

Annual Congregational Report
Trinity Lutheran Church
2023



Pastor's Report

Greetings, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The work of this past year has been steady and stabilizing even though our congregation is changing.

The "influx of curious worshipers" from St. John of Groton Township included in my report from last year has become an influx of members. They exited their own common mission as a congregation quite gracefully even as we welcomed them to become more included in ours.

We have continued to baptize and educate young folks for communion. As our older youth have become more involved in secular activities to a large extent, we have younger kids latching onto our Sunday school program, Vacation Bible School and Monroeville Youth Club. The network of relationships among these younger kids is quite powerful as they support each other in the community, and we have been blessed to be a significant part of their faith community. Many of our high school youth still come to Sunday school and worship, but often their attendance is affected by employment and sporting events. In all, our families are still very involved in our faith community, and they deserve as much support as we can lend them.

The modeling of family faith life in our congregation seems to draw in parents with younger children to our community. We seem to have some folks returning as parents who may have left prior to being married—maybe having experienced a second marriage—or prior to having children. We encourage them to continue to focus on a relationship with Christ as a center for their families.

As we look to the future, we strive to focus on the ministry opportunities presented to us. We may have to return to and refocus our Malawi ministry somewhat in response to the needs of our ministry partners in that country. We may have to help our middle school and high school students determine what calls them to point to Christ beyond our walls, possibly in new ways. And we will be looking at ways to be more hospitable to those who worship with us, at least as far as our worship space is concerned.

We continue to help those who are discerning their call to ministry. Monica is still attending seminary classes, and Sam looks forward to attending Nexxus this summer. Both of them continue to accept opportunities with regard to serving our congregation as their faith and goals align.

Our God has been abundant in our lives both inside and outside of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. Our prayers are heard as we ask God to care for those we cannot, both within our congregation and across our local community. We continue to point to his abundance for us and for our neighbors even when doing so means we are countercultural when called to be so by Jesus Christ. But in all things, God is blessing us very richly. My prayer is that our response in love for our neighbors near and far consistently reflects his grace toward us.

Again, I leave the reporting of successful ministries to the other committees presenting herein, and I still find great joy in all of our ministries attracting so much inspired participation.

The following pastoral acts and membership milestones occurred in 2023:

Receipt of Members	Name	Date	Means
	Beckett Thomas Smith	January 22	Baptism
	Gage Allen Nuhfer	May 14	Baptism
	Gabrielle Louise Smarr	June 25	Baptism
	Brody Courtland Smarr	June 25	Baptism
	Evelyn Louise Tonelli	October 1	Baptism
	Becky Kay Bores	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism
	Donna Jean Colvin	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism
	Steven Gregory Colvin	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism
	Roger Lee Dickman	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism
	Angela Irene Swanbeck	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism
	Carl Lindholm Swanbeck	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism
	Donald Allen Tommas	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism
	Miriam Jean Tommas	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism
	Michael John Tommas	November 19	Affirmation of Baptism

Loss of Members

Name	Date	Means
Daniel A. Dietrich, Sr.	March 31	Deceased
Yvonne E. Henkle	October 3	Deceased

Even though Rick Gfell was no longer a member of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, his passing was felt by this congregation, especially while we celebrated the gift that was his life here. Also, the marriage of Anthony and Rachelle Corbin occurred off-site on September 30 with Pastor Amy Little presiding, her last commitment to this congregation as its pastor hereby fulfilled.

Other milestones included the confirmation of Isaac Andersen Krueger, Aidan Joseph Myers, Kaylee Ann Roeder, and Alec Nicolas Schafer on May 21; and a fairly large group of first holy communicants on June 25.

We give thanks for the cycle of faith in our congregation that witnesses to God's constant devotion to and support of his children, now and always. May we, in thought, word and deed, continue to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of all who believe in his holy name.

Grace and peace, always,



Rev. Daniel I. Pennington

President's Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been a privilege and a blessing to serve on the TLC Council as President this year. We are blessed to have strong, talented, and committed Disciples to tackle the business of Trinity Lutheran Church. Thank you to - Carolyn, Jennifer, Monica, Cindy, Lorie, Bret, Dan and Gary. Thank you, Carolyn, for your service on council and your dedication to TLC...you will be missed.

Pastor Dan has had an outstanding first year leading our congregation and challenging us all to be grateful servants.

The Lord's light shines brightly through all the Disciples of TLC. The joy of many little children in our Sunday School is heartwarming. The teachers who bring the life of Christ alive for His children is inspiring. Our youth continue to grow in the Lord's work. New members have blessed TLC with energy and love.

The first Sunday service of the year was a wonderful surprise as I turned to Page 7 of the bulletin and saw a beautiful GREEN line - We ended the year in the GREEN. Thanks to Sharon Heyman for the outstanding work she does as Treasurer. Thanks also to Bruce Kinsel for keeping our records and managing our financial investments and for Dan Clinker for counting our offering every Sunday.

Thank the Lord and sing His Praise!

Rob Ludwig, Council President

Property and Planning Report

We started the year 2023 with very little snow to the point that the sidewalks didn't need to be shoveled or plowed.

We had a pre-Easter cleaning and power washing in front of the Sunday School was done. The church pews were taken out of the church, into the social hall and cushions were cleaned, pews were cleaned, and Bret repaired quite a few of them, they should last for years to come. The carpet was cleaned, and it should be noted that the balcony and church carpet need replaced.

Jeff Little and Jim Pocock kept the grass and landscape in great shape all year. Thank you, guys. A new EUU charging station was installed for Pastor's vehicle. Thank you, Bret & Jim.

A new handrail was installed at the steps coming from the office to the outside.

Bret was able to refurbish the storm window for the beautiful stained glass above the altar.

The furnaces were inspected, cleaned, and tested; they seem to be ok for the near future.

Respectfully submitted,

Bret Gfell, Dan Smith, Gary Underwood

GIFTS- Growing in Faith Together

Our theme for 2023 was "Learn the Word...Spread the Word", based on Evangelism. A six-week bible study "Introducing our Neighbors to the Bible" started in January and was offered on Tuesday mornings or you could attend on Thursday evenings. The bible study was based on the Book of Mark. Notes were posted in the Fellowship Hall for sign up and lessons of the Bible Study.

Ash Wednesday Service was held on February 22 at 7pm. Lent services were from Holden Evening Prayer and were also held each Wednesday at 7pm following the soup supper.

On June 4th we began our summer church hours with no Sunday School. Church was held at 9:30pm until Rally Day in September when Sunday School began for the new school year.

An outside church service was held on Sunday, September 24 at 10:30am.

A second service has been and continues to be discussed.

A new bible study Book of God: The Gospel of John started at the end of September on Thursday afternoon and evening. It is a 15-session reflective Bible study that continues into the new year with two more sessions.

Advent was held on Wednesday evenings for 3 weeks this year at 7pm/ The Holden Evening Prayer was used again this year for it was received last year.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service was held on Sunday, December 24 at 7pm.

Thank you,

~Carolyn Adelman, Marlene Signs, Darlene White & Tonia Smith ~

Worship Team

I would like to thank everyone who has helped this year with reading, greeting, ushering, acolyting, and altar duty which included filling oil in the candles, altar clothes cared for, communion prepared, and cleaning up following service. From beautiful flowers on the altar to wine for communion, even homemade bread, our family is very blessed. Easter, Christmas, and all the services the church was made beautiful. A big Thank you to Ramona and Jim Thill for taking care of the funeral luncheons. A beautiful ministry to our families in a time of their grief.

~Carolyn Adelman & Tonia Smith~

TLC Youth

In 2023 we planned two Mystery Trips for the kids and were able to actually go on them. The first trip for the Middle and High School kids was spent down in Southern Ohio where they helped build a tiny home as part of the NALC Disaster Relief program. Our younger youth were able to join us for a day trip where they visited Westmeister Farms in Shelby and the Bar Lee Jersey in Willard. The kids enjoyed Bible lessons with Pastor Dan and got to play with lots of different animals.

This year we were able to host two sessions of Youth Club, one in February and one in October both held for 4 weeks. We decided to continue with the theme of "Walking with Jesus" and enjoyed sharing bible lessons, cooking, games, crafts, and teaching the kids how to be disciples.

Thank you for entrusting us with your children and allowing us to take them on adventures all while sharing and learning the Word of God.

Respectfully Submitted,
~Jennifer Miller~

Christian Education

Our Christian Education Team has had a busy year! We have been focusing on "Walking with Jesus" with our youth. We started the year by taking the Sunday school kids to the ice skating rink in Fremont. We had a wonderful Valentine's Day party for the kids in February as well as a fun-filled family game night out at the White's barn! We also started another round of our Youth Club in February this year. We helped prepare four individuals in the spring for their confirmation. We hosted a beautiful Mother's Day brunch that was then followed by celebrating three of our youth graduating high school!

This summer we were able to host TWO mystery trips again like in previous years! The younger kids focused on animals in the bible and visited Westmeister Farms in Shelby and the Bar Lee Jersey in Willard. The kids enjoyed Bible lessons with Pastor Dan and got to play with lots of different animals.



Our high school mystery trip combined with the missions team this year and built a tiny house. They worked alongside the NALC disaster relief team and learned a lot about God, the Bible, and building!

Before summer ended, we hosted another fun-filled Community Vacation Bible School. We had an average of 50 kids in attendance each day! The theme was Babylon and the kids learned about Daniel in the Lion's Den! Pastor Dan was able to hand out over 15 Bibles to kids who did not have one!

We started the school year off by blessing backpacks and collecting school supplies for the teachers. Rally Day kicked off Sunday school and our new focus this year is 'Sailing with Jesus as he anchors us with His love to keep us from drifting away.' We hosted another round of youth club in October with multiple new faces in attendance!

We ended our year with the annual Christmas Journey where a lot of our youth were involved and did a fantastic job! We had our Happy Birthday Jesus celebration with our junior high and high school youth walking around (in the rain) to share Christmas cards with our neighbors and our younger students sang during worship service!

We are so excited to see what next year will bring for our Christian Ed team! Many blessings and thanks to all who helped serve our youth.

Thanks for your continued support.

Christian Ed and the Children of Trinity Lutheran Church

Sewing Group

We worked on many projects for donation this year from dresses and bags for shoeboxes, to 26 blankets donated to Victory Kitchen and Safe Harbor. Pastor Dan took 14 quilts for storm victims along with 27 pillowcases.

Other items made were baby quilts, fleece blankets for children, and headbands for VBS.

The Journey to Bethlehem

This year's Journey brought in just under 200 people. The weather was predicted to be bad, but it actually ended up being a decent night. Once again Trinity partnered with the Village to host the Journey and the Village's Santa parade on the same day.

This year, Journey "travelers" met a centurion, shepherds, midwives, wisemen, King Herod, inn keepers, animals, and of course, Mary and Joseph.

While the Journey is a huge undertaking, and involves many people, we need to remember the reason we do this every year. Those of us involved in getting the Journey ready often get tired and worn out. I know that I personally have said that this isn't worth it; this will be the last year.

And then comes the comments. A co-worker of mine asked about my weekend and asked what the "Journey to Bethlehem" was. As I was getting ready to say it was a pain and too much work, another co-worker spoke up and, I quote, said "it was an amazing experience that the church does every year. And every year the church does such a good job of making sure the participants get the real message of Christmas." She went on to say how it has become a tradition for her and her children. This statement really hit me; not only did a co-worker sing praises of the Journey, but she did it out loud in a room of others, many of whom are not involved in church. What an impact the Journey has made on her life!

All during the Journey, the same statements were made. Groups were insistent on making donations despite being told it was just our gift to the community. I heard other families that came through saying how much they enjoy this tradition. So in summary, I leave you with 2 Thessalonians 3:13: "And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good." Hopefully, you will take away the same renewed energy that I had!

Respectfully submitted,
~Lori Griffith~

Mission Team

Our mission team was at it again this year by serving others in the name of Christ outside of our church walls. Our monthly change for charity has helped multiple local families in need, the Malawi Orphan Care Project, the NALC disaster relief fund, and the NALC 2020 vision to name a few. We collected items for the non-food bank multiple times throughout the year.

During our Community Vacation Bible School, we collected non-food items as well as in November and December with our neighbors at the United Church of Christ.

One of our catechism students created a 'Blessings Box' that was put outside in front of our parking lot. This box is designed as a "take what you need" with non-perishable food items. It has been a success so far in reaching others outside of our church walls in more ways than one!



Our high school youth mystery trip was a trip that focused on serving others nationally. The chaperones and kids helped build a tiny house in southern Ohio. They worked with the NALC disaster relief fund and learned a lot about this mission along the way!

Our Journey to Bethlehem was a success in reaching over 180 of our neighbors and sharing the Christmas story.

Respectfully Submitted,
~Monica Underwood~

Parish Life

It has been a busy but productive year - but first huge Thank You go out to my committee members: Tonia Smith, Jennifer Miller, Lorie Pierce, Barb Gurney, and everyone else from the church who pitched in over the year whenever needed. None of our accomplishments would have been possible without each of you.

January 2023

We had one Baptism on the 22nd for Beckett Thomas Smith and a congregational meeting and potluck on the 29th.

February 2023

We had one new member cake for Barb Gurney on the 12th.

March 2023

We had our lent soup suppers on Wednesdays at 6pm on the 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th. We also had one Baptism on the 26th for Dagny Grace Wilhelm.

April 2023

We had our Maundy Thursday Dinner on the 6th. It was a wonderful turnout, and everyone was well fed. There were 55 in attendance.

May 2023

We were busy with Mother's Day breakfast on the 14th, and Confirmation on the 21st for Alec Schafer, Isaac Krueger, Aiden Myers, and Kaylee Roeder. There was a Baptism for Gage Nuhfer on the 14th.

June 2023

Graduation Reception was held on the 4th, there were 3 graduates this year: Mallory Roeder, Owen Roeder, and Isabel Anderson. We had our Father's Day Breakfast on the 18th and held First Communion on the 25th and a Baptism for Gabriella and Brody Smarr.



July 2023

Nothing to report.

August 2023

Nothing to report.

September 2023

We had a dinner for the Huron Co. Trustee Association. We served boneless chicken, cheesy potatoes, green beans w/ bacon, salad, and dinner rolls with assorted pie for dessert. We made a profit of \$596 for TLC Youth.

October 2023

On the 19th Pastor Dan held a Pastor's Breakfast. We provided donuts, muffins, fruit, juice, and coffee for those in attendance.

November 2023

We welcomed new members from Groton Twp to our church with a reception following the service. We also had a potluck dinner following the service to hear information on NALC.

December 2023

We had our Advent Soup Suppers at 6pm on Wednesday the 6th, 13th, and 20th. Good turnouts for all services. We also had the Journey again this year in which we provided cookies and hot chocolate for all our visitors.

Again, none of these activities could have happened without the help of my team and our whole congregation.

Thank you,
Cindy Schuller

2023 Giving Summary

In 2023 total giving was \$128,285. (\$5,948.35 of which came through online giving).

Fidelity Investment Account Balance as of Dec 31, 2023: \$90,276.41

Capital Improvement Fund Balance: \$499.51

Memorial Fund Savings Balance: \$37,239.94

Malawi Mission Trip Fund Balance: \$4,812.89

American Legion Fund (Good Shepherd) Balance: \$-

Mary and Joseph Fund Balance (Christmas aid): \$629.31

Change for Charity donations: \$2,237.59

Malawi Orphan Care Project: \$1,060

Malawi Food: \$491.11

Malawi Scholarship: \$610

Ohio Mission District NALC: \$500

Treasurer's Report

Line Item	2023 Budget Amount	2023 Actual Spending
Pastor's Salary	\$47,000	\$47,000
Social Security	\$3,596	\$3,596
Medical	\$10,632	\$13,339
Pension & Disability Ins.	\$7,754	\$5,595
Continuing Education	\$1,800	\$1,885
Mileage	\$2,500	\$973
Musicians	\$5,200	\$4,421
Custodian	\$3,600	\$3,562
Admin. Assistant	\$6,300	\$6,175
Utilities	\$11,500	\$10,232
Supply Pastors	\$300	-
Taxes	\$2,000	\$1,005
Insurance	\$3,900	\$4,209
Bulletin, Supplies, Copier	\$6,000	\$7,066
Music	\$100	-
Christian Ed. Team	\$750	\$703
Parish Life Team	\$1,500	\$744
Mission Team	\$50	-
Worship	\$1,700	\$1,250
Miscellaneous	\$100	-
Benevolence to NALC	\$8,000	\$8,000
Annual Convention	\$1,000	\$1,000
Total	\$125,282	\$120,754