church structure, services still were not held each Sunday. Pastor Cederstam felt he could not continue his constant traveling schedule due to his age, and resigned after the first year.

Music was an important part of worship services from the outset. With no organ or piano available, a song leader was hired to guide congregational voices. Interestingly, Erick Olson was elected to the double position of song leader and janitor with the salary of \$60 per year with extra pay given “for woodsawing and scrubbing.” One can imagine strength was needed for both tasks.

Also important, from the very first year of the church, was preserving the Swedish Christmas Day service called Julotta held at 5:30 a.m. The hymn *All Hail to Thee O Blessed Morn* was sung at the opening of each Julotta Christmas service at the Fourth Street church. One member’s family needed to get up at 3 a.m. to get “dressed and fed, and to ride behind a pair of old mules to whom two miles an hour was excessive speed. Then in the evening there was the children’s festival and we all went to that.”

During the next five years, the Rev. Jonas Ausland traveled to Stillwater once a month from St. Paul, where he ministered to the First Lutheran congregation. This meant a forty mile round trip by trail across the countryside. He was on hand for annual and special meetings, but the parish wanted consistent leadership with services on Sundays. Over the summer months it was possible to contract a seminary student to lead worship services. When a pastor or a seminary student was not available on Sunday, deacons read a meditation from a book of sermons.



The Rev. Jonas Ausland and the Rev. A. F. Tornell

In 1876 there was a concerted effort made to call a resident pastor. The congregation was offering a \$600 salary the first year, plus the proceeds of the Christmas offering as a bonus. Think about that yearly salary amount from the perspective of a frugal congregation that sold the remnants of all the used candles to the highest bidder, which turned out to be fifteen cents per pound! Even with this salary offer, it was difficult to find a pastor, simply because the need was great in so many new towns and the limited number of ordained ministers working in the Augustana Synod were in considerable demand.

The Rev. Adolph Frederick Tornell of Taylors Falls accepted the call by the Stillwater Swedish church to be the first resident pastor providing he would still be able to serve the Bethesda congregation the last Sunday each month. His request was honored unless that last Sunday was a Holy Day. Consequently, his salary was adjusted from \$600 to \$500.

At a special meeting in November of 1878, Pastor Tornell asked permission to serve a River Falls, Wisconsin congregation one Sunday per month. This was granted after the deacons and trustees had studied the matter. The Stillwater congregation had only been organized officially for seven years through the willingness of ministers of other congregations to extend themselves to start a new church. No doubt just when it seemed there would be a full-time, resident pastor, it was difficult to release his services two Sundays per month.

One ongoing controversial issue in the early years of church worship pivoted around which songs were appropriate to sing for worship services. There was a Swedish hymnal and a songbook of gospel tunes called Hjemlands Sångar available,

but not all members could agree on which to use. A compromise vote was reached in 1877, whereby the hymnal tunes were reserved for Sunday worship and the gospel songs were to be sung at mid-week services. As a result, the song leader resigned because he did not care to sing the gospel songs, nor would he do so. Pastor Tornell solved the dilemma by declaring that the hymns from the Swedish Psalmbook would be used exclusively at all services "with the reservation that if anyone desires to sing a song, it is not forbidden."

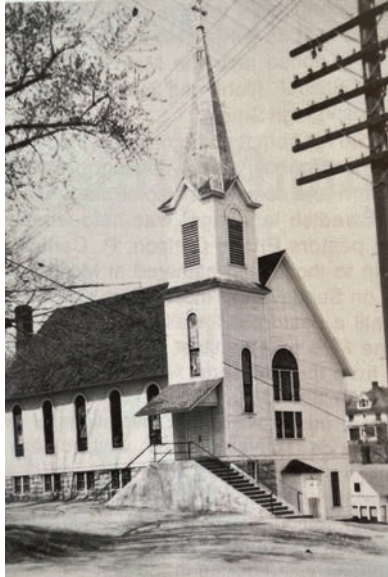
When the song leader and custodian positions were divided in 1878, Mr. Lemich Krantz was elected to lead the singing at a salary of \$8 per month. He would furnish his own parlor organ for the church to use until Sept. 1. Choir was not organized until 1880 under the direction of Noah Krantz.



Choir of the Swedish Lutheran Church

Growth of the congregation was apparent by the number of new members received, and programs initiated by Pastor Tornell. Sunday school was organized in 1878 with Peter Lillegren as superintendent. In addition to Sunday school, the congregation voted to provide Swedish school four months out of the year, two in the winter and two in the summer. These classes were in addition to the public school offerings, primarily for learning catechism and the Swedish language. Each child registered was expected to pay \$1 per month as tuition. The teacher's salary was set at \$35 per month, plus round-trip travel expenses. Most of the teachers were men who were college or seminary students. Carl Elis Nelson wrote of his Swedish weekday school experience with classes at the rear of the church auditorium, "My first memory was the initiation I received from one of the larger boys. It was during the opening prayer, while we were standing at attention, that he stuck a pin in my thigh. I let out a bellow that added nothing to the solemnity of the occasion. What happened to Martin? There was a woodshed in the rear of the school room."

Further outreach by the young congregation was evident in 1879 raising a 25 cent assessment from each communicant for the benefit of Gustavus Adolphus College. There also was a special offering collected for a church in Dahlsborg, Clay County, South Dakota where the crops had frozen one year and had been eaten by grasshoppers the next. By the eighth annual report, a delegate was elected and sent to the synodical meeting in Chicago.



Remodeled church from
1879 with steeple

Membership dues for each communicant were raised to \$6 for men and \$4 for women. Half of the fee was due by September first with the balance to be paid by March first. This was a no-nonsense policy where a ninety-day notice was given to church members in arrears with their dues. From the translated minutes of the 1880 annual report we read, "Those who refuse to pay are to be excluded from the congregation; those who are willing but unable to comply with this request are advised to appear before the church council and set a date when they expect to be able to pay what they owe."

A 20 feet by 28 feet vestry was added on to the church building on Fourth and Oak Streets in 1879, which was 10 feet high with five windows and three doors. This addition seemed to solve facility problems for awhile, however, the trustees could foresee need for further expansion due to the increasing immigrant population from Sweden.

Forty-two new members had joined the church that year, raising the total membership to 228 adult members. To prepare for this expansion, several lots were purchased in 1881 on North Third Street near Myrtle Street. Half of the \$2,500 pledge amount had been paid in advance toward the cost of the land. Then the first building was sold to the German Lutheran Salem Church in 1882, however the right to hold Sunday worship was reserved until November of 1883. The next step was to build a parsonage on the new south lot with plans being made for building a new church the following year.



The first parsonage built on Third and Myrtle streets, the location of the U.S. Post Office in 1996. Vertical photo of the brick Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church and parsonage on South Third Street.

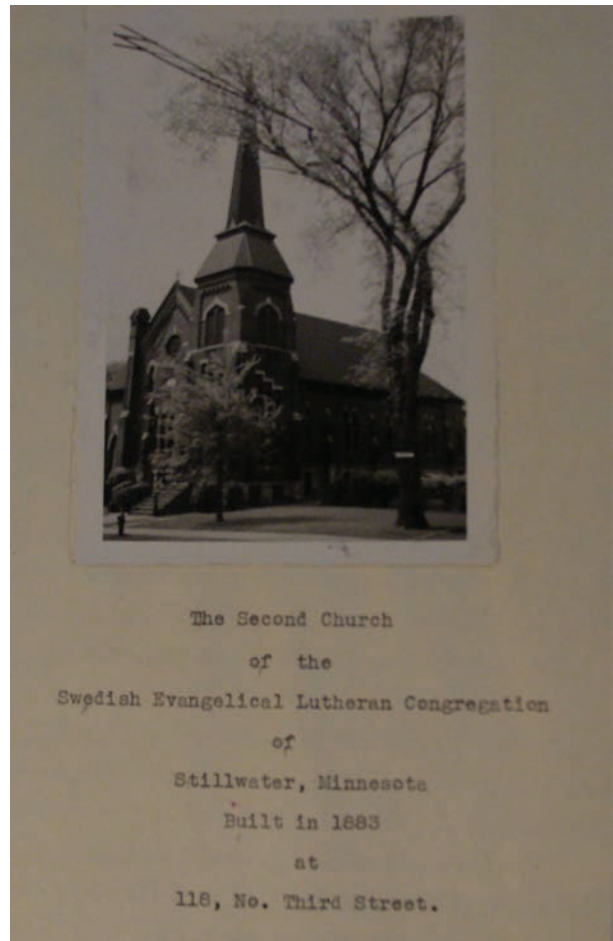
A building committee of twelve formulated the plans for the new structure with room for expansion. Dimensions of the new church were 46 feet wide and 80 feet long with the exterior of “dressed stone.” Although the structural construction proceeded on schedule, it was several years before the interior was fully complete due to a recession at that time. In fact, the congregation requested the synod that assessments be suspended from 1883–1885. Two years later the building committee requested designs and drawings for the chancel, pulpit, and altar ring. Emil Swanson, father of Harry Swanson and Betty Swanson Vesall, was the carpenter who assembled the marvelous woodwork backdrop and altar, and pulpit. (Now in 1996, these are housed in the Heritage Chapel.) The church was not dedicated for five years, until 1887, also the year the basement of the structure was flooded.

There was an interim from 1887-1888 when the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church was without a pastor, Pastor Tornell having resigned in the spring of 1887. Over the summer months, Joel Laurentius Haff, a seminary student, served the congregation. He was so well liked, that at a special meeting in December, the Stillwater church voted to extend a call to him as soon as he was ordained the following June. During the Rev. Haff's ministry there was a definite emphasis on programs for the young people of the congregation of which he felt there was "an astonishing number." In 1890, there were 26 "youths and maidens" confirmed on May 30. The following year, 25 students prepared for Confirmation in Swedish and six in English. Sunday school met between 3-5 p.m. on Sunday afternoons with members of the Young Peoples Society serving as teachers. During the week there were 98 students in weekday Swedish school; and students received newsletter copies of "Barnens Tidning" (Children's Tidings) each month. Annual reports were far more detailed in reporting the activities and funds of each of the organizations.



The Rev.
Joel L. Haff

as well as old, receive the spiritual care they need." Nevertheless, this issue was not really resolved, but rather evolved gradually with double services until well into the 1930s. Mr. August Liljegren was the only living charter member in 1931.



Second church pictured on a printed bulletin.

The Earliest Organizations

Trinity has always been a church of active membership from the outset. There certainly were not as many activities for all ages and special groups as we see the programs in 1996, yet the early church organizations provided the needed spiritual and social structure. Another interesting factor was the dedication with which people accepted leadership roles and continued to serve in those positions over decades. Sunday school teachers, like Mrs. John G. Anderson, who taught continuously for 33 years, and Miss Amanda Jackson, for 29 years. Conrad Danielson was Sunday school superintendent for over 40 years, plus serving communion over that period as well. Harry A. Swanson was financial secretary for 45 years. Choir members Mrs. F.G. Landeen and Mr. and Mrs. F.E. Holcombe sang in the choir for 44 years.

The Ladies' Aid Society began with eight members in 1871, and then was reorganized in 1878, meeting two times per month. Even though these women of the congregation did not have voting privileges at church meetings, they nonetheless saw to the details of caring for the church home and raised substantial amounts of money to meet their goals. It was the recommendation of the Ladies' Aid, in 1876, that suggested painting the first wooden church two coats of light gray with corners and cornices somewhat darker in color. To pay the church debt in 1878, a Strawberry Festival was planned by the church women. In order to raise money for a pipe organ, \$302.67 was set aside from their treasury as the seed money. Then they proposed a church supper to further that amount. No doubt it took several years of suppers to raise the \$1,715 needed to pay the Barckhoff Church Organ Company of Salem, Ohio, because the pipe organ was not installed until 1884 when the congregation was in its new church on Third Street.

A Missionary Committee formed in 1891 for the purpose of supporting Augustana Synod missions and the Stillwater City Hospital. They were an active group in 1892 meeting 22 times that year!

The forerunner of the Luther League program was the Young People's Society started in 1880 during the Rev. Haff's tenure. This group was open to confirmed members who liked to socialize with other members of the church. Included in the annual report of 1887, we read that the Young People's Society, with 32 members, had a small book collection of 75 volumes to start a church library and over \$100 in their treasury. In service to the congregation, they volunteered to help teach Sunday school on Sunday afternoons. Another project was raising \$62 for the first baptismal font (which is now located in the Heritage Chapel). The Young People's Society installed a light midway between the two stairway entrances, presented an

altar painting to the church and donated to foreign missions as well as those in need in Stillwater.

Two offerings per year in 1891 were to be designated as the beginning of a "Poor Fund." The church board administered this fund until a Sick Aid Committee was formed at the annual meeting. That committee evolved to a Men's Sick Benefit Society, an insurance and financial aid group primarily men of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church, but also a few from Bethlehem Lutheran in Bayport. Revenue was disbursed "for the relief of others."

The New Century Brings Changes



The Sanctuary in 1901

Before the turn of the century, when the Rev. Philip Thelander came to the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Stillwater, the church was one of the larger churches in the conference with finances "being surpassed by one of the two hundred and twenty-five congregations." At that time, there were 508 communicant members and 370 children. It was also reported in the annual meeting minutes that the financial circumstances had improved.

Two Christmas celebrations were especially meaningful to the young members of the congregation. The Julotta, early Christmas morning matins service, was impressive with candles lit on a stand by each pew and on the Christmas tree as the congregation sang *O Hail to Thee O Blessed Morn*. Roy Thelander, Pastor Philip Thelander's son, recalls the Barnfesten, or the Christmas Sunday School Festival, with scripture recitations and songs inspiring the congregation with the meaning of Christmas.



The Rev.
Thelander
and 1905
Confirmation
Class



The Rev. Thelander's leadership saw the congregation into the twentieth century. In many ways his ideas seemed more conservative than those of his predecessor, for example, he admonished parents to teach their children the Swedish liturgy and hymns rather than promoting the use of English. In the biographical sketches of the early pastors, "Korsbaneret," we read of his brilliant mind, commanding appearance, love of music, and that he "inspired the confidence of the parishioners as few men could." A goal realized was that the congregation became fiscally responsible and paid its debts to the Minnesota Conference. In 1900, our church was able to loan Gustavus Adolphus College at 5 percent interest per year and planned to host the Minnesota Conference meeting in February of 1901.



The Rev.
A.W. Edwins

The Rev. Dr. August William Edwins served our church from 1902–1905. More information is known about his career after leaving Stillwater, as he went on to become the first Augustana missionary sent to central China to the Honan province. "After many dedicated years in this field, he was captured and held prisoner of war." Detained by the Japanese in 1939, he and his wife were released in 1942 in a prisoner exchange. They both started the return journey to America. Tragically, he died aboard ship and was buried at sea.



The Rev Dr. Edwins
Missionary in
Central China

In 1906, the Rev. Carl Ernest Benson came to the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church in Stillwater. His was to become the longest stewardship of the church and congregation, from Aug. 2, 1906 to Sept. 1, 1946. From 1908 to 1931, Pastor Benson served as the Protestant Chaplain of the Minnesota State Prison. Twice he was elected president of the National Association of Prison Chaplains. Agnes Gjordav, a current and lifelong member of Trinity, remembered Pastor Benson as a sincere person who delivered excellent sermons, but one who could also be a strict disciplinarian if need be. Church projects and programs flourished under his leadership. A “modern and commodious” parsonage was built on the corner of Mulberry and North Fourth Streets in 1908. No longer modern, no longer church property since 1959, this beautiful spacious home remains elegant in 1996.



The Rev. C. Ernest Benson and family
Parsonage in 1908, Mulberry & North Fourth streets

A two-day celebration was held on Sept. 29 and 30 of 1912 for the 40th Anniversary of the organization of the congregation, complete with a program printed in Swedish to mark the occasion. In the following year, the big project was installing an adequate furnace to heat the church sanctuary. Choirs were redefined in 1915 into a Senior Choir and a Chapel Choir with a male quartet, mixed quartet, orchestra and soloists to add to the total musical program. The Boy Scout troop was added in 1916, however all in all the status quo remained until the next decade. (World War I did not seem to have the same effect on the congregation as that of the second World War.) Tandem services in Swedish and English were available for divine worship, confirmation and Sunday school.

Pastor C.E. Benson's wife organized the Willing Worker's Society in 1917 to complete special hands-on projects at church not covered by the Ladies' Aid. Meetings for this organization were twice monthly on the second and fourth

Thursday evenings. Many of the same members attended both organizations. One of the projects completed by the Willing Worker's Society was having pew cushions installed.

The era of the 1920s brought tremendous changes to our congregation, particularly in the name conversion from the original 1871 title, Svenska Lutherska Forsamlingen, in English translation, The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. With the 50th anniversary, the congregation seemed receptive to other transformations. It was not until the early 1920s that the women of the church became voting members. Quite a bit of renovation was accomplished in 1924, with the addition of the sacristy, and choir room on the Fourth Street side of the building. Also, a pipe organ, carved high altar, and stained glass windows were donated, primarily as memorials, to beautify the sanctuary. These hand-crafted fixtures now enhance the worship setting in the Heritage Chapel. Parochial summer school was discontinued in 1924, when confirmation classes shifted to Wednesday afternoons after school. Other additions to the general program was a Stillwater High School Baccalaureate Service in 1922, Father and Son Banquet in 1923, and mimeographing church bulletins in 1926. About 400 copies were made per Sunday. Two weather-related events interrupted the normal church schedules in the 1920s—one was an 18-inch snowstorm in 1924 and the other in 1926 when the church steeple was struck by lightning.

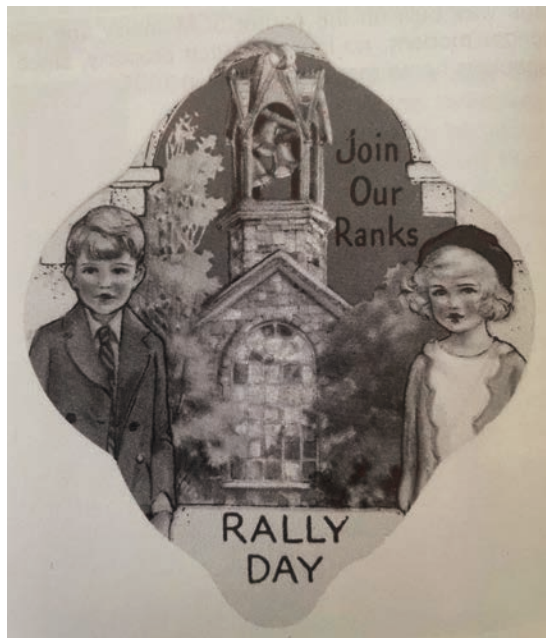


Sanctuary viewed from the balcony.

The Young Women's Society, mostly active in the 1930s, membership encompassed those who were not involved in Ladies' Aid or Willing Workers, but were confirmed members. It was through the efforts of this group that the funds for a piano were donated to the church.

A memorial album combining photos and history, published in 1931 for the 60th anniversary, gives us a wealth of information about that era. At that time the value of Trinity Lutheran property was \$70,000, while census figures show 863 adult members and 287 children. Three choirs are mentioned—the Senior Choir of 38 singers, Chapel Choir with 30 singers, and a Children’s Choir of 40 children. All were directed by Lillian Olson, who also was the organist. The Rev. Benson was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois in 1932. Pastor Benson reported to the congregation that English services on Sundays at 10 a.m. were far better attended than those scheduled every other Sunday at 11:25 a.m. presented in Swedish. He felt only the aged were coming to the Swedish service and that the double system was drawing to a close.

“Family pews should be the vogue and thus the children trained from earliest childhood to attend worship.”

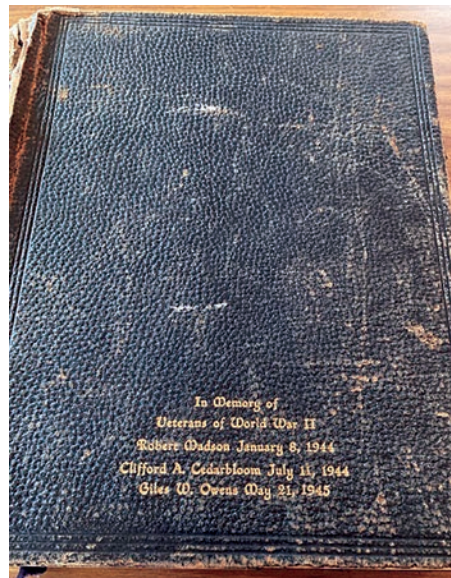


Rally Day and birthday greeting cards were given to each Sunday School pupil.

A Midsummer Day outing was sponsored for Sunday school children and families where entire streetcars were filled with Trinity members off to Wildwood Amusement Park for the day. Current lifelong member, Helen Orff, remembered that occasion as being really exciting and special. Each child received a couple tickets for rides and families shared picnic basket delights. Despite the Depression, Trinity celebrated another anniversary during the 1930s, that of the sixty-fifth year. This event focused around a dinner with numerous guest speakers and a telegram from Pastor Philip Thelander, then serving a parish in Escanaba, Michigan, was read.

The World War II Years

The first substantial increase in envelope receipts since 1931 was reported in 1941, a decade later. Debt had been a major issue over that period. It was recommended by the Board of Trustees that the special collection of offerings at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, usually used to supplement the staff salaries, be designated instead to reduce the debt of the congregation, for mission or for conference charities. New junior offering envelopes were printed to aid in paying the costs of Sunday school materials. Pastor Benson suggested a field survey of the community at the annual meeting for the purpose of increasing the membership potential of the church. He and three appointed members would perform the task. At that time the Augustana Synod advised the church to write a new constitution, so a committee was appointed to study the constitution and make recommendations. An archive committee was elected in 1941 to preserve programs, pamphlets, pictures and portraits. As a result of their efforts in assembling regalia, the Stillwater Motor Company donated an office safe to preserve those records. Repairs to the steeple in 1942 included renovating and painting. Trinity was able to purchase the Kenwood property just north of the church, as the apartment house owners were delinquent in payment of taxes and mortgage. That summer no Vacation Bible School would be held “for fear that some child might be hurt in the wrecking of the building on the newly purchased lot.” Pastor Benson announced that services in Swedish would be discontinued as of the annual meeting in 1943 by saying, “We are a one language church.”



WWII Memorial Bible in honor of three Trinity men.

“Rationing of foodstuffs, tires and gasoline is cutting more and more on the routine work of our societies, but we expect to carry on,” Pastor Benson announced to the congregation in 1944. That year there were 1,104 members of Trinity. Senior Luther League was disbanded for the duration, their treasury was used to buy war savings bonds and then entrusted to the church for safe keeping. Boy Scout activities were also on hold, as the leaders were on active duty. The Trinity Girl Scout Troop had been taken on by leaders from the public school. There was a group of church women who formed a Church Correspondence Committee to write letters to all Trinity members in armed service. Most women wrote about town happenings once per month. Then the names were circulated the following month so there was a new perspective on the local scene. By January of 1945 the committee was sending letters to 170 people in service. Five of that number were women. One was a nurse, two were Waves and two were with the Marine Corps Women’s Reserves.

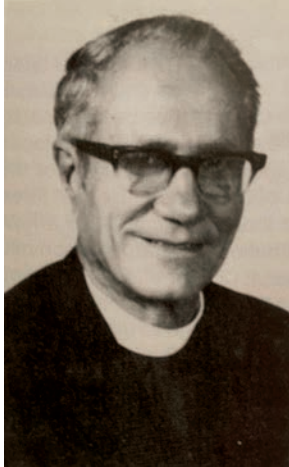


Pastor Benson, with his wife Mabel, served the congregation for 40 years. | Photo of the church from the parking lot.



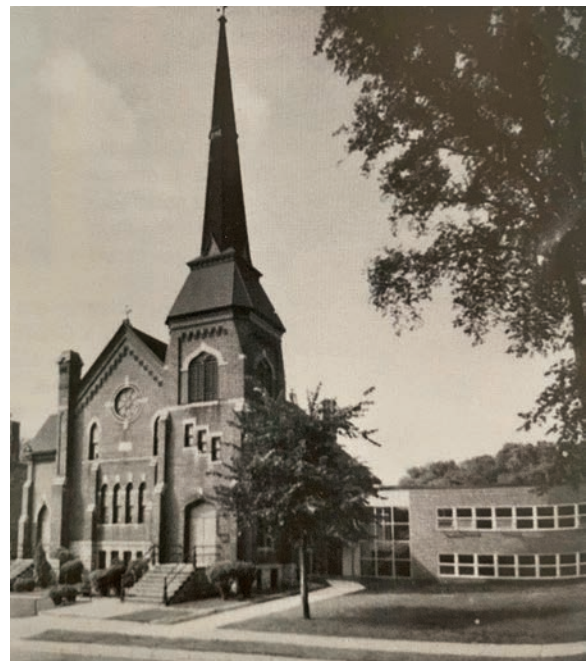
Trinity also acquired the title to the Jacobson property on Fourth Street and revamped the building to house the Boy Scouts, lease part of the building, and provide additional parking space. Three hundred and twenty-nine man hours went into the construction of the south parking lot.

Synod policy dictated that automatic retirement occurred when a pastor reached the age of 70, however Pastor Benson served one and a half years longer until September of 1946. No doubt he rejoiced at celebrating the Diamond Jubilee, 75th anniversary of the congregation in July of that year. Festivities over three days centered on a historical theme, one with district pastors bringing greetings, a communion service and a Grand Jubilee Reunion Service. He and “his helpmeet,” as he called his wife Mabel, had devoted 40 years to the spiritual wellbeing of Trinity members.



The Rev. Norman P. Wold and the stately sanctuary.
Below, the church with new parish hall dedicated in 1954.

The first sermon preached by Pastor Norman Wold in 1946 was entitled, "In the beginning—God." In the 23 years he ministered to the Trinity congregation, he is remembered for his compassion for church members and believing in the power of prayer. By the 78th annual meeting, it was reported that two identical services were held each Sunday at 9 and 10:45 a.m. That same year all the pledge amounts, church dues and special offerings were published in the annual report and continued to be until 1962. Ladies' Aid paid for the painting, redecorating and rewiring of the church parlors. New front doors needed to be added before the insurance appraisal of the property took place. After general foundation and roof repairs were completed in 1949, the church was ready to begin plans for a parish education building. Ground breaking for the new structure was in 1952, but the dedication was not until 1954. Miss Joyce Sundbom (Welanders), was the first parish worker to the Trinity congregation. Also new was the idea of serving communion to senior citizens at 2 p.m. on the last Tuesday of each month, with a luncheon served afterwards by various circles. A new Lutheran liturgy and hymnal was introduced to the congregation during this era. Also in 1954 the women's organizations; Ladies' Aid, Martha Society, and Willing Workers, joined to form the Ladies Guild. It was estimated that there would need to be approximately \$15,000 of repairs needed to



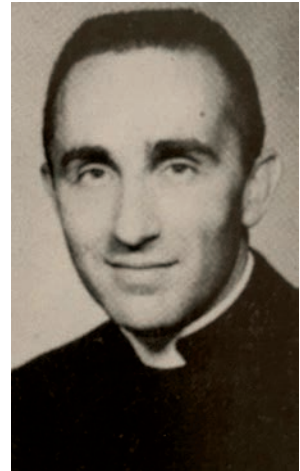
the parsonage on Fourth and Mulberry streets, so the decision was made to sell the property and build on the south side of McKusick Lake in 1959. Confirmation classes had been held on Saturday, however it was suggested that the course be held after dinner one weekday evening instead. Conrad Danielson recommended that an altar committee be established to assist with Holy Communion. With quiet dedication, Mr. Danielson had been performing these services unassisted for many years, but with the larger membership, he requested some help.

The music program became more extensive throughout the 1960s, especially so under the enthusiastic choral direction of Denis Brown. Senior Choir even cut a record of choral favorites in the spring of 1968 which sold for \$4. There were 25 different organizations at Trinity at that time, and space was at a premium then. Some discussion involved adding a floor to the parish building, but the decision was made to hold two sessions of Sunday school instead. An expansion committee investigated the purchase prices of land within a five-mile radius of Stillwater city limits. In 1969 the trustees recommended adding a third service per Sunday and purchase neighboring property on Third and Fourth streets. With the adoption of a new constitution, the church governing system changed from that of a Board of Administration to a Church Council. Officers were no longer deacons and trustees, but designated as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, benevolence treasurer, and financial secretary. Eight standing committees were also formed at that time. During Pastor Wold's tenure at Trinity, five young men of Trinity became ministers: Willard Albertson, Paul Franzen, Richard Landeen, Gary Langness, and Ray Larson. Trinity members during Pastor Wold's ministry will surely always remember the close of the Lenten services when the sanctuary lights were dimmed, the cross illuminated and he sang a capella, "Beneath the Cross of Jesus." Upon retirement in August of 1969, Pastor Norman and Marguerite Wold received a painting of the church and a trip to the Holy Land from the congregation.

The 100th Year

Changes in many areas of church life marked the transition from the first one hundred years of the congregation to the second. During this transition the Rev. Forrest Chaffee was ministering to our church with tremendously thought-provoking sermons. His gift for preparing spiritually uplifting messages and delivering them in a stimulating manner was unparalleled by few. Confirmation changed from a two to a three-year course of study as had been prescribed by the Lutheran Church of America eight years earlier. First Communion began for fifth grade students at that time. A Couples Club organized five delightful events. Sunday school boys were used

in pairs to assist at holy worship. Boy Scout Troop No. 116 was rechartered in March of 1970 after more than 50 years of being sponsored by Trinity. Two interns served the church at this time, the first being Dennis Cook and the second, Timothy Cowen. A sociologist, Mr. Paul Anderson, was hired by the congregation to write a profile of church attitudes, community traditions, general religious positions and basic needs "to show the right directions programming should take." This Socius Report, completed in 1971, indicated that Trinity was "a healthy old church with a strong, young, able and well-educated population." It was necessary for the church to do some long range planning. After a careful survey, Mr. Anderson recommended retaining the present church site, continuing the historic tradition, acquiring some property for parking and development, adding to the staff to serve a population that would be twice as large, developing a strong Christian education program, fostering an ecumenical program with churches nearby and giving financially at a higher level.



The Rev.
Forrest Chaffee

The centennial plans pivoted around the theme "Forward in Faith into the Future." Throughout the spring, the church basement was undergoing major transformation into The Centennial Room. Meanwhile, the congregation enjoyed two celebratory concerts by the Gustavus Adolphus College Choir. As a memento of the centennial year, any of the 1882 congregational members could purchase a commemorative plate with a drawing of the church on the front and the prayer from the organizational meeting in 1871 on the back. To mark the generations of the centennial, the Trinity Lutheran Church Women presented a pageant of bridal gowns and confirmation dresses, the earliest being from 1875, originally worn by Christine Bostrom, the grandmother of Kenneth Bieging. Two models in the pageant were great-great granddaughters of Mr. and Mrs. John Smith at whose home the original church members gathered. The gowns were representative of long-standing Trinity families: Thoreens, Grandstrands, Glasruds, LaVines, Landeens, Lawsons, Linnerns and Madsens, plus the wedding gown of Mrs. C.E. Benson.

A Centennial Reception and Banquet was held at Gustavus Adolphus Church in St. Paul on July 17, 1971. Entertainment that evening began with a "Hootenany" organized by Mark Jacobson. We now know him as Dr. Mark Jacobson who is dedicated to the Maasai medical mission in Tanzania, which is supported by Trinity. Paul Giel, sports director for WCCO radio and former Gopher All-American quarterback, was the emcee for the banquet. Flickoma Fern, which means five girls, shared Swedish folk tunes in the musical evening program, followed by baritone soloist James Murray.

The Rev. Wilbert Benson, son of former Pastor C.E. Benson, gave the sermon for the centennial Sunday service entitled, "A Century with Christ." Special tribute was given to ten members of Trinity who were 75 years or older and had entered into our church membership through baptism. Mrs. Archie (Emma) Geidel, Mrs. Edith Vesall, Mrs. Martin (Edna) Olson, Miss Jennie Anderson, Mrs. Arthur W. (Anna) Edstrom, Mrs. A.T. (Ellen) Anderson, Mr. Elmer Bostrom, Mrs. Joseph (Alice) Casanova, Mr. Henry E. Sandquist, and Miss Irene Carlson.

The Expansion

The year 1973 became another year of transition for our church family with a new senior pastor, Daniel L. Johns, and a new associate pastor, Timothy Cowen, who had served as an intern pastor prior to his call to Trinity. In general the community was experiencing change and expansion, and Trinity grew in that ground swell. The energy and enthusiasm of these two new pastors seemed boundless, stimulating the membership to accept countless innovative ideas not previously considered. Of course considerable change in a century old congregation did not always proceed without controversy, nonetheless, the general church program moved ahead. A Drive-in Trinity worship service began across the St. Croix River at the Hilltop Drive-in in Houlton, Wisconsin. It was quite a novelty—guitar music, honking of car horns or blinking lights to respond to the minister, and hearing the gospel over a car window speaker seemed "far out." Arlene Kern, (Mrs. Raymond) had been the first woman to be elected to serve on the church council, followed by terms of Sandy Rydeen and Miriam Madsen. The church steeple that had appeared the same



The Rev
Daniel L. Johns
Christmas Eve
early service with
the Cherub Choir

for decades was covered with an ultra modern looking aluminum sheeting. Finally, that same year, the last parsonage provided by the congregation for its minister was sold.

Next, a combined church bulletin and newsletter called *This Week* was mailed to Trinity members and the concerted publicity effort was underway. The church library was designated as the Norman P. Wold Memorial Library and was expanded to include audio-visual equipment in addition to children's books and general Christian reading and reference materials for adult members. Long-range plans were presented to the congregation in a publication entitled, *Trinity Plans Ahead* with expansion of the facility to be divided into phases, increasing the seating for worship services was considered essential. There were three services each Sunday morning and one on Saturday night at that time, already using the facility to its maximum potential. Lutheran Church Women sponsored a Day of Renewal, an ecumenical event with 33 other churches. Also in 1974, Warm World Child Development Center began with a three-day nursery school and two-day play school program.

Church outreach meant contributions to Northwestern Theological Seminary, and Lutheran Orient Mission. Locally, Trinity contributed to Young Life, Home-delivered Meals, and the St. Croix Chaplaincy. Outreach via the media was through a local WAVN radio program of devotions, "Light for Today" presented by Pastor Johns at 7:50 a.m. on weekdays. Trinity also published a one-page photo display article in the 1976 Bicentennial Edition of the *Stillwater Gazette* with photos of the church program, past and present, Bible verses that applied to daily help for successful living and statements about the future plans for the congregation. The Organ Committee and Church Council approved the purchase of a Seville electronic organ to replace the failing pipe organ. Another purchase in 1976 was the property to the west on Fourth Street with an existing store building and parking lot. The former grocery store was remodeled to house Family Service of St. Croix, and the Warm World Nursery School. As both agencies paid rent to the church, it was feasible to maintain the property for further use. Neujahr and Associates were authorized to proceed with designs for building expansion including estimates.

Next a ramp was affixed to the parish hall entrance of the sanctuary to provide easier access. After the resignation of Associate Pastor, Tim Cowen, Pastor Dean J. Wigstrom was called to serve Trinity. At that time, Conrad Danielson had served as Sunday School Superintendent for more than 40 years, and the congregation celebrated his leadership and dedication as he relinquished the responsibility to Dan Wilson.



Cherub Choir

More and more new programs were available for young and old. Joanne Brown, (Mrs. Denis) had organized children's choirs for the young "Cherubs" and "The Joyful Noise" elementary groups. Funds to purchase a set of handbells were donated to Trinity as a memorial gift. Glenda Bjorum, (Mrs. William) was the first director of the group of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students. As these students advanced under her weekly instruction, a junior high group was formed. Adding to the musical excellence for services was the introduction of the Lutheran Book of Worship with two liturgical settings. Adult education developed with Sunday or early weekday morning Bible studies offered, as well as evening enrichment courses. One was the "I Can—I Will" twenty-nine week program to complete the reading of the entire Bible within that time frame. Sunday Morning Forums downstairs in the Centennial Room emphasized social action, historical or theological discussion or family effectiveness. Adults were encouraged to attend before or after the worship service of their preference. Pastor Leman Olsenius was added to the growing staff to serve in the ministry to senior citizens, and Pastor Betsy Dolmar (Dartt) became the first woman intern. The total baptized membership for 1979 was 3,337 members.

Leadership roles for women in the church began to expand in the 1980s. Interestingly enough is the fact that it was during the term of the first woman elected as council president, that the first woman was called as an associate pastor to the congregation. Gerrie Granquist was especially proud to serve as Trinity council president, and to have the opportunity to aid in the call of Pastor Betsy Dolmar (Dartt). Trinity women were assembling kits for Lutheran World Relief, donating maternity and infant supplies to Birthright, and giving clothing to women serving a sentence at the Shakopee Prison for women at that time. A very successful

cookbook, *Trinity Country Cuisine* was in the second printing, supplying needed funds for Lutheran Church Women (LCW).

Commitments for \$1,500,000 were pledged in a Capital Funds Program enabling the council and congregation to approve the design and drawings for construction of new facilities in a 51,900 square-foot project to be completed by September of 1983. At the special meeting in September of 1982 a written ballot was requested and the motion passed in the affirmative. Groundbreaking for this construction was on October 3, 1982. Dreams for Trinity mentioned at this meeting included broadcasting the worship service via cable communication, starting an instrumental music program, displaying sculpture or paintings throughout the facility, and possibly developing a nursing home. The Thelen Center building was removed from the Third Street property which provided additional off-street parking for Trinity members.



Crane digging in back of the church from the Fourth Street side.

A couples club group had been intermittently active during the mid to the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. There were about five events per year when the organization was called The Happiness Emporium. Then it dwindled to one catered dinner in the Centennial Room with Judge Miles Lord as featured speaker. When Pastor Bruce Carlson joined the ministry team in 1981, he and his wife, Barbara, spearheaded the reorganization of the group.

The youth program had been under the direction of parish workers, and interns since the 1960s. However effective these programs were was diminished by the fact that the leadership did not remain. Students adjusted to one person by the time the next staff member was in charge. When Dan Laitinen was added to the ministry team as the Minister of Youth and Young Adults, the program began to develop.

There were more than enough activities that were fun for all and Trinity began to be perceived as *the place* for kids. Whether it was the winter ski trip West for high school students, the Colorado rafting experience for the confirmands, the Mexico Mission trips, hometown service projects, or early breakfast Bible study groups, the participation was at a high level. For eight and a half years, Dan Laitinen served Trinity youth programs. The Breakfast Bible Studies under his leadership were attended by about 300 people.

He was even awarded the Outstanding Young Person Award by the Stillwater Jaycees.



Mexico Missions group in 1988

According to a May 1, 1989 *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch* article, “Lowell Rieks, a church member in whom Dan Laitinen often confided, said he had money problems we were getting worked out.” There were car payments and house rent payments Laitinen could not meet.

Then Washington County authorities began investigating sexual abuse complaints by Stillwater high school boys against the youth director. In a *Stillwater Gazette* news article, Captain Dale Fuerstenberg said, “One parent of a boy who said he was abused by Laitinen, confronted Laitinen about the claim.” Tragically, Dan Laitinen died by suicide before the allegations could be fully investigated. Ken Boyden, Chief Deputy

for the Washington County Sheriff's Department said, "Our main concern is to make sure the kids are dealt with properly...that they don't assume any guilt or feel they caused anything by coming forward." The county shifted focus to help alleged victims get counseling. Trinity held a program called "The Question is Suicide" presented by grief counselors talking to junior and senior high youth. Trinity's Senior Pastor at the time, Dan Johns shared, "We are trying to positively react to feelings of anger, shock, and disbelief, and be challenged constructively to provide hope and continuing ministry to the St. Croix Valley, especially for the youth."

Over 1,500 people attended Mr. Laitinen's funeral at Trinity remembering many positive, affirming Christian programs initiated by Dan Laitinen during his youth ministry. Students wrote goodbye messages to Dan on long sheets of paper at the church telling how he had a positive impact on their lives.

Larger congregational celebrations were fostered with the reinstated Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner featuring favorite Scandinavian delicacies. The first Trinity Yule Fest, organized by Kathy Brothen and Susan Stow, had a definite international theme. There were ethnic musical and folk dance performances, crafts of various cultures for sale in the gym, and foods representative of many lands served in the Garden Room for lunch. Chapel services with scripture and song were coordinated by Richard Shager to be celebrated in the Heritage Chapel in the Swedish, Norwegian, German, French and Spanish languages.

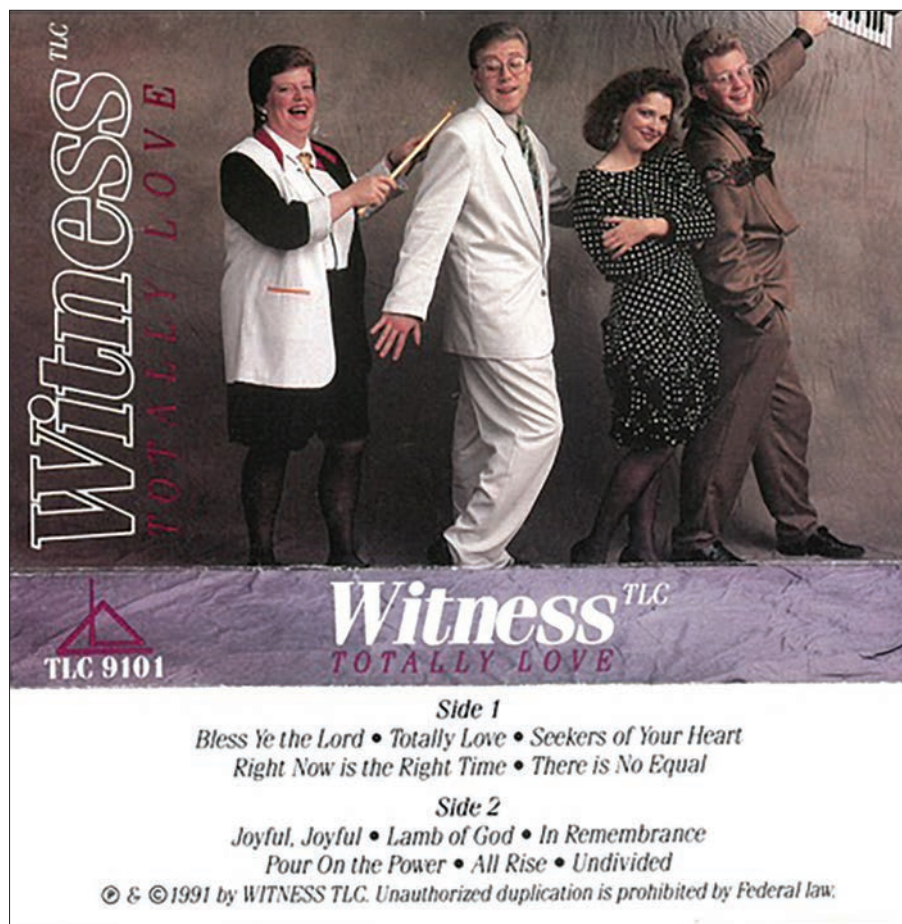


Construction stages

Nov. 18, 1984 marked the dedication of the new building although the facility had been used since March 25. The focus of the new sanctuary was the Resurrection Wall designed by architect Steve Erban and built by mason artisans Ed Erban, Steve's father, and Dave Schoenrock, his uncle. Twenty-one tons of the Minnesota stone had been cut at a Mankato stone quarry, transported to Trinity and then laid on the sanctuary floor to check the pattern design and color variations before being mortared in setting the stage for worship. This newly-completed sanctuary provides seating for 800 people. It is interesting to consider that the brick church

of 1883 was built when there were only 168 members, and those people also looked to future expansion. There were a couple of needs in particular not funded by the construction funds. Special memorial donations were often designated for either the elevator or the pipe organ fund. Those members with deep roots to the earlier church sanctuary were pleased that the Heritage Chapel, with the carved wooden chancel wall, pulpit, altar and baptismal font from 1885 and the Ascension stained-glass window, from 1924, found a beautiful home in the renovation results. Norris Swager, of Swager Construction, saw to the dismantling of the pieces to be used and painstakingly restored and assembled them in the condensed space to the east of the new sanctuary. The chapel now seats 50 for baptisms, small weddings, memorial and communion services.

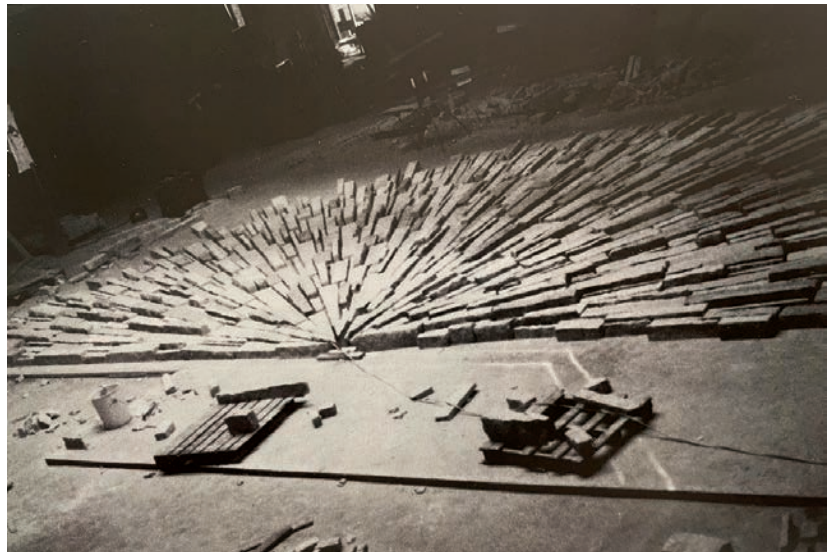
As the membership expanded to 4,089 baptized members in 1987, care was given to meet the needs of members in many areas of their lives. Tuesday night at Trinity was shortened to the powerful acronym TNT, which was packed with support groups for Positive Christian Singles, stress management, and effective parenting. The year 1988 was designated as the “Year of the Family” for Adult Forum emphasis. Also that year, there was a shift to change the 11 a.m. service to the “Come Alive Hour” using



Witness TLC recording cover

contemporary worship liturgy. The Witness TLC musical group with Robin Cain, Nancy Duncan, Phil Kadidlo, and Craig Koehnen began their dedicated ministry of music for contemporary worship at Trinity. Another service provided by our church in this era was Mom's Day Off which provided childcare and gave more than 100 mothers an opportunity for a break on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week. Pastor Len Nadeau was called to Trinity in 1989, after the resignation of Pastor Peter Johnson, as the leader of small group ministries, "Life and Growth" new member classes and Junior high ministries.

Women's organizations at Trinity have always provided support to the church in coordinating buffets for weddings, funerals and Lenten Wednesday luncheons. In 1990, the Lutheran Church Women (LCW) were able to donate a sizable gift of \$8,500 to the church, plus donating furniture for the Garden Room and kitchen items. Pastor Betsy Dolmar (Dartt) has provided capable and caring direction for Women of the ELCA (WELCA), Bible studies and children's ministries.



Senior high youth help move the heritage pulpit. | The brick Resurrection Wall in progress.

If there wasn't an activity to suit the need at Trinity, it seemed a congregational member or pastor would respond to organize just such a group. Faith, Fellowship and Fitness was an example of this premise, meeting six times a week for aerobic exercise and devotions. Search Bible studies were offered three times per week. During Pastor Richard Melheim's term as Associate Pastor, Christian theater productions became an anticipated event. "A Tap on the Window" was the 1991 production. Preparations were underway to broadcast the contemporary service on local cable access TV. Also that year, the Stillwater Post Office building was purchased by the Trinity congregation, thus insuring further room for expansion when the lease expired. That property would not be available until the long-term U.S. government

lease expired in 2014. The yearly income from that property was between \$20,000–\$22,000. Mexico or Yucatan Mission expanded in 1991 to include a young adult group over Christmas vacation and four January groups in 1992. Tom Thiets and Dave Swager coordinated these trips. A second Habitat for Humanity house was built by Trinity labor in 1992.



The cast of Godspell: Christian musical theater strengthened the youth program.

Glorious music continued to be an integral part of worship services at Trinity. We have been blessed with a wealth of musical expertise and dedication of choir directors and musicians—Denis Brown served as the Temple Choir director from 1964–1985, David Goulette, our organist began delighting the congregation in 1975 and Yvonne Danielson accompanied the Temple Choir on the piano. Many Trinity members can readily attest to hearing magnificent duet rhapsodies, variations on old standard hymns played by Yvonne and Dave. Ken Hannah began directing the Temple Choir in 1985 after Denis Brown's untimely death. At that time, one adult choir sang for both early services. When Carol Carver joined the musical staff in 1990, the choral groups changed to the Matin Singers for the 8:30 a.m. service under Ken Hannah's direction and the Temple Choir for 9:45 a.m. worship with

Carol Carver directing. For special celebratory worship services a Trinity brass group was assembled to add verve to the music. Children's choirs from preschool to high school contributed periodically to worship to the delight of all. A new red hymnal supplement was introduced containing hymns by contemporary composers and some gospel tunes, completing the circle of when there was the hymnal and gospel song book during the earliest years of the church.

An article about junior high ministries and the Wednesday night confirmation classes was featured in *The Lutheran* magazine in 1993. That year the fall kick-off Junior High Jamboree included youth groups from the Saint Paul Area Synod at Trinity for music, skits, and games. It was also the year that our Senior Pastor, Daniel Johns, and our Associate Pastor, Richard Melheim, resigned. Both were strong, conscientious men of faith. Pastor Johns is remembered for his futuristic planning, dynamic business sense and applying the Bible to the practicalities of

modern life. The congregation learned to know Pastor Melheim as a very creative individual, author of plays, a confirmation series and music.



Trinity's Ministry Staff from left to right:
Olsenius, Melheim, Dolmar, Johns and Nadeau

The Present

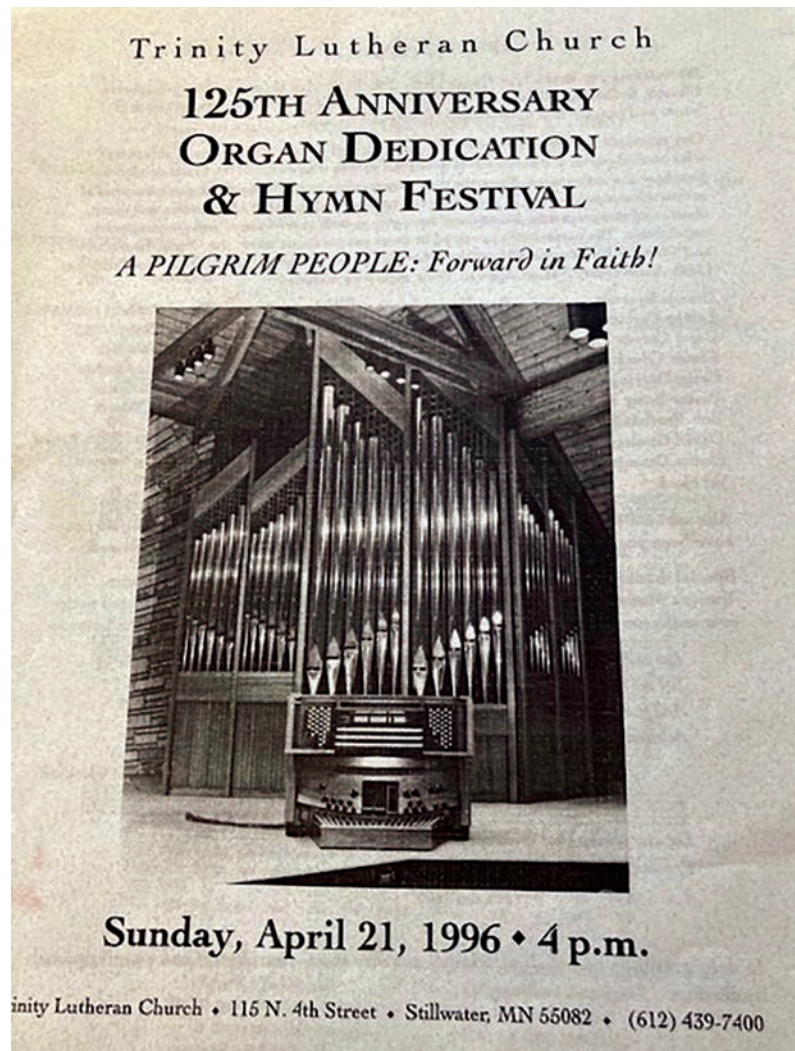
Pastor Chuck Claus ably served the Trinity congregation as Interim Senior Pastor for 15 months during 1993-1994. With the guidance of the Church Council, Pastor Claus continued to move us ahead with plans for the 125th anniversary projects. His friendly manner to all and excellent sense of humor were appreciated. Other milestones in 1994 included the 20th anniversary of the Warm World Child Development Center, the confirmation of 64 ninth grade students, and a total membership of 5,122 members.

In the present, we celebrate the calling of Dr. Lee Sather as Senior Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church looking forward to his spiritual guidance of our growing congregation. We celebrate his early months of his ministry as we continue in our plans for the 125th anniversary. One part of the celebration is to give mission support to a new ELCA congregation. Some of the plans have been necessary stewardship of our church home, like the replacement of the Narthex carpeting, roofing maintenance on the church and post office properties, and the renovation of the church kitchen. Other plans are for the upgrading of equipment such as the church office computer system and sound equipment for Witness, our contemporary service musical group. The renovation of the sanctuary to improve acoustical sound production for music will be a joy to many.

The Hymn Festival Dedication for the new Schantz pipe organ took place on Sunday, April 21, 1996 with narrations from "A Pilgrim People" by Jon Westerhof. Organ specifications include: the console is moveable to two locations, and the new organ keyboards are covered with bone and rosewood with matching rosewood draw knobs that can be used to change the expression of the music in 99 different combinations. Eleven hymns from throughout a calendar year were sung by the Temple Choir with Carol Carver directing and the Matin Singers directed by Ken Hannah. David Cherwien, an accomplished organist of renown performed on the new Schantz instrument.

What is so remarkable about Cherwien, as a church organist, is that he played an entire service including the prelude, postlude, liturgy and hymns from memory. Reverting to the tradition of church organists from the time of Bach who composed or improvised the music during a service, Cherwien's studies started at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. From there he continued in Berlin, Germany with the Kirchenmusik Schule (church music school). Further training was with Christian Baude in France and Paul Manz in the U.S. To treat our Trinity congregation to the full capabilities of the new organ, David Cherwien played the "Prelude and Fugue in G Minor" by Marcel Dupre. Listeners were not sure he accessed all of the 2,551 pipes during the concert, but he certainly used the three manuals and pedals with a flourish to play glorious music!

To commemorate the 125th anniversary, Elaine Frederickson has painted an exceptional water color view of Trinity that will be reproduced in smaller print size



Organ Dedication & Hymn Festival program, April 21, 1996

suitable for framing. Elaine, a lifelong member of Trinity, studied with 28 prominent artists, and has traveled to hill towns in Italy and the countryside in Windermere, England and several Mexican locations for painting inspiration. In addition to her Trinity water color print, there will be a plaster miniature model of the church designed in 12-inch facade size, or as a free standing illuminated structure.



Elaine Frederickson's church painting

By reflecting on the history of the first 125 years of Trinity Lutheran Church, we have a record of where we have been, and what we have accomplished. It is up to those present to cherish the faith of our congregational heritage, nurture those present with our spiritual care, and plan for those in the future who will know us by our love for God as we move forward in faith.

CHAPTER SIX

The New Millennium

1996 – 2021

by Susan Goerne Stow

The Gather, Grow and Go Mission

As our Trinity Lutheran Church congregation marches on toward our 150th anniversary, officially on July 19, 2021, we give grateful thanks to our awesome pastors, Church Council, staff members, and volunteers leading us with warmth, welcome, and innovation in our spiritual journey.

Opening the Church Council meeting in 1997, Lisa Moriarity, council president, sang an original song with the *Gather, Grow and Go* mission statement. Quite an unique way to start the new year! She felt that in such a large congregation—more than 5,000—“Trinity needs to be a refuge and place to build moral direction. We are called to stretch beyond our comfort zone taking risks and not being idle in our faith.”

In the annual report, the Bible verse from 2 Corinthians 15:17 was appropriate to creating new visions for our Trinity congregation. “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”

Seventy congregants worked to create and prioritize “Ten Visions for Greater Ministry” at Trinity. It was the general opinion that these ideas would take more than three years to implement. Part of the immediate results created a Wednesday worship service, uniting all the ministries at Trinity and moving to concentrate on our spiritual gifts and wholeness. Emphasizing welcome, outreach and care of our members was part of that vision as well.

Pastor Lee Sather related well to people and was an especially attentive listener. He encouraged congregants to learn to forgive, forgiveness found through prayer. His wife, Barbara Jean held weekly prayer meetings in the church office. Pastor Sather encouraged the Caregivers to write notes to the individuals on the prayer list to “blanket every endeavor with prayer.” He took risks in the delivery of sermons, according to Bill Bjorum, “Sometimes he would sing to the congregation

or other times he would shift into role playing to get the message across. A positive, constructive thinker!”

Jim Pederson, council president from 1997–1998, felt the greatest challenge for the council and congregation was dealing with the finances after the new sanctuary was built. At that time, the congregation was polled to see if Trinity should relocate and build north of town or remain in downtown Stillwater. Jim said there was quite a controversy about the decision. He felt staying in town and creating the new sanctuary was real progress.

Pastoral care under the leadership of Pastor Len Nadeau specialized in reaching out to senior members of our congregation, those in nursing homes or homebound. In 1996, Pastor Len and his calling team made phone calls from A to S families in the church directory. The next year it resulted in calling 50 percent of the congregation and continued on each year. He served as Cursillo Spiritual Director of men’s weekends.

For the 125th anniversary celebration, Pastor Len arranged “Preachers from the Past” to speak on Sundays through the summer and fall. At that time there were more than 190 seniors age 75 years and older who were enfolded in Trinity’s loving care with visits, calls, cards, Meals on Wheels, hospital visits, and communion arranged by Pastor Nadeau. Preaching 43 sermons, baptizing 23, performing ten weddings and 14 funerals was quite a full schedule.

Bringing the joy of music to Trinity for more than 18 years, Ken Hannah directed the Temple Choir and High School Choir for three services each Sunday after the death of our highly-regarded choral director, Denis Brown. When Carol Carver joined the Trinity musical staff, Ken formed a smaller vocal group of 16 to 28 singers called The Matin Singers. We have known Ken as the expert piano tuner, keeping Trinity’s pianos perfectly pitched. Did you also know that Ken rebuilt the 1884 Steinway (which measures 7 feet and 4 inches) grand piano for our sanctuary? This Steinway, located in Cleveland, Ohio was purchased by Dr. David Palmer as a memorial gift from the entire Palmer family in honor of his father, the late Dr. Harry A. Palmer.

Trinity shares what we have with our congregation, our Stillwater community, our St. Croix Valley, our Saint Paul Area Synod, our state, our country and those in need throughout the world. One such example in 1996 was shepherding a Bosnian refugee family, Dervo and Franka Kutinic and their sons Denis and Alen. The couple was headed to Trinity under the auspices of Lutheran World Relief. From the time Dick Shager (general chairman of the effort) picked them up at the airport, Trinity members fostered their hope and care. At first the Kutinics lived in the home of Dave and Evie Borg. Bob O’Neill chauffeured them here and there for job possibilities, getting the boys enrolled in school and for medical appointments. Dervo was employed by Dahl-Tech. Then Ute Erickson helped Franka obtain work through District 834 schools. Fred Kalinoff had an available apartment for them,

so Trinity members came up with furniture and household items to get them started. Paul Wolff and Kay Shager helped with legal matters. Don Jacobson worked on helping them set up bank and checking accounts and plan a monthly budget. Trinity volunteers generously continued to support the Kutinic family as they settled in Stillwater.

Youth ministries made some real growth when Pastor Tim Coltvet was called as an associate pastor in 1998. The Sunday and Wednesday school enrollment reached 600 children! All sorts of camp experiences were possible at Luther Point and Lake Wapogasset Bible Camp. Day camps were offered at Hidden Pines, a karate camp and even a creativity camp. Club 56 started for the pre-confirmation 5th and 6th graders. Seven Breakfast Clubs met at local restaurants that paired high school students with dedicated Trinity adults for prayer, Bible study and conversation. These groups were so successful that kids wanted to meet over their summer months too. A Good Friday service for children clarified many hard-to-understand mysteries about Jesus' death.

As our Trinity congregation grew, so did the programs. Trinity members actively made things happen donating time, and expertise in helping others. Volunteers delivered Meals on Wheels, worked on the Hope House for Aids ministry, and served six Loaves & Fishes meals in St. Paul each year. Rivertown Car Care, established in 1999, paired needy St. Croix families and Trinity backyard mechanics who repaired cars for free. Coupling that with free food, counseling and prayer, car owners were also involved in the process along with the Trinity volunteers. Sometimes cars were donated free of charge. Ron Felsch provided the leadership for this outreach program. Generous hearts brought 9,000 pounds of food to the Feeding the 5,000 event at Pioneer Park. The worship service was enriched with music by the Windsor Brass and a musical drama by the children's choirs of Trinity. The Befrienders group at Trinity were lay church members who extended their support paired with church members of any age who needed short-term guidance. Each year another small group of Befrienders was trained to help others during life transitions.

"O Lutefisk, O Lutefisk, how fragrant your aroma. O Lutefisk, O Lutefisk, you put me in a coma." Words to this song go on and on, as does the tradition to host a Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner at Trinity. None of our experienced Trinity cooks can exactly pinpoint the year of the original Lutefisk dinner. According to a report by Suzanne Olson, Tina Flotten was the instructor on properly preparing lutefisk. She and Ruth Steinmetz were called the "Lutefisk Queens" by the Circle women apprentices. That instruction was approximately in the 1950s.

In the earliest printed annual reports of Trinity in 1912 and on, activities were reported in a very general manner. For example: The Ladies' Aid hosted x number of dinners resulting in x number of dollars realized. One can't help but imagine that when those earlier cooks fastened their aprons on, that at least one dinner per year served lutefisk.

It is confirmed that Norma Swanson, Gloris Swager and Dorothy Valsvik restarted the tradition in 1985 with Helen Orff as the “Pie Lady.” That first year 135 homemade pies were donated! Evie Linner felt that the fellowship during the preparation and serving of the meal was so special. She met Trinity members working at the Lutfisk dinner that she had never encountered before.



Lutfisk & Meatball Dinner planners, diners and greeters

The lutfisk dinner in more recent years has become an effort of many teams. Donna Dielentheis has coordinated teams for every facet of the production and written all the particulars into what is affectionately called “The Lutfisk Bible.” Recipes, where to order ingredients, amounts needed, a floor plan of the dining room, and gym assembly, how many days prior to start cooking, portion control, serving procedures—all explained. Of course, there needs to be an entire brigade of lefse bakers to achieve 1,500 lefse circles in five baking sessions. This traditional Scandinavian meal is the biggest fundraiser for Outreach Missions at Trinity.

In 1996 the idea of a group called Prime Time Friends for ages 50 plus or minus was initiated. By 1998 there were health classes, cross-country skiing, biking and golfing outings and a book club. Pastor Chuck Claus had the group shifting into first gear by 1999 with 57 events planned plus eight classes through Augsburg College of the Third Age. There was even a fall mystery trip with Ole and Lena (Lowell and Marie Saterbak) on the way to the Hinckley Fire Museum. It was a service initiative from Prime Time Friends that studied other parish health programs. Pastor Claus talked with Iona Holsten about considering being a parish nurse at Trinity. Iona, already a registered nurse trained at Concordia College in Moorhead as a parish nurse, came back to Stillwater with many new ideas to implement. In 1997, whenever there was a Women of the ELCA (WELCA) group meeting, she would present a ten-minute educational piece about hypertension or chronic illnesses or the signs and symptoms of stroke or heart attack. The greatest accomplishment during this time was her initiation of the American Red Cross Blood Drive. Beds were set up in the gym as well as a canteen. Blood was drawn there too. The first blood drive at

Trinity resulted in drawing 100 pints of blood. Although Iona was told Trinity wasn't able to pay for a parish nurse at that time, she continued to organize the blood drive for more than ten years. Pastor Claus presented the idea of a parish nurse to the council in 1999.

Keeping us healthy, our congregation was blessed to have had Sandra Monson as our first Trinity official volunteer nurse from 2000-2006. The whole parish nurse ministry accreditation started at Concordia College in Moorhead and then was offered at Luther Seminary where Sandra completed the program. Sandra administered flu shot clinics, and visited hospitals, care centers and homes; conducted health screening and checked blood pressure on the first Sunday of each month.

Smaller projects at Trinity were possible during the years of cash flow problems. Some projects were delayed. There was no salary increase to staff. Some positions were consolidated. Youth and adult volunteers worked to remodel Luther Hall. Jerry Maier, Council President in 1999, recalls the decision to hire a business manager to be a good move to free the pastors for spiritual ministry.

Ann Wolff recollected ongoing discussions during Church Council meetings about worship times and Sunday school times. Should there be Sunday school between the two services on Sunday morning? Should children be attending Sunday school while parents are at a church service, or should the families with children be worshipping together? Ann was most proud of the change in focus in stewardship under the leadership of Tom Jolivet. With God as the center we became a Gratitude Team. More church members wanted to volunteer for the Gratitude Team than ever.

Warm World Child Development Center was a positive presence at Trinity over a 26-year period from 1974-2000. Children from six weeks to ten years old were welcomed by Miss Mary (Mary Oswald, the Director). The original infant care, under the direction of Diane Sauers, was housed at our neighbor church, Ascension Episcopal, also providing a drop-in program for parents who needed an occasional day for their child. Trinity was an excellent location for Warm World visits to the library, police department, fire station, Pioneer Park and down to the St. Croix River too. A friendship with Linden Nursing Home residents developed when Warm World went to sing or to read stories. Another reading experience was at the "old" Stillwater Junior High School on Third and Pine streets. Students in Mrs. Peterson's English classes would read stories to Warm World little ones. In 2000, Presbyterian Homes was building a senior living community in Oak Park Heights, Boutwells Landing. They asked if Warm World would like to move to their facility. The senior home provided an extensive playground adjacent to the building. Infants were cared for in a room with six huge picture windows, so Boutwell residents who enjoyed babies could sit in the corridor and watch the little ones through the windows. Preschool classes would parade through the hallways and interact with seniors.

There is a long history at Trinity of being part of a mission effort. In the early years, the emphasis was financially supporting pastors serving in China, Japan and Borneo. Pastor A.W. Edwins was our missionary to China in 1905. In 1952 Pastor Paul Setterholm served a mission in Japan funded partly by Trinity and also by Zion Lutheran Church in Anoka. Then there was a shift for ongoing support to Dr. Mark Jacobson as a medical missionary to the Masai in Arusha, Tanzania and a partnership with Mwatasi Lutheran, Iringa diocese in Tanzania also.



Mexico Mission trip in 1988 and 2017

Trinity's Mexico Missions program began in 1985 and continued until 2018, with financial sponsorship of high school "missionaries" traveling to Mexico to build roofs, dig water-pipe trenches, and lead a one-day Vacation Bible School experience for local children. The very first trip was to Piedras Nigras (Black Rock), Mexico just across the border from Eagle Pass, Texas. Working on building a Bible college church and orphanage in San Luis Potosi was the 1986 mission. Years 1987-1989 Trinity high school missionaries worked in Estancia on the Beth Shean Elder Center. From 1990 to 2018, Chuburna, Yucatan was the location of the mission trips. Tom Thiets, Trinity Mission Director, asked, "What is the most helpful project we could do?" The answer was to build roofs. The local family could pour a cement foundation and construct block walls little by little as their budget and time would allow, which might take seven years to accomplish. During the 1990-2018 period, Trinity kids and home owners worked side-by-side to complete roofs on 1,200 homes! The roof for one house could be completed in a day. Fifteen individual classroom buildings for a courtyard-style school were constructed with teachers, parents and students working side-by-side. Of the fifteen Yucatan church projects, local congregants worked with Trinity missionaries on the project. People from Chuburna have called Tom Thiets in 2021 to ask about the health of people in Stillwater. They have not forgotten the Trinity mission trips! Over a 33-year period, approximately 1,980 awesome Trinity young people served as Mexico Missionaries! High schoolers, on return to the St. Croix Valley, had experienced another part of God's world and built

relationships with more of God's people. They had grown in appreciation of life at home and church, also having learned that those with little comfort in their lives had generous spirits and happy lives.

The Building up of the Church of Christ

Ephesians 4: "It was he who gave some as apostles, some as evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ."

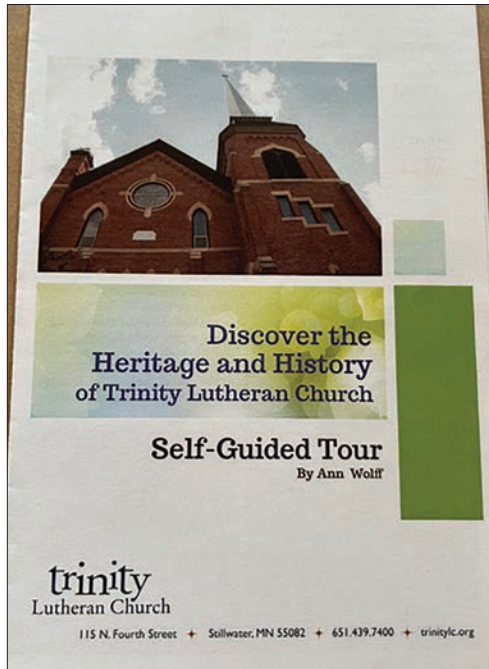
We, at Trinity, have benefited by the service of individuals who saw a need for help, then jumped in to serve. At times, those individuals knew others in the congregation with just the right skills to bring to a project. Older members, not able to do the physical tasks, were glad to contribute financially and especially to offer prayers for the success of each endeavor. And so it has been through the years. Trinity has been blessed in our volunteers! What remained strong in this interim period was children's ministries, women's ministries and the choral music program.

Pastor Larry Johnson spent two years at Trinity using his considerable skills as a conflict management consultant to guide the congregation in resolving issues. The synod requested Pastor Johnson to serve Trinity at this time. Calm sermons by Pastor Johnson focused on reassuring and healing the congregation. His method was entirely nonjudgmental when calling people in to talk over a problem. One positive step was to form a "Trinity Staff Code of Conduct" which was available for all to read. Pastor Johnson worked with the staff on leadership training. Church Council President, Dan Wilson shared that "major problems happened when communication stopped. Communication was everyone's responsibility." He urged members to elect council members who have vision for the future of the church.

Progress kept moving forward. Recycling, remodeling, refocusing. With the green movement prevalent in 2002, our church began recycling bulletins and paper. One remodeling project at church was to create a Youth Center in an old storage closet. At a minimum of cost, there was a cozy, welcoming spot for teens to gather. Two beautiful wooden crosses were crafted by Russ Savstrom, with David Beaudet fashioning the stone engraved center. The cross was dedicated during Holy Week in 2003. Visual systems in the Worship Center, Garden Room and Conference Room enhanced our services and events.

Outreach to our congregation members came in through our Caregivers, Befrienders, Meals on Wheels, Telecare, and nursing home visitation. Further outreach was extended to the American Indian Mission in Minneapolis.

Mark Gieseke, council president from 2002–2003 felt these years during the interim allowed time for healing differences. At that time there were 18 Trinity Church Council members. The council refocused and came together on the common vision for our church to remain in downtown Stillwater. It was considered wise to purchase a duplex property across Third Street from Trinity. There were also ongoing discussions regarding the U.S. Post Office property and the Croix Center.



Self-guided Trinity tour created for church librarian conference. | Library book table in Narthex in 2015.

Trinity has been under the impression that having a church library was a modern development, however the Young People's Society established a "loan library" with 80 volumes in 1894. Next a memorial gift library composed of 124 books was organized in 1967. The church library has moved around the building from 1969–1998. The Rev. Norman P. Wold was Trinity's pastor from 1946–1969 focusing his ministry as an advocate for youth and families. The Wold family donated funds to start the Norman P. Wold Memorial Library. In 1999, the smaller Wold library relocated to its present location downstairs from the Third Street entrance. Church libraries moved away from names that included "memorial" as that intimated it was a place for historical records and books. An unusual feature of the Trinity Library was donated by The Hazelden Foundation who made "The Addiction and Recovery Collection" available to everyone without having to sign a library card.

Trinity members, Dr. Jim Jensen and his wife, Ruth were great readers. He read medical journals, while she had her own library of "thousands of books of various genres." It was Dr. Jensen's hope that the library would help Trinity members to have an understanding of the Bible and Christian living, so he supported our library with numerous books from their personal collection and funds to purchase books.

The Living Library was started in 1999. Lori Houston from the Stillwater Public Library and her daughters processed the book collection at home to get organized. This helped librarian Karen Gieseke and the library team tremendously. In the year 2001, the library celebrated with a special birthday party sponsored by Lutheran Brotherhood and Trinity complete with cake and a giant birthday card. Herb Brokering, a pastor, author, and hymn writer came to speak. The result saw \$1,000 added to the library fund to purchase books, music and videos. A book sale for Sunday School kids and families included friends from Ascension Episcopal Church too. Volunteers from Trinity's Living Library began to read to sight-impaired residents at Boutwells Landing. In the following year, authors were hosted and small groups started to meet in this cheerful location.

The Restructuring

A call committee was formed in 2004 to seek a new lead pastor. By February a special congregational meeting was held to call Dan Poffenberger as pastor. By September, another congregational meeting voted to call Siri Dale (Erickson) as associate pastor. The major focus became growing adult ministry. Pastor Poffenberger expressed the idea that, "Everyone has gifts, everyone has purpose, everyone has a ministry. From 1 Peter 4:10: 'As each has received a gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the grace of God in its various forms.'"

Judd Orff, council president from 2004-2005, felt the six Stewardship Dinners held during this year got congregational members involved, which made such a difference in the resulting stewardship pledges. There were various themes to each dinner: Recipes from the Trinity cookbook, a Scandinavian smorgasbord, a Tanzanian buffet, a Loaves & Fishes spaghetti meal, a pizza party and a Mexican fiesta! He recalls writing the lease for St. Croix Academy to rent the Croix Center during his tenure.

The *restructuring* at Trinity took the form of sweeping changes. Our Church Council went from 18 members to six. There were 16 council members, the president and the pastor before the adjustment. After right sizing the group there were six council members. In the modernization of programs at Trinity, emphasis on adult learning was added. "On Purpose" became the theme for the second half of life. To foster that concept of lifelong learning, a new class called Building your Personal Theology met on the banks of the St. Croix River. There was the birth of the church website and a congregation-wide reading ministry. A Trinity for Tomorrow team began evaluating properties and facilities owned by Trinity. To reach out to the community, Trinity placed information in the Welcome Wagon booklets given to

those new to Stillwater as well as in the St. Croix Valley Resident's Guide. Large newspaper ads were placed in local papers at Easter and Christmas. In the Worship Center, two large wide screens were installed in front and in back of the sanctuary. It was necessary to revamp the sound system to improve amplification. New pew hymnals were in place to enhance our congregational singing with modern hymns.



Spiritual practice trees created by high school youth in 2012.

New groups were added to the Circles, WELCA activities, Bible studies, choirs, men's groups, until the explosion to 48 groups! Everything from Little Tots and Polka Dots, to home communion for shut-ins. Jody Thone was on staff to help those interested to explore their potential through the Enneagram program she established. Trinity members could try yoga, Pilates, meditation and Tai Chi. There were A.W.E. outdoor plans for active women, two book groups, and scrapbooking too. Retired Men were invited to tours, hear guest speakers (one Trinity member presenting on nuclear and alternative energy), work on Habitat for Humanity, or help with needed repairs at church with the Tuesday Guys.

Bible 101 focused on ideas in Bible research. Not 101, but 100 church members were involved with large and small group discussions. Business and professional women were meeting over lunch to support each other in faith and work.

The WELCA organization (Women of the ELCA) was a very strong team at Trinity from 1997 to 2006. This group formed the leadership team in organizing the Yulefest and the Lutefisk Dinner, both huge projects that netted funds for many Trinity mission donations at home and abroad. Funds for Maasi Girls Scholarships, to the Selian Hospital in support of Dr. Mark Jacobson, St. Croix Red Cross, Young Life,

Loaves and Fishes meals in St. Paul, St. Croix Valley Food Shelf and needs at Trinity. The energy of this vibrant group also hosted the Mother/Daughter/Sister Banquet each year. Between all the organization and fund raising, WELCA sponsored retreats, and women's teas too!

Mission work by Trinity's Helping Hands volunteers, lead by Lowell Saterback painted affordable housing units in Oakdale. Two adult volunteer crews went to Louisiana to help rebuild homes after Hurricane Katrina. Workers from Trinity journeyed to Tanzania to help with a water project for the Mwatasi Lutheran Church and the Bomalang'ombe Secondary School. A new well was drilled at the school in 2011. In the following two-year period, Trinity wanted to purchase and install a generator and water storage tank with equipment bought near the school so that parts would be available locally. Trinity was able to sponsor 15 high school students attending the Bomalang'ombe Secondary School.



Bomalang'ombe Secondary School classroom

A Guatemala Mission program was initiated by Dr. Kevin Bjork, Pastor T.J. Anderson, Cory Jones and Tom Thiets in 2007. It was a program to last 12 years in building a Hospitalito Atitlan (Hospital at Lake Atitlan) after the first small hospital on that site was washed into the lake in a hurricane. During the rebuilding there was a temporary medical site at a backpackers hostel. St. John's Lutheran Church of Mound was in partnership with Trinity. Donations from the Lion's Club

plus U.S. and World Charities gave money to purchase a generator. A non-profit Guatemalan organization Kaslimaal were partners too. Guatemalans did all the project planning. Loren Carver recalls the projects during the first three years were: pouring cement footings for the hospital building, adding three power sources to keep electricity flowing with wiring, a solar grid and the generator; and installing plumbing. Medical staff members worked with Trinity and St. John's volunteers, as well as a variety of other mission groups working side-by-side on some 14-hour days. Mostly college students were part of the mission trip. Thirty of these college volunteers have gone on to earn their degrees in the medical fields.

The Fine Arts Committee was created to beautify the Worship Center, Narthex, and our traditional and contemporary services. Worship services and overall ambience are enhanced by displays of art, poetry, dance, flowers, green plants, and colorful paraments. Variety in the choice of organ and choral music also enriches our worship services. We have been blessed with a wealth of instrumentalists who have added an overlaying joy to anthems and hymns. A key factor was having the carpeting removed from the chancel area which brought sound to life in our sanctuary. Other musical groups began to ask to host concerts at Trinity. Concordia College Band, St. Olaf Choir, National Lutheran Choir and the Valley Chamber Chorale all held concerts. Carol Carver thought, "Why not start a Trinity Concert Series?" The concert series started in 2004 with a combined concert by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) and Valley Chamber Chorale. In 2007 alone, there were over 25 musical concerts and art exhibits at Trinity. From there, the 2006-2007 season brought the SPCO regularly to Trinity until COVID-19 lock-down in March 2020.



Worship Center decorated for Christmas



Clockwise:
Carol Carver,
Worship &
Music Director
Trinity Choir
Dave Goulette
on keys
Sine Nomine
Choir in 2014



Carol Carver, our Director of Music for the traditional service and Trinity Choir Director, has brought a wealth of various types of music, singers, and instrumentalists to our worship services! Trinity is so blessed to have her creative leadership and musicality. Carol found delight in the formation of the Sine Nomine girls choir (1998). By June of 2011, the choir was eager to travel and sing in a totally different environment. Tanzania was suggested, which turned out to be a mission trip with singing as another facet to the experience. The girls worked on the Bomalang'ombe Secondary School. Carol experienced joy in working with our beloved organist, Dave Goulette.

Phil Kadidlo, contemporary service Minister of Music, lead music at the Trinity Drive-in services and as part of the Witness TLC music ensemble. This talented musical group was assembled by Pastor Dan Johns with original members: Robin Cain, Phil Kadidlo, Craig Koehnen and Nancy Long. The group name evolved from *Witness* to *Witness Trinity*, *The Trinity Singers* and then again to *The Walk*. Pastor Dan Poffenberger wanted the band to be an “experimental laboratory” for new worship approaches with more instrumentation of guitars and bass guitars. During that time, Phil said, “It was not unusual to hear a U2 or a Tom Petty song in the mix.” We have all admired Phil’s versatility on the piano. He can transpose the key on piano accompaniment to suit a soloist’s voice range in seconds.

During the worst economic downtrend in 80 years, in 2009 the church budget had to be trimmed by \$100,000. It was certainly a year of decisions with many recommendations by the Trinity for Tomorrow leaders: move the U.S. postal facility to the Croix Center, and purchase the Drive-in property over in Houlton, Wisconsin. There was a push to "Go Green with God." Rain gardens to control the watershed installed in the new Croix Center parking lot was funded partly by Washington County Conservation. Environmental speakers inspired Trinity to go paperless. The *Trinity Today* newsletter was now available online for the majority of the congregation. Community meal packing carried 35,000 pounds of food into the Croix Center and assembled 276,000 meals.

Upgrading and enlarging the Drive-in stage was a project the following year, along with volunteers removing scrub trees, and invasive buckthorn. With those tasks accomplished, other trees were planted. Our church Worship Center sound system was renovated to improve sound quality and amplification. Good news reported to the congregation was that communicating electronically saved Trinity \$6,500 in postage over a two-year period.

Pastor Dan Poffenberger especially liked the homemade bread served at communion at Luther Seminary. He asked for the recipe and contacted Karen Gieseke's mother, Carol Smith, to adapt this to serve at Trinity. Carol baked communion bread for seven years, and then a committee of at least six bakers was formed. In an hour and a half, the crew could bake enough communion bread for a month. Susan Carr, lead baker after Carol Smith, said, "Adding spices or flavors depended on whimsy or the season. Usual flavors included cinnamon (a favorite with First Communion Bakers), ginger and cardamom, sometimes even pumpkin pie spice. The recipe includes molasses and honey too."

Food for Thought Gourmet Club dinners was revived by Glenda Bjorum. Themed dinners occurred four times per year. The kick-off event was a meet and greet potluck with some mixer activities to become acquainted with other diners. The plan was four couples of different age groups; each couple hosted a dinner once providing the main dish while others brought either appetizers, salad or dessert. Good food and fellowship!

DIY projects at the Drive-in amounted to 420 hours by Trinity volunteers. Outstanding efforts saw the new electrical service installed, cleaning the concession stand, new



Communion bread bakers

signage, servicing the water well and installing a rain garden. Talented Trinity members gave freely of their time to make considerable improvements. This effort was another example of the willingness of Trinity members to work for the greater good of our church.

A new playground at the Croix Center was installed by Helping Hands, under the leadership of Lowell Saterbak, for a colorful, fun spot for Warm World nursery school children to stretch and play.



Painting crew: Kathy Hagen on ladder, Lynn Schurrer on detail painting, Joanne Brown with the long paint roller | Tuesday Guys building a nursery school playhouse

When Pastor Dan Poffenberger had served as lead pastor of Trinity Lutheran for eight years, a capital appeal called “Opening Doors” was presented to the church council and the congregation. There hadn’t been an ambitious plan such as this in three decades. The goal was to collect pledges from 500 Trinity families to achieve \$5.3 million in building costs. There was to be a 14,000 square foot addition with a circular drive and an overhang for entering the church complex. Also included: another elevator, a glass-fronted River Room with a view of the St. Croix River, a coffee cafe for parents while the Wednesday night classes were in session or for small gatherings, and one giant community hall that could be divided into two rooms. A sprinkler system was required for the entire building to bring all of the church up to code. Only some of the cost of this massive project was pledged, so that the design was then modified to fit a lower expenditure. The biggest question was, “How do we pay the mortgage?” Monthly mortgage payments had been paid out of special appeal funds and the church had not met the yearly budget for five of the previous six years.

Three hundred and fifty-nine members responded to the survey by the task force as to whether the Opening Doors appeal should be discontinued. However, this campaign continued to 2014 but did not reach the financial goal. A special

eleven-member task force of the Church Council recommended that the Opening Doors project be stopped immediately. Those who had donated were given the options to designate their pledge to repairs to accomplish major maintenance of the church, to use toward any existing dedicated fund at Trinity, to refund the paid portion to the donor, or to cancel the unpaid portion of the pledge. Written communication went out to every Opening Doors donor and every member who pledged to the appeal clarifying their status.

Some positives from this capital appeal were that 86 percent of Trinity donors would support other needs of the church with the significant repairs needed, that we had the plans and drawings that could be used in the future, and that three years of mortgage payments were paid.

Sue Peterson served our church with health care from 2014–2018, through a program affiliated with the St. Croix Valley Parish Nurse Program and Lakeview Hospital. She received referrals from the Trinity Care Team of Pastor Deb Ost and Zanny Johnson. Also there were referrals from the prayer box in the Narthex and word of mouth for specific health concerns. A grant from Lakeview Hospital paid a salary for this congregational program. Once a year there was a Senior Health Fair in April for St. Croix Valley residents. Nurses from Trinity volunteered at that event. The purchase of a defibrillator for Trinity was recommended and has proved essential.

Bibles were distributed to toddlers, kindergartners, 4th graders and 7th graders in 2014. To learn to navigate through the Bible, a Bible 101 course was developed for those in 7th grade. The Cherub and Joyful Noise children's choirs were 25 singers strong and presented the musical "Oh Jonah" over the first weekend in May 2014 to enthusiastic response. Also, in the fall our pastors began using the Narrative Lectionary for fuller understanding of God's story in the Bible throughout the year. "The Narrative Lectionary is a four-year cycle of readings. On the Sundays from September through May each year the texts follow the sweep of the biblical story, from Creation through the early Christian church." Gospel texts and songs were also recommended.

Adult groups were active too. The Retired Men's Group took a boat tour to inspect the new St. Croix Bridge. Rock climbing, paddle boarding on the St. Croix, hiking and camping kept the GLOW (God Loving Outdoor Women) group fit and active. The Trinity librarians hosted the Twin Cities Area Church Library Association at Trinity.

When the 50-year-old post office building was demolished, all the steel, copper and concrete was recycled. Then the land was graded and seeded to create a Green Space. At that point, the brick facade of the south side of the church was visible. According to Administrator Bob Eiselt, "Trinity's computer landscape also changed in 2014." The computer network storage went to the cloud. New hardware was purchased and a new operating system was installed for improved efficiency. Indoor

gardens were redone throughout the Garden Room, Commons, Narthex and ramp with donated plants and materials.

A continuous giving spirit by Trinity members was evident during this eleven-year period! There were dedicated church members who carried on the many programs without fanfare or expecting any credit. Choir members and directors, Helping Hand volunteers, indoor and outdoor gardeners, WELCA programs, Sunday and Wednesday school teachers, our parish nurse, librarians, Women's Circle leaders and members, Church Council and committee members, the Fine Arts Team, Retired Men's Group, prayer chain, knitters, Hilltoppers, community meal packers, missionaries to Tanzania, Mexico, Habitat, and Katrina rebuilders, Warm World teachers, and our Gratitude Team. Trinity carried on with such a loving, caring spirit for each other, our community and mission outreach!

The Congregational Assessment

"Change is inevitable; progress is optional," quoted new president Gail Olson to the Church Council in 2015. Staffing changes were part of that period with Pastor Dan Poffenberger accepting a call to Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church, Prior Lake, Minnesota.

Pastor Stephanie Vos moved on to study chiropractic medicine. As a result of financial debt, six staff positions were cut and two additional staff members experienced shortening of hours. Interim Pastor Paul Svingen spent a year of transition at Trinity. He saw his role as one of facilitating renewal. Along with Pastor Svingen, Stefanie Fauth came to Trinity as an Interim Pastoral Assistant.

Looking forward to the next part of Trinity's history, Gail Olson encouraged our congregation with these verses from Philippians, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7).

"Holy Cow!" was the name of the congregational assessment survey completed by Kairos. How did Trinity see itself? Results indicated that Trinity was progressive, and open to change. Strengths were: love of traditional and contemporary music, and support of global missions. Survey responses indicated we needed to work on: being welcoming, adding more lay leadership, showing transparency in decisions made, effectively communicating with the congregation, and having greater connection to local missions. Every age congregant felt that having a solid educational program for children, youth and families was essential. A Trinity Transition Team led by

Jill Longnecker explored the survey results to formulate what Trinity wanted in the future before calling a new lead pastor.

The Finance Committee had difficult decisions to make! Trinity's staff was reduced by one-third so that duties were consolidated, cutback or eliminated. To alleviate budget shortfalls, Third Street properties across the street from Trinity were sold, a "Respond to God's Love" summer appeal generated funds and Trinity members redesignated their pledges to Opening Doors appeal for the operating budget. "The incredible faithfulness and steadfastness of the Trinity community to our ministry and mission throughout these years of painful financial decisions and significant loss of staff," was gratifying to Council President Gail Olson. Our church council and congregation received wise support from the Saint Paul Area Synod, particularly Bishop Patricia Lull and assistants Pastor Koerner and Sister Stevens.

A request was made in the fall of 2013 by the Bomalang'ombe School (Boma) to Trinity for funds to purchase a six-ton truck. The purchase of the truck would assist the ongoing building projects at the school and could be hired out to raise money for Boma operating expenses. Trinity responded enthusiastically to raise \$45,000 and wired the funds to the Iringa contact in December of 2013. Over a two-year period, there were a series of communications with misinformation: a truck had been located for purchase, however the VIN number on the truck needed to be cleared before purchase. Trinity was not included in the contract about the use of the truck and proceeds that would go to the Iringa Diocese although the funds for the purchase were from Trinity. Then there was no communication from Mwatasi to Stillwater from 2015-2016 about the status of the truck purchase.

On a Trinity mission trip in October of 2016, Congregation President Gail Olson and Treasurer Tom Olsen traveled to Tanzania to meet with officials from the Iringa Diocese. Discussion focused on the misinformation and lack of accounting of the \$45,000, a well-intended gift to the Boma school that did not materialize. Our Trinity officials acknowledged operating our mission independently from the Iringa Diocese. It was determined that in the future, any funds from Trinity Lutheran Church would be sent through the Saint Paul Area Synod to the Iringa Diocese for financial accountability and security. Another meeting, with the local contact to whom the money had been wired, would not provide information that the truck had been purchased nor account for the expenditure of the money from Trinity.

Officials from the Iringa Diocese visited Minnesota and met with Trinity representatives and the Rev. Peter Harrits of the Saint Paul Area Synod. No further information about the truck contract was received at that time. Further legal action by Trinity would have been costly, have jurisdictional issues and it was unfortunately highly unlikely that Trinity would ever recover any of the missing funds.

Another part of the Tanzanian mission work by Trinity was the construction of dormitories for the Bomalong'ombe School followed by building a meeting hall and

kitchen too. Digging wells for a safe water system was an extensive project that meant training people to service the equipment if need be. The water pump at the school was replaced in addition to fixing the water pump in the village of Mwatasi. The last committee to travel to Tanzania recommended that there should be a study of nearby secondary school programs before further support was considered.

A committee led by Arba-Della Beck to call a new lead pastor formed a comprehensive ministry profile describing the congregation, community, ministries and mission, plus challenges we faced. The call committee held forums to provide information about the process to our congregation and sought input about what characteristics the new lead pastor should have. With overwhelming approval the Rev. Christine Bellefeuille was called to Trinity. March 5, 2017 marked a Celebration of Installation for Pastor Chris and commitment to renewal as a Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-powered faith community.



Trinity's Knitting Ministry

Some new traditions and programs started during the interim, particularly, the giving of shawls to newly baptized babies by the knitting ministry. The knitters must have been working overtime because they were able to create 25 prayer shawls and 41 baptismal shawls in 2015! Tom Thiets encouraged the Trinity Mission Alumni Association to be a leadership team. With 30 care ministry groups to foster, Pastor Deb Ost managed to create an adult course for the "sandwich generation" for those caring for children and aging parents plus she wrote a new member information guide. The Tuesday Guys team was created by Ron Hagen to give needed repairs around the church. A new Stewardship Team of younger adults was formed by Chris Johnson, Stewardship Team Chair. They focused on building a "Stewardship Playbook" that would encompass an entire year of planning and coordinating. One

idea was to present a short video slideshow at worship services to show visibility as to what Trinity has to offer. Ways to “do something special” after services were an important simple show of thanks. For example, serving ice cream at the Drive-in or scones at church lifted spirits of gratitude. This committee also planned to use texting as an alternative giving method.

How to use the Trinity Green Space brought many innovative events. In 2016 the open air TrinityFEST, organized by Carol Carver and Phil Kadidlo, was very special with Roosevelt Credit coming from New York City to sing for the Saturday evening concert and Sunday morning service. Both choirs sang with Roosevelt to accompaniment by Phil. A 60-foot by 30-foot tent erected for the musical celebration held an audience of 600! On Sunday, Pastor Deb Ost spoke. After a delightful musical message, there were activities for children plus food trucks with a variety of delicious meals available to continue the festive mood. Another community-wide event that summer was collaborated through the St. Croix Valley Ministerium. It was called a Community Vigil for Peace on the Green Space. Peter Mayer provided the music in response to violence in the Twin Cities and our country.



A live nativity makes use of Trinity's Green Space in winter.

The Evolution into the Future

When fall leaves were turning to splendid, brighter colors, there were changes at Trinity in that golden month of October 2016. They were the brighter, hopeful, positive changes we all were seeking to move forward in faith. Trinity Sunday morning adult learners began a seven-month study of the Bible that fall. The congregational meeting on Oct. 30 decided to extend a call to Pastor Chris Bellefeuille as lead pastor, who began her ministry at Trinity in December, dedicated to lead us into the future with a well-rounded vision of the Lutheran church, adding her own brand of kindness, leadership and humor.



Lead Pastor Chris Bellefeuille at her installation in March 2017.

Eleven cottage meetings at church, homes and Boutwells Landing provided an opportunity for Pastor Chris to start to know people in smaller settings. She could hear that “worship was central to our lives together.” Then the one-on-one staff meetings between each staff member and supervisor were held weekly. As a gift of thanks to staff members, each was given three “Gratitude Days” as a thank you by the Church Council for their dedication over the challenging past couple years. Next, the Church Council and staff held a retreat to discuss each of the ministry areas. How to

engage lay leaders in the areas rather than having all the leadership from staff was a needed discussion identified by the Transition Team.

Prior to the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, the adult Sunday morning Bible study focused on: The Roots of the Reformation. Another study for the Trinity staff was a mental illness workshop with training on how to be a Dementia Friendly church. A year long Bible study with prayers and conversation centered on how to be welcoming to individuals and families in the LGBTQ communities.

Two decisions regarding Trinity’s Outreach Mission programs were made. The first was to shift to an “Accompaniment Model” to work mutually with those needing help rather than delivering goods and services as in the past. Secondly, it was decided by the council that 2018 would be the final year of the Mexico Missions program, the 30th anniversary of the program, with a celebration that same year. A new special mission project helped Anuak refugees from South Sudan, Africa with household needs, and winter clothing to cope with winter in Minnesota. Christianity is the faith of the 300,000 Anuaks. The violence against the Anuak people began in

2002 and escalated causing many to emigrate. Pastor Gilo Agwa, their leader, came to Trinity to preach. A benefit concert for the Anuak refugees was given at Trinity with choral groups from the Anuak Choir, First Presbyterian, Our Saviors, Trinity, and Valley Chamber Chorale. The concert raised \$14,660 for a van purchase. Trinity also gave \$2,000 as a mission gift after the concert.



Choir welcoming Anuak refugees.

Our Trinity stewardship theme was based on Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6: 21). Stewardship stories by Trinity members were shared during worship services with thought-provoking articles in the *Trinity Today*. One book recommended on stewardship had an intriguing title and new perspective, "Not your Parent's Offering Plate" by J. Clif Christopher, an attorney and ordained Methodist minister. Give-by-text at Trinity was part of new giving options. Trinity members were encouraged to give 3 percent of their income as their "fair share." To lead by example, our Stewardship Team, Church Council and senior staff pledged 10 percent to start the campaign. Bringing financial stability to Trinity was the goal. Thanks to the Stewardship Team under the leadership of Claudia Swendseid, the fiscal year end saw a small surplus.

A "Year of Renewal" program from the Saint Paul Area Synod led us to conduct a Congregational Vitality Survey. Although we had polled Trinity members in 2015, the dynamics had once again shifted. Results of the survey were presented at the annual meeting for future planning. The congregation responded with the suggested need for increasing a welcoming spirit at Trinity, thus a Hospitality Team advanced

delightful ideas to make all feel at home. The hymn we have sung at Trinity, by Marty Haugen, had just the warm welcome needed, perhaps our theme song:

Let us build a house
Where love can dwell
And all can safely live
A place where
Saints and children tell
How hearts learn to forgive
Built of hopes and dreams and visions
Rock of faith and vault of grace
Here the love of Christ shall end division
...
All are welcome, all are welcome
All are welcome in this place.

The congregational vote to affirm Trinity in the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) movement by the Lutheran Church, was another step to being that welcoming church to every age, family, race, physical and mental capability, economic status, those of uncertain faith and the LGBTQ community. Council President Doug Johnson was proud of that affirmation.

“God’s Work. Our Hands.” was a designated denominational day of service on the second Sunday in September, 2017. Eighty Trinity volunteers worked on various service projects for the day. Everything from St. Croix River shoreline clean-up, buckthorn clearing, nursing home visits to share music, games and crafts, assembling quilting kits for Lutheran World Relief, serving brunch at Hope House, or washing windows. At the end of the day the volunteers gathered at church to share stories of their experiences.

Other forward-thinking Trinity Church Council decisions Doug felt were positive involved “selling three small parcels of unusable land owned by Trinity directing the money to be used for debt reduction, improving the outdoor green space by planting trees and installing a beautiful new sign introducing the public to Trinity, and that giving has greatly improved.”

Trinity celebrated with Pastor Chris after her May 2018 graduation from Luther Seminary in St. Paul with a Doctor of Ministry degree! “Preaching to Shape Christian Witness: He Cannot be the Messiah, Can He?” was the thesis she defended after three years of research and study. The culminating result was a well-earned new title with her Doctor of Ministry degree: The Rev. Dr. Chris Bellefeuille.

Pastor Peter Weston Miller brought a fresh perspective of new ideas to the Lifelong Faith Formation role at Trinity in 2018. His new position encompassed members of all ages from baptism, Sunday and Wednesday classes, Confirmation,

high school ministry including missions, adult learning and intergenerational programs. Through all of his work with these groups Pastor Peter enthusiastically calls the process “cross-pollinating the generations.” Such encouraging news that more than seven hundred adults were involved in small groups!



The Rev. Peter Weston Miller

Warm summertime sunshine and Lumberjack Days festivities brought an opportunity for Trinity to welcome the community on our green oasis. We offered free water bottles, a respite stopover at a sun tent, and even pools for canines to cool off. Trinity parking lots were full earning money for missions. This effort spurred on ideas for using the Trinity Green Space in the future.

Our church was bustling and buzzing with activity! Can you imagine that there were 56 different groups in 2018, even a couple more fledgling ones, using their creative faith ideas and hands to work in serving Christ and our congregation? Trinity teams for: Altar Guild, Angel Tree, Assisting Ministers, AV technology, Birthday Greeting Team, Caring Friends, Communion bread baking, Communion Assistants, Church Council, Facilities, Finance, Fine Arts, Flower Ministry, Funeral Hospitality, The Green, Green Team, Greeters, Helping Hands, Home Communion Friends, Human Resources Team, Instrumentalists, Knitters, Landscaping, Last Sunday Supper, Library, Lifelong Faith Formation Team, Lighting, Lutefisk Dinner volunteers, Make a Meal Ministry, One and Done Book Group, Outreach Missions, Painting, Parking Lot, Prayer Chain Ministry, Prayer Group, Quilters, Sacristy, Second Harvest Heartland, Sine Nomine Singers, small group leaders, soloists, Stewardship, Sunday Nursery, Sunshine Ministry, Tanzania Outreach Mission, Trinity Choir, Trinity Children's Choir, Tuesday Guys, ushers, Valley Outreach Food Shelf, Volunteer Visitation, Wednesday Night Supper volunteers, Website Team, Welcoming Ministry, Worship Band, Worship Ministry Team.

A new group, called Solo 55 Plus started in 2018 for singles. Organizers Debbie Erickson and Marie Liberda chose this quirky name after a red Solo cup on a nearby table. Five people were on the committee to plan 3-5 events per



week. Every meeting started with a prayer. A member could choose which events to attend, however if only two people came, it was canceled. On Sundays the group sits together at worship services. Later that day was another event at church from 4–6 p.m. Tuesday mornings a walk was planned. Other tours, excursions and concerts rounded out the event offerings. Solo 55 Plus established a rule that members can date, but were “excommunicated” if they were in a serious relationship. Eighty-four members have enjoyed this fellowship group.

One and Done Book Group started with the concept that a discussion participant was welcome to come for only one discussion or opt for more. Books chosen focused on faith and politics, race, or gender equity. “Love without Limits” by Jacqueline Bussie was the first book. As the group wanted to continue to meet, “White Fragility” by Robin Diangelo and “Dear Church” written by Lenny Duncan were chosen for discussion.

Communications with all of our members is a vital arm of the church. Whether in printed form, on our website, or with social media, it is important to stay in touch and have current information at hand. The *Trinity Today* publication is emailed to a distributed list, or was available through the website. About 100 copies are printed for those without computer connections. Articles from our pastors, ministry teams and activities are essential to each monthly newsletter. Congregants are encouraged to submit photos, stories or details of events to the publication adding color and verve.

The Dec. 21 “Longest Night Service” focused on contemplation for those who are grieving, anxious or depressed. This is an alternative to a joyous Christmas service for those experiencing a season of loss.

Commitment to be an emergency warming space for those experiencing homelessness from February 1 to March 7 in 2019 involved tremendous planning and numerous Trinity volunteers. One hundred volunteers in fact! St. Andrews Church in Mahtomedi had provided shelter for a dozen people the previous year and were housing people the month prior to Trinity’s warming space. Jeff Anderson and John Hodler were the Trinity leaders for this effort. They hoped to involve other congregations in the St. Croix Valley to help care for those experiencing homelessness in Washington County. During the daytime between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Stillwater Emergency Winter Shelter at Trinity was open when the temperatures were below zero degrees. Overnight emergency accommodations were available when temperatures were 10 degrees below zero. This involved preparing and serving food, providing bedding, doing laundry, and having activities available. There were 116 daytime guests, 8 overnight, with 70 repeat guests, 192 meals were served excluding those for Trinity volunteers. Two stories from Jeff Anderson about the program bring reality into numbers and statistics. With a welcoming and non-judgmental approach, volunteers found out that a couple of regular guests were not homeless. As it turned

out, they each were living alone and were lonely. To share a meal and interact with others was the highlight of their day! One guest had been at a local highway rest area and previously had refused offers of shelter or help. At Trinity this person found a safe and warm environment and willingly connected with social workers from Washington County who started the process of providing the help needed.

Our congregation continued to support each other and our community with a variety of projects and activities. Winter Care Kits were assembled in the gym by children ages preschool to grade 5 as part of their monthly service project. A team of 13 Trinity members called the Trinity Tired Men's Troupe, spent a day working on Habitat for Humanity. The Retired Men's Group did some snowshoeing at William O'Brien State Park. Later in 2019 they attended the Twin Cities Auto Show. At the Trinity Town Hall Forum, Bill McKibbin, author of "The End of Nature" and environmentalist and educator, spoke on building a movement to stop climate change.

Newcomers to Trinity were introduced to our church with a three-part one hour series. First: Introduction to Lutheranism and Bible 101; Second: Telling our God Stories; Third: Strengths Finder—The Image of God Created in You. Wednesday evenings during Lent there were five speakers who focused on the theme "How to live as a faithful Christian in an election year."

Brent Peterson, Executive Director of the Washington County Historical Society, wrote an article titled: Pandemics in the St. Croix Valley. "When the world became entangled into a global fight, the Spanish influenza spread across the continents." Years 1918 and 1919 were challenging for the Stillwater Hospital because there were only five rooms set up for contagious disease patients. Stillwater opened an emergency hospital to care for more influenza patients in 1918 and then closed it after the influx subsided. Unfortunately, cases of Spanish influenza recurred in 1919 which meant the emergency hospital was opened again. Local newspaper, *The Stillwater Messenger*, brought the need for a county and city hospital to the forefront of everyone's minds. "According to the Center for Disease Control, CDC, the flu killed an estimated 675,000 Americans, 195,000 in October alone. Worldwide the flu killed 50 million." Ninety sons and daughters of Trinity directly enlisted in World War I. All came home except Lt. Arthur LaVine, who died in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1918 of Spanish influenza just before he was to be shipped out to the front.

One hundred and one years later—Trinity, Stillwater, the United States, and the whole world is in crisis with COVID-19. The death of Trinity's beloved organist Dave Goulette made the reality of this epidemic all too real. As per recommendations by epidemiologists at the Minnesota Health Department and the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC)—March 8, 2020 was the last in-person Trinity worship service. Inventive use of current technology made it possible to participate in worship via Facebook or the Trinity website. Drive-in services, even throughout the winter months, were well attended as an outdoor environment was considered safer



Dave Goulette, organist

for gatherings. The business of our church continued with Zoom meetings, like the Annual Meeting. In fact, the Trinity constitution had to be amended so the Church Council could conduct business without meeting in person.

“As Lutherans, we keep on reforming,” said Pastor Peter in response to all the adaptations needed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our dedicated Trinity staff worked from home, as did millions across the country. For five minutes at noon, there was a daily Pause & Pray on Facebook. Five staff members gave devotions. Later

congregational members did as well. Trinity middle schoolers met online or on the Trinity Green Space in favorable weather. The High School Puerto Rico Mission Trip was rescheduled for late June 2021 with 47 high schoolers and ten leaders prepared to help others. At that point, it was not known if that further date was feasible.

Doug Johnson, Church Council President (2018-2019), felt the conflicting federal and state government information did not give a clear vision as to what health measures Trinity should follow. Thus, a Re-Entry Team of medical experts from our congregation was formed. Fred Anderson, retired Washington County Infectious Disease Epidemiologist; Dr. Matt Simcik, Professor at University of Minnesota School of Environmental Health; Mel Sullivan, Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer of Ecumen; Denise Swager, R.N.; Kim Dahlgren, R.N. and Trinity’s Faith Community Nurse; Bob Eiselt, Parish Administrator; Tom Hosek, Lead Custodian; Pastor Chris Bellefeuille, Lead Pastor advised us according to new rules with state and federal guidelines. Doug Johnson was “most proud of how the people of Trinity responded to the pandemic. I heard no complaints about the restrictions that were put in place. Attendance actually went up counting the people at the Drive-in and online. Giving was increased. At the time of crisis, Trinity came through!”



Pledge parade provided a physically-distanced way to give during the pandemic.

Kim Dahlgren started as Parish Nurse in April of 2019. Being supportive of parishioners health needs during the COVID-19 epidemic took a creative shift as to how to serve. The Trinity Visitation Team was so terrific about calling and sending cards to shut ins. For Kim and Pastor Don Fultz, it was mostly phone calls at first to check on parishioners health, followed by delivering needed eggs and toilet paper to doorsteps. Members of the Solo 55 Plus group were especially helpful in locating what was needed. The Trinity staff divided the list of congregants to call and exchanged the lists so that the same person was not calling all the time. Their purpose was to support congregants wellness during the stressful time. The strength of the Re-Entry Team was able to advise our congregation with consistent up-to-date health information. We were all saddened to learn that six of our congregation died of COVID-19.

Two “Love Drops” at homes provided a small caring bag of gifts to shut ins. First, some 91 Trinity members received two cookies, a devotional book and a Trinity coffee cup. Pastor Kris Linner’s book “God’s Word God’s Creation” was in the second Love Drop shared with sixty Trinity folk. Two or three times a week, Kim would keep the prayer list from requests and send an email to the Trinity Prayer Group: Darlene Parent, Carol Taves, Jean Davis, Kim Hanson and Ute Erickson.

Mel Sullivan, Church Council President from 2020-2021, stated that council decisions are focused on what is best for the community, how to love one another with our actions and to follow science. With the Trinity Re-Entry Team medical advisors, the council had strong support and guidance in order to proceed into the future as other coronavirus variants have been discovered. Trinity’s leadership “stayed grounded in doing what most represented our love of Jesus and love for each other and found modified ways to worship and celebrate each other.” President Sullivan feels honored to be a part of the 150th anniversary of Trinity. “What an accomplishment to thrive in so many different situations, conditions and sentiments throughout its history. Our church community is remarkable, smart, resourceful and kind, which is one reason Trinity continues to be a vibrant part of Stillwater and the ELCA.”

Innovative thinking on the part of Pastor Chris and Pastor Peter resulted in starting a Trinity podcast series in January of 2021 when we all need “An En-Courage-ing Word,” as per the title of the series! Pastor Peter received a synod Thriving in Ministry grant, from the Lilly Endowment fund to implement the project. Once a week there is a podcast. Thus far, there has been an overview of the Old Testament, the New Testament, an hour and a half reading the Gospel of Mark. The podcast begins with a little upbeat music as an introduction and then off to select an episode title. The messages prove to be thought provoking and well presented.

The February Adult Faith Forum was a study on the theology and the amazing life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran minister and German theologian who was martyred during World War II. Pastor Peter's *Trinity Today* message centered on Bonhoeffer's question while imprisoned, "Who is Jesus Christ for us today?" Speakers from Luther Seminary and Trinity focused on that question by clarifying some of the Rev. Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writings.

After receiving a beautiful birthday card, with lovely calligraphy by Robin Cain and the thought, "Joy is an act of spiritual resistance," Pastor Chris shared a message of joy to all of us at Trinity. "Joy is an act of spiritual resistance. Joy isn't quite happiness or merry making. Nor is joy the denial of reality. Joy is a transcendent submission to life, hope, love, and wherever possible, faith. Joy is God's gift to humankind. The flicker of life that inspires us to see beauty, offer courtesy, pray in thanksgiving. Joy is the resurrection burning within us, calling us into life and hope. As you take your walks, gaze out your window, Zoom or chat with friends, or listen to music—anticipate sparks of joy in yourselves or those around you. Joy is one of God's most generous gifts and it is highly contagious. So stay home. Wash your hands. Wear a mask. Pursue joy."

Observing Lent meant adaptation in 2021, however with a variety of speakers each week, the half-hour Zoom each Wednesday explored racial inequities and prejudice. Rhonda Otteson's topic focused on Homelessness in Minnesota. An overview of racial inequalities, and segregation influencing housing was Pastor Peter's online message. The Rev. Jim Bear Jacobs discussed racial reconciliation and reparations. "Welcoming the Dear Neighbor" was the title of Rachel Neiwert's speech about racial covenants and segregation in Ramsey County. In the last five decades, the U.S. has experienced the longest period of increasing homelessness. Sue Watlov Phillips, director of Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing shared how people of faith can be allies in ending homelessness. Not at all the usual Lenten messages, but plenty to consider.

In April, families were urged to bring blankets and gather on the Trinity Green Space to hear the reading of "The Tree Lady" about the woman who inspired the city of San Diego, California to go from tree-less to a verdant, lovely city. Children were able to pick up a scavenger hunt and grass project to try at home. Zoom possibilities in May were about the St. Croix River and invasive species with Katie Sickmann (Invasive Species Coordinator for St. Croix River Association), how to care for lakes and streams with Angie Hong (Washington County Conservation District), and about poverty and climate change with Peter Kilde (Executive Director of WEST CAP a community action agency). Trinity's Green Team advocated a plastic-free July. We were encouraged to carry reusable shopping bags, use our own coffee cups and water bottles filled with delicious "Still water" from home, say no to straws,

shop at Farmer's Markets and bring silverware and dishes from home on our summer picnics.

Trinity's 47 high school seniors received recognition for their achievement and a blessing at the Drive-in on Sunday, May 16. The class of 2021 had coped, managed and excelled when restrictions mandated their studies to be online and activities canceled during their senior year, unlike that of any other Stillwater Area High School class.

Outdoor activities were permitted in the summer of 2021. Vacation Bible School (VBS) for children ages 4-9 had activity tents on the Green Space between 6:30-8 p.m. when temperatures were cooler. Appropriately, the VBS theme was the Summer Olympics. Summer Stretch for middle schoolers did an outdoor service project, went to Bunker Beach water park, Como Zoo and Valley Fair. High schoolers also had an outdoor service project, plus trips to Can-Can Wonderland, Valley Hi Drive In and Valley Fair.

The Women's Talk & Tea "Zoomed" together in May on the topic of "50 Ways to Pray," also the name of the book by speaker the Rev. Teresa Blythe who had numerous ideas for groups and individuals to approach prayer in many new ways. Another "tee time" event was for the Retired Men's Golf at Applewood Golf Course every Thursday. Enjoying the game, getting some exercise and the company of other Trinity golfers outdoors seemed time well spent.

Peace! Be still! The Rev. Dr. Chris Bellefeuille invited us to sit in silence for five minutes. No phone, TV, or other distractions to focus on "God's peace" as you breathe in and "God's love" as you breathe out. Nothing to decide, just quiet moments in companionship with God. Pastor Chris' fifth anniversary as lead pastor at Trinity intersected with the 150th anniversary of our congregation. "As a community, Trinity has walked as the body of Christ through a century and a half of worship, learning, service and care. A century and a half of hope, grief, transformation and possibility."

September 2021 marks such an ultimate step towards normalcy at Trinity with the return to church activities in person. Of course there are the COVID-19 restrictions of distancing and wearing masks, however to actually see people in person instead of on Zoom is incredible! The Children's Choir for K-5th grade started rehearsals.

Trinity Choir invited new sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses to bring their voices to rehearse for traditional worship services. Registrations for children's birth to grade 5 or grades 6-9 gives us hope. Adult Faith Forum discussions on Sundays are back. Food for Thought will begin for adult couples who enjoy a tasteful meal with good conversation. Bridge enthusiasts are only too happy to play in person rather than online. Women's Retreats publicized "save the dates" for new possibilities. TrinityFEST packed the 150th Anniversary Birthday Celebration at the Drive-in

with food and fellowship. Bishop Patricia Lull gave us a sermon with inspirational thoughts for the future of our congregation. Special music, art, food, a story cook-book marked such a momentous milestone for Trinity.

One hundred and fifty years of determined believers in Christ worshiping together, working together, caring for one another, through financial hardship, wars, and differences of opinion. Prayer, respect and just plain hard work have forged this congregation! We have been exalted with the unforgettable music we have shared. New ideas have been welcomed as the work of our church advances. Trinity is grateful for every church member who has volunteered their time and talents. Trinity is grateful to our past and present church leaders. We are grateful for each child of God who has come to find his or her own pathway to faith at Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Minnesota.

“We look forward in hope and anticipation, imagining as our task laying the groundwork for the next 150 years,” told Pastor Chris in her July 2021 *Trinity Today* message. “Because marking the past only serves us insofar as it serves the vibrant wellbeing of the future. From great successes to painful lessons, we look back to inform our view forward.”

“See, I am making all things new!”
- Revelations 21

CHAPTER SEVEN

Treasured Trinity Artifacts

by Susan Goerne Stow

In our Heritage Chapel

Altar, Statue of Jesus, Communion Rail

Two years after the brick church was built on Third Street, the building committee requested designs and drawings for the chancel, pulpit and altar ring. The communion arc was to be made from red oak and ash. Emil Swanson was the carpenter who assembled the beautiful wooden backdrop, altar and the pulpit. The high altar was given by the Johnson family in memory of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Johnson who were pioneers in our church, both from Sweden.

Pulpit

Emil Swanson, father of Harry Swanson and Betty Swanson Vesall, crafted the wooden pulpit with the anchor and cross entwined as our faith is also to be.



Left to right:
Altar, Statue
of Jesus,
Communion Rail
Pulpit
Baptismal Font

Baptismal Font

The Young Peoples Society raised \$62 in 1887 to pay for the first baptismal font. The inscription in Swedish: En Herre en tro, ett dag. A modern translation would be: Oh Lord, a faith to see God one day.



Bibeln | Illustration in Swedish Bible

Bibeln

The tooled-leather-covered Swedish Bible was embellished with gold leaf. Printed in 1877 in the old fraktur style of lettering, the book has many elaborate drawings of biblical stories.

Illustration in Swedish Bible

Den gamle Testamentet or Old Testament illustration.

Psalmbok, Sanger i Sion, Hjemlands Sång, Minnesskrift

Early hymnals in Swedish pictured here were part of quite a controversy in the early years of our church. Some members wanted only hymns sung, while others wanted Swedish gospel songs from Hjemlands Sång (Songs from the Homeland). A compromise vote resulted in 1877—hymns on Sunday, gospel tunes for Wednesday evening. When the song leader resigned, Pastor Tornell decided only hymns from the Swedish Psalmbok would be sung.

Divided page Swedish Psalmbok

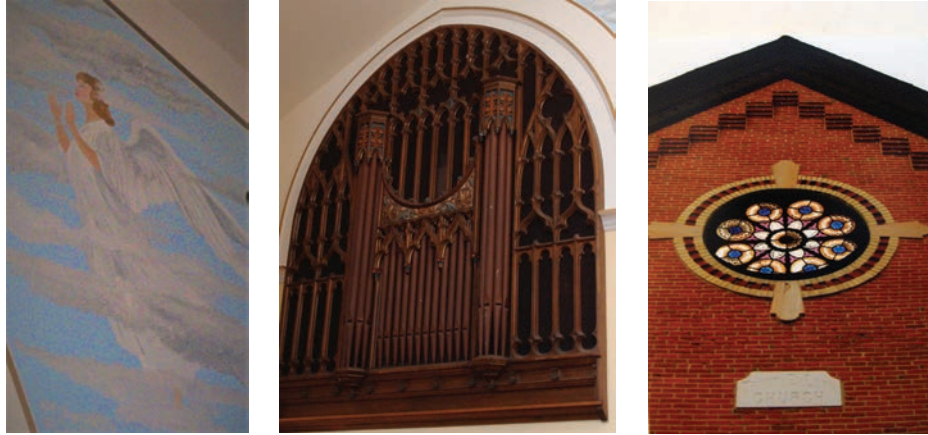
With the melody lines of the Swedish hymn on top, the lower half of the divided page has the exact printed biblical text used in the song. This is a most unusual book!



Left to right:

Psalmbok,
Sanger i Sion,
Hjemlands Sång,
Minnesskrift

Divided page
Swedish Psalmbok



Angel painting | Organ pipe covers | Ascension window

Angel paintings

Norris Swager, in charge of moving and recreating all the elements of the Heritage Chapel to scale in the current correct location, recommended Bill McDonald to replicate the original angel paintings. Bill studied the pictures of the original angels and painted them left and right above the altar.

Wooden decorative organ pipe covers

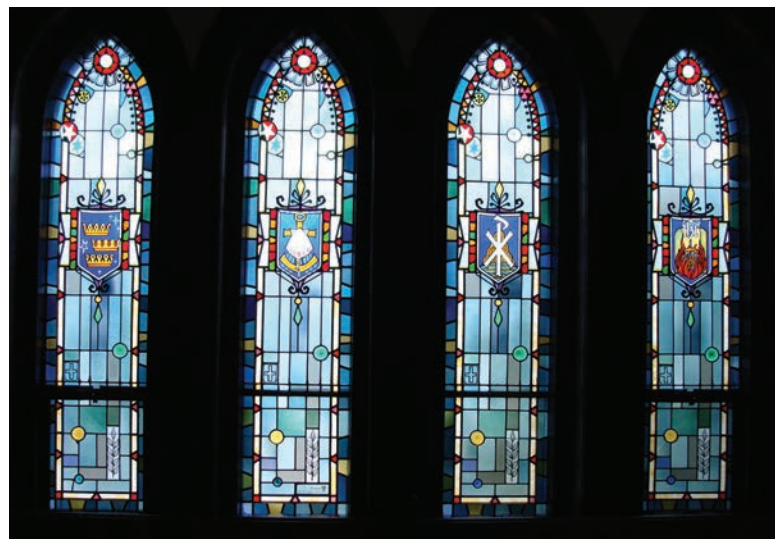
While these elaborate organ pipe covers are not currently hiding any pipes, they graced the front of the sanctuary for seven decades being as much a part of the beautiful woodwork as the rest of the front altar.

Circular stained glass Ascension window

Our lovely circular art glass window decorating the front of the Third Street side of Trinity was donated in 1924 by Miss Emma Olson in memory of her parents, Andrew Olson and Christine Olson, both immigrants from Sweden. Mr. Olson served as treasurer of our church for many years.

Memorial Arched Stained Glass Windows

These windows were donated to beautify the church in 1924. The colorful windows, now at the back of our sanctuary and in the heritage chapel, have engraved metal plaques naming those Trinity members honored.





Swedish primer | Budbären 1916 church newsletter | Dedication program 1925

Swedish primer

Every summer, for two months, Swedish language lessons for children of the congregation were taught to acquaint them with the language of the church. These language lessons continued until 1924.

Budbären 1916 church newsletter

It is interesting to compare the church newsletter from 1916 to the appeal of the *Trinity Today* current publication.

Dedication program 1925

From the very beginning Trinity Lutheran Church has celebrated milestone years and events marking the changes of the times and progress of the growing congregation.

Swedish ads printed on back of annual reports

To defray the cost of publishing the Trinity annual reports, business ads were printed on the back of the official account. Many of the businesses advertising were owned by members of the congregation.

Berglund & Peterson
Leading Groceries
 407 North 4th Street,
 STILLWATER, - MINN.
 Phone 1011.
We supply your wants at lowest possible prices.

F. G. Tandren
LAKARE
 102 Green - 102 East 1st St.
 Phone - 284
Run 7-8 and 9 Torinus Block.
STILLWATER GRANITE WORKS.
Monument and Gravel.
Have vasa kullagranit till försäljning.
1000 - 10000 kvadratt.
Kantor och Fabrik
NORTH MAIN ST.
ALEX. WELST, Prögar.

MINNESOTA LAND CO.
IMPROVED FARMS.
Home and Farm in Stillwater, Brantford, Monticello, Lake, Investment Bonds, Cattle - Froelich, Lake, White Lake, Yrjö.
W. H. Barnes **W. R. Briggs.**
 1000 21st Street
 Tel. N. W. 413 B.

For fine Candles, Fresh Bread and Delicious Ice Cream go to . . .
The Storkel Bakery
 Corner of 2nd and Chestnut

Up-to-date Stock Furniture
Decorative to select
Hammett the Polygrapher
prints to suit demand *Phone 1000*
 1000 21st and 26
 FRANK W. WILSON *Barclay S. Thompson*
WILSON & THOREN
ADVOKATER
General Attorney at Law
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ENROLL NOW
DAY OR NIGHT SCHOOL.
For the purpose of obtaining a diploma of the
United States Customs, Customs House, and
Revenue Service, California State Police, and
United States Coast Guard.
RASMUSSEN **TECHNICAL SCHOOL**
 1000 21st Street, Stillwater, Minn.

BUDRÄRENING
John W. Jackson,
 16 So. Second St. Tel. 561 Stillwater, Minn.
SPECIER, KAFFE, TE, FRUKT OCH GRÖNSAKER.
ÄVEN ÅR 1914 HÄR I DEN TILLBÄRANDE
Engelström & Söner - 1000 21st Street - 1000 21st Street - 1000 21st Street

THE HOME OF FURNITURE, STOVES AND RUGS
FRICKSON FURNITURE CO. **Stoves**
NO. MAIN ST. **and**
Honest Goods at Lowest Prices **Ranges**

Samuel Belisle **Funeral Director**
and Embalmer
 MR. SAMUEL BELISLE, Licensed Embalmer and Lady Assistant.
 Open day and night. Auto hearse and limousine. N. W. PHONE 384
 205-207 Chestnut St. Stillwater, Minn.

En glad jul och Ett godt nytt år
Tillökningarna hela vår församling.
E. H. BERGSTROM & CO.

HANSON MEAT CO.
 1000 21st Street
FRESH AND SALT MEATS - Quick Delivery.
 Phone 7 210 SOUTH MAIN ST.

Ernest Carlson
WEST HILL GROCERY
Highly recommended *Largest price.*
Try my Leader Coffee.
 Phone 54 101 N. Owen

BLUFF CITY LUMBER COMPANY
C. O. LINQVIST, - - - Manager
 - Dealers in -
 Lumber, Lumber and Cement
 All kinds of Pulp. Phone 10-0
 Office: Box 2nd St. (near Auditorium)

T. C. Stocking
DRUGIST
 1000 EAST CHESTNUT STREET
 STILLWATER, MINN.

Reader!
Please patronize our
advertisers!
Co. of Main & Myrtle Sts.



Several Trinity anniversary booklets
Centennial publications for the church anniversaries: the 40th in 1911, the 50th in 1921, and the 60th in 1931 are treasures of historical information.

Silver candelabra donated by early Trinity member

John Anderson

shared this lovely candelabra to use for special meals and celebrations at Trinity. Many early members gave their finest silver serving pieces too. These can be seen in the glass cases in front of the Garden Room.



SLC early church dish logo

Crown Potteries of Evansville, Indiana specialized in a line of heavy white ware pottery used by churches, hotels, restaurants and clubs. A church would want their emblem or initials put on the different items or perhaps with a color line or band. The SLC logo stands for Swedish Lutheran Church. In 1923 the name was changed to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.



Hardanger embroidered altar cloth

Hardangersøm embroidery is traditionally worked with white thread on white even-weave linen, using counted threads and cut and drawn work techniques. This embroidery was a hallmark of needlework art in the Hardanger area of Norway. Fern Lundeen was the skilled seamstress who created this altar cloth.

Centennial commemorative plate

At the time of

Trinity's centennial celebration, collecting decorative plates was in vogue. The lovely embossed rim of the plate sets off the image of our historic church, with the years 1871-1971 underneath. On the reverse side of the plate there is the following inscription: The



Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was organized July 18, 1871 by Swedish immigrants. The 34 adults and thirteen children enrolled as charter members prayed this prayer which is today our Centennial Prayer 1971. "May the Great Shepherd Himself watch over this little planting to the praise of His Holy Name and the salvation and bliss of many." In 1923 the name of the church was changed to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Choir album

Recorded on vinyl in 1981, *Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken*, was sung by the 62-member Temple Choir under the direction of Denis Brown. David Goulette was our organist and Yvonne Danielson our pianist. Side one featured classical church music with three numbers by Haydn, while side two focused on more contemporary choral music and spirituals.



Stained Glass Baptismal Doors

Created by artist Maureen McGuire Design, the baptismal doors were acknowledged in the dedication booklet dated Nov. 18, 1984. Thoughts behind the design recalled by Pastor Betsy Dolmar Dartt were about living on the beautiful St. Croix River and thinking about going to the promised land crossing the River Jordan. It was a long way from the Fourth Street entrance to the sanctuary. The vibrant stained glass doors built an expectation of beauty and traveling to a place of hope. In 2017, the Baptismal Doors were removed due to fragility. They are now crated in wood and stored at Trinity. These lovely Baptismal doors would be a stellar art piece framed carefully, backlit and placed in our church Narthex for all to enjoy.

In our Worship Center



Resurrection Wall

Nov. 18, 1984 was the dedication of the Resurrection Wall made of 21 tons of cut stone from the Mankato Stone Quarry. Mason artisans Ed Erban and Steve Schoenrock built this one-of-a-kind, exceptionally beautiful sanctuary focal backdrop.

Pulpit

Master woodworkers and artists, Jerry Nelson and Gene Kelm, designed and built the beautiful pulpit that meets the requirements for a modern lecturn. Jerry built the pulpit base of oak plywood and oak boards to match the church furniture. Gene used maple, oak and cherry wood to replicate the resurrection wall design in more than 250 pieces.

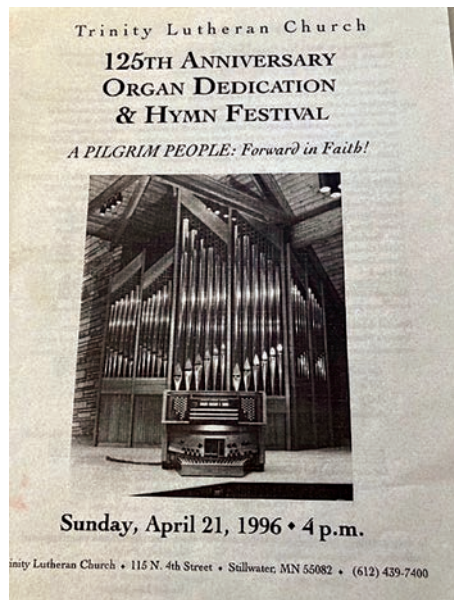


Altar

David Beaudet and his father Albert were the artists engraving *I am the resurrection and the life* on the front of the stone altar and entwined grapes and vines on each side. The altar top weighs about 800 pounds and can be rotated. Stone used for the altar was from Mankato Quarry providing stone in which the inscriptions would be secure in the surface. This altar was installed in 1999.

Paraments

Marjorie Ford of Cantraip Studios in Minneapolis handcrafted the green, white, purple, blue and red paraments in 1988. Several families donated funds for these.



Organ

Dedicated on April 21, 1996 with "A Pilgrim People" Hymn Festival. The Schantz organ has 2,551 pipes, three manuals (keyboards with bone and rosewood keys) and pedals. The console can be moved to two locations in front of the sanctuary. It features 99 combinations of "stops" that change the dimension and sound.



Wooden crosses and candle holders

The large wooden cross and a smaller portable cross, were made by Russ Savstrom. They were designed by Russ Savstrom and Ron Haugen in 2008. Later on, Russ also built the eternal candle holder, and the candlestick holders.



Wooden offering bowls

Gene Kelm, master woodworker, created ten unique offering bowls, each out of a different type of wood and with a singular design.

Altar easel

This sturdy but decorative altar easel has been used for supporting open songbooks and Bibles.

Water color painting of Trinity

Artist Elaine Frederickson was asked by the Women's Club of Trinity to paint a watercolor for the 125th anniversary of Trinity. Over a period of two days, Elaine captured the exterior of our church with a soft image depicting the historic Third Street side of Trinity.



CHAPTER EIGHT

Resources

by Susan Goerne Stow

Printed Materials

Fyrtio-Årsfest, Svenska Ev. Lutherska Församlingen, 29-30th September 1912
Family History, Volume 1, by Roy F. Thelander
Femtio-Årsfest, 1921
Fiftieth Anniversary (1921) translated by K.B. Larson
Minutes of Proceedings of Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Mn.,
July 7, 1871–December 5, 1900, translated into English by A.R.Holmberg
Dedication Program (of Bennett Organ) Feb. 27, Mar. 1, and 2nd, 1925
The Church Messenger, Vol. 11, April 5, 1925, & Vol. 12, May 17, 1925
Memorial Album & Program for the 60th Anniversary, 1931
A Short History of the Trinity Lutheran Church for the 80th Anniversary, Oct. 21, 1951
Yearbook & Reports from Annual Meeting, Nov. 18, 1970
Parish and Pastor Newsletters, Dec. 1970–Oct. 1971
Trinity Lutheran Church 100 Years Program Guide, 1871-1971
Trinity Lutheran Church Centennial Directory, 1971
Stillwater Gazette Bicentennial Edition, Section 6, Trinity Lutheran Church,
Stillwater, Minnesota, 1976
The Lutheran, June 1, 1977, *Challenged by Change*, by Carl T. Uehling, pp. 4-7
Trinity Today, Special Edition, Nov. 1980, architectural drawings of church
Trinity Today, *Challenged to Build*, Sept. 1983
Dedication Booklet 1984 *A Vision that Awaits its Time*, Baptismal door article
Sesquicentennial Souvenir Edition of Stillwater Gazette, Oct. 21, 1993
History of the Heritage Chapel, by Richard Shager, 1993
St. Croix Valley Press, Vol. 18, No. 50, *Celebrating 125 Years*, Mar. 7, 1996, pp. 3-5, 7
125th Anniversary Organ Dedication & Hymn Festival Program, Apr. 21, 1996
The One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Mn.
by Susan Goerne Stow, 1996
Annual Reports of the Trinity Church Council, 1996-2002, 2003-2014, 2015-2020
Trinity Lutheran Church Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner, by Donna Dielentheis, 2006

Washington County Historical Society *Historical Whisperings*, Vol. 46, Issue 2, July 2020
St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch, *Tearful teens mourn death of youth minister*,
by Julie Anne Hoffman, May 1, 1989
Stillwater Gazette, *Youth pastor's suicide leaves town stunned*, by John Gillstrom
and Nadia White, 1989
Stillwater Gazette, *Youth director was being investigated*, by Jim Adams, 1989
Stillwater Gazette, *Pandemics in the St. Croix Valley*, by Brent Peterson, 2020
Stillwater Gazette, *Back in Time, Trinity Lutheran Church: Celebrating 150 years*,
by Brent Peterson, Oct. 1, 2021

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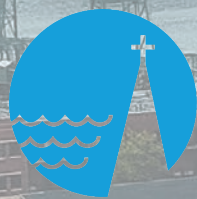
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While every effort has been made to ensure the information included in this book is accurate, it is written by humans and therefore may include errors.



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