



Trinity Steeple Notes

April 2024

A Blessing from the Bard House: Solid



A church like Trinity, late in its third century of existence, seems unshakable. We've survived revolutions and wars, depressions and recessions. We've seen growth and decline—in our membership and in our area.

We've seen years with three pastors and three decades with one pastor. We've started congregations and seen their whole lifespan—of founding, success, decline, and ultimate closure—play out in one fraction of Trinity's longer lifespan.

We've seen new buildings put up with fanfare, a steeple that fell with a crash, and instruments played until they were no longer tunable. Through it all, we've endured.

There's a solidity at this corner of Sixth and Washington, no doubt. Solidity is a good thing, a sign of health. But sometimes, we forget what's at the root of this solidity: every church continues only because people give sacrificially.

We can think about this another way. Ask yourself: does Trinity's continued ministry depend on what I can do? I think you'd be right to say no. But that creates a paradox—if we all think that Trinity's mission and ministry will continue without any sacrifices from us, we're likely not to give sacrificially, and the work God is calling us to do will end in our generation.

I don't just mean money—but money is a part of it. Some people might wonder, as they ponder their offerings: doesn't Trinity have enough money already? Do they really need mine? Shouldn't I give to the library, or the United Way, or Opportunity House, or...

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Similarly, someone who usually attends a small, struggling church with an attendance of a dozen might ask: don't you have enough people already? Shouldn't I go where my voice is louder and my presence more meaningful?

Both of these are reasonable questions—but I think they miss the point. Jesus calls us to give our time and our treasure to His ministries sacrificially. We don't do this because we want to shore up an institution, no matter how dear it is to us. We give because we know that everything we have—in the words of the liturgy, our selves, our time, and our possessions—are gifts from God. In gratitude and with generous hearts, we give God a portion of our selves, a portion of our time, and a portion of our possessions.

We give God our selves by living our lives in relation to God. We judge our decisions not based on what our neighbors might think, but based on what God is calling us to do. This may lead us in directions that are uncomfortable or counter-cultural—but it will be faithful.

We give God our time by spending time in prayer and worship and by serving the Church and our neighbor. Whether you sit on the Vestry on a Monday, hang drywall on a Tuesday, sing or ring in Choir on a Wednesday, or simply find time to come and Worship on a Sunday morning, you are being faithful—and, since in this time God is sure to bless us with grace, you will also leave refreshed, renewed, and forgiven.

We give God our possessions by giving God a portion of what we produce. Most of us in our modern age, myself included, work for money. So, God wants us to give money. We use this money to do God's work of proclaiming the Gospel—both to those who know it and those who haven't heard it.

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If we respond to God's invitation to give sacrificially, I have no doubt that Trinity will grow in faith and number in our age. And when it comes time for us to join the Lord, we will have passed on what we have received: not only God's grace in the Word and the Sacraments, but also a solid institution that exists as a witness to that grace.

- Pastor Hans

Special Congregational Meeting on April 14th Following Worship



Trinity's Vestry is calling a special congregational meeting for Sunday, April 14th immediately following worship for the purpose of amending the Capital Campaign approved in October 2023.

This is the only piece of business that will be conducted at this meeting. Members are invited to remain after this very brief meeting for a special Coffee & Conversation hosted by the Capital Campaign Committee.

Easter Gratitude

We are grateful for all who have offered enormous time and talent to enhance our Easter praise: the vocal and handbell choirs; David Himes and members of the Trinity Brass; our decorators; worship leaders; givers and planners; social ministry volunteers and caregivers; greeters and ushers; teachers and media members; property, garden and office volunteers; and all who served worship and our ministry in various capacities. Thanks to the Trinity staff, who worked so faithfully to help us celebrate the resurrection of our Savior. You are a gift to Trinity and to the world.

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Update on First-Floor Renovations

Things are starting to move more quickly now in our first-floor renovations. We started with the demolition of the nursery, but during the week of 3/11 we cleaned out the auditorium. On 3/10, Common Ground had their last worship service in the auditorium. For the next several months, they will worship in the Hintz Room. We will need to share that space with them on a Sunday. Gloria Berrios, who sets the room for Common Ground's meals, will need help changing the Hintz Room over. Anyone who would like to help should stick around after Coffee and Conversation.

In the old nursery, we had our fire alarm/security system people, electricians and plumbers in to do some work. Wires that were above the drop ceiling were raised and rerouted, new lighting and switches were installed and plumbing was roughed-in for the new bathroom. A wall was framed and should be completely drywalled by mid-March for that room. Peter Graf will be installing the tile floor and walls for that bathroom too.

In an exciting new development, we found nicely designed stained glass windows in the garden room. We love how they look, but they are not in good shape. We have consulted with a contractor and have decided to repair them. We also found two more in the back media room that we think we can bring downstairs. So, we will be adding four lovely new focal points to the outside wall of the Welcome Center room. We feel that this is a great way to highlight and keep beautiful things that we have available.

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Finally, at the end of the Welcome Center project is the removal of the hallway wall. We are still consulting with engineers about our options.

The next phase of our project, the demolition and repair of the auditorium floor, has begun. The stage was torn up and the carpet removed during the week of 3/18. We are removing the subfloor during the week of 3/25. That IS Holy Week, so we will all be able to see the Holy Spirit alive and active as we enter our building for all of the worship services we have planned that week!

I can't state often enough that we keep pushing ourselves timewise because we are trying to stay within the limits of our ARP grant from Berks County. If we can finish on time, we will receive much more financial help!

We are getting help from some Habitat for Humanity volunteers for all the stages of the auditorium floor project. What a gift! This will save us lots of money on the entire project. Habitat volunteers already assisted with the demolition of the current floor. We hope that they can also help us with sistering new joists to fix the floor, installing new subfloor and even the new flooring.

That's where we are as of this writing. Thank you to all who have volunteered so far to move our project along so quickly!

-David Himes

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Welcome Pam Wasmuth to Trinity's Staff!

After a lengthy search, I'm pleased to announce that Pam Wasmuth, long-time member of Trinity, will be joining our staff in the position of Bookkeeper. Pam has decades of accounting experience for varied businesses and non-profit organizations across Berks County and additional experience in Banking and Finance. She also holds an MBA from St. Joseph's University with a concentration in Marketing. Most importantly, Pam is passionate about our mission and ministries here at Trinity!

Peter Graf will continue to oversee the financial office, but with reduced hours at his request. I am so grateful that Peter has helped out in this time of financial transition, despite his heavy workload in his other jobs. As he works with Pam, we can be assured that Trinity's complex finances will continue to be in capable and committed hands.

- Pastor Hans

Update on Pr. Drew Neidig

Several folks have asked about Pastor Drew Neidig, our former interim pastor. As of February 1, Pastor Drew is serving as the Associate of the Bishop of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod relating to the congregations in both the East and West Berks Mission Districts. His role includes working with congregations in transition and supporting rostered leaders. On March 18 he accepted the opportunity to serve as the interim pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Sinking Spring. He also continues to utilize his bookkeeping skills for various non profit ministries including the WBMD, Café Esperanza, and the newly forming Refresh! Berks mobile shower trailer organization. Sara Neidig continues to work the early morning shift at Café Esperanza and accompanies Pastor Drew wherever he is leading worship.



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Sunday Forum Schedule

9:00 AM in the Hintz Room - **Interesting. Informative. Inspiring.**

April 7th and 14: The Eucharist under the Microscope

Join Pastor Hans as we delve into the meaning of the Eucharistic liturgy as practiced at Trinity. Even if you haven't participated in the previous sessions, there will be much to learn about the history and theology behind this central practice of our Christian faith.

April 21st: Meet Jill Skoutelas, new Executive Director of Family Promise!

Family Promise, a ministry birthed by the Lutherans here in Berks County and long-supported by Trinity, has a new Executive Director! Come and meet Jill and learn more about Family Promise's work.

April 28th and May 5th The Story of St. Stephen

In the Season of Easter, we hear stories in worship from the book of Acts.

One oft-overlooked story is the ministry and witness of St. Stephen, the church's first martyr. Join Pr. Hans in Sunday Forum to open Acts and learn more about the early church's witness—and how it might inspire us today.



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OUTREACH and SERVICE

Family Promise: Information and Sign Ups

Family Promise of Berks County, believes in keeping families together and youth off the streets while providing hope, a new beginning and opportunities for change. [Family Promise of Berks County](#) helps families experiencing homelessness for the first time by providing a safe place to stay, vocational and interview skills training, job hunting assistance, and much more.

For many years Trinity has been working with Atonement Lutheran Church to participate in the Hospitality Network. **Trinity and Atonement will be supporting Family Promise families during the weeks of 4/8/24, 4/15/24, 7/8/24 and 7/15/24.**

There are currently 3 shelter houses that we support. There are opportunities to provide a Monday night meal, donate gift cards, and shop for groceries.

Sign up for the weeks of 4/8/2024 & 4/15/2024 [Family Promise April 2024](#)

If you do not have access to the internet, and would like to contribute or learn more, please speak to Deaconess Deborah.

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Refresh! Berks – mobile shower trailer

When Trinity began dreaming about Annex renovations, one idea was to include the installation of a shower.

As we spoke to community partners, including the

Berks Coalition to End Homelessness, we determined that a mobile shower trailer would make a greater impact for our community. Refresh! Berks is now an independent 501c3 organization.

Led by Dave Himes and Amy Stewart-Himes, the core team has expanded to include more community partners. Kristen Opalinski is working on a logo, and with the help of Senator Judy Schwank, the Coalition was able to secure a grant to purchase the shower trailer, truck, and start up supplies. The Holy Spirit is undoubtedly at work as this project continues to grow!

Congratulations!

Veronika Shick qualified for the 2024 Junior Olympics, held in Charlotte, North Carolina, as one of the fencers representing the Philadelphia area. There were over 2,000 youth fencers competing from across the country at the competition. Veronika competed in both junior and cadet categories for women's foil. This was Veronika's first major fencing competition, and she's working hard to qualify for "the Nationals," which is a competition open to qualifying fencers of all age groups later this year.

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Upcoming Concerts

This year we will again welcome Reading Musical Foundation scholarship winners. There will be two concerts: **Sunday, April 28 and Sunday, May 19, both at 4:00 PM.** Come, hear these talented young folks share their gift of music with us.

And mark your calendar now for the final Wolfe Concert Series of 2024 - **Friday, December 20 at 7:00 PM** featuring handbell soloist Ron Bellamy accompanied by his wife, Linda Lorgus.

The Berks Jazz Fest is coming to Christ Episcopal Church!

On Wednesday April 10th at 7:00 PM, Christ Episcopal Church is hosting Jazz, Folk & Blues by Calli Graver (vocals), Chico Huff (bass), and David Cullen (guitar and vocals). Refreshments will be on sale before the concert begins. This concert is made possible through funds provided by the Cynthia Phillips Concert Fund. No tickets are needed so please come and enjoy this free concert!

The Arts at Calvary presents The Steve Katzenmoyer Trio

Sunday, April 21st, 3:00 PM at Calvary U.C.C.

640 Centre Avenue, Reading, PA 19601

Steve Katzenmoyer, piano, Mandy Veloz, bass, and Joel Evans, drums

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Staff of Trinity Lutheran Church

The Rev. Hans E. Becklin	Senior Pastor
Deaconess Deborah Graf	Deacon for Formation & Service
Karen S. Eddinger	Minister of Music
Matthew Mellen	Media Director
Rachel Gambone	Parish Secretary
Peter Graf	Financial Administrator
Dave Troche	Sexton
The Rev. Fred S. Opalinski	Pastor Emeritus

Vestry of Trinity Lutheran Church

Amy Litvinov +	President, <i>Congregational Life</i>
Jennifer Smith +	President, <i>Media</i>
Martha Good +	Secretary, <i>Congregational Life</i>
Erica Hofmann +	Treasurer, <i>Finance</i>
Steve Welz +	<i>Personnel</i>
Donna Osborne	<i>Worship & Music</i>
Eric Rosenbaum	<i>Property</i>
Tom Hofmann	<i>Outreach & Service</i>
Pr. Hans E. Becklin +	

+ indicates members of the Executive Committee

Email the Vestry: vestry@trinityreading.org

Email Pastor Hans: hbecklin@trinityreading.org

April Broadcast Schedule

All of our programs listed below can be watched on Comcast Channel 190 (in the Reading Hospital, Channel 80) or online at any time at www.trinityreading.org, on Facebook, or on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/trinitylutheranchurch. Worship is available both on demand and streamed live at 10:00 AM on Sundays.



Sundays

6:00 PM World Views
6:30 PM Music From Trinity
7:00 PM Trinity Worship Service

Wednesdays

4:00 PM Trinity Worship Service
5:00 PM Music From Trinity
5:30 PM World Views

Prepare for Worship

April 7: Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31

April 14: Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

April 21: Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 23; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18

April 28: Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; 1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8



At Trinity, we welcome all LGBTQ+ people as full participants in our common life. We're proud to proclaim this publicly in our city and wider church as a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

Trinity Lutheran Church

527 Washington Street, Reading, PA 19601 (610) 374-4861

www.trinityreading.org