

## **RESPONSES TO THREE CAT-RELATED QUESTIONS**

A summary to maintain confidentiality.

### **Question #1 – What brought you here?**

- I came in the beginning because the pastor's message met my faith needs.
- Lutheran theology, especially how grace is preached and lived out in the congregation.
- Searching for volunteer opportunities in a faith-based setting
- Members reached out to talk to us, familiarity with Lutherans, contemporary liturgy and music
- Was looking for a church that was welcoming and not only preached God's love for all people but demonstrated it through actions. A friend who is a member convinced me to join and I have enjoyed being part of this congregation.
- Grew up in this church (weekly Sunday school, confirmation, married in the church, baptized children in the church)
- I was baptized and confirmed Lutheran, so when I moved to NH, we looked for a Lutheran church.
- We are really "dyed in the wool" Lutherans!
- You were one of our sponsoring congregations.
- Family history attending Holy Trinity
- My family joined when I was young; I love this church.
- After a lapse in attending church, 911 happened, and that was my impetus to return to church. I was looking for a new church and Chose HTELC because I passed by it twice a day going to and from work. I stayed because I was VERY warmly received.
- Family connection
- It was an intergenerational congregation; musically diverse.
- Keeps me coming back
- a transfer brought us to the area; we transferred our membership to HTELC before we arrived which means proximity and being Lutheran were of primary importance.
- My experience at a former church – an ELCA.
- I grew up Lutheran and it was the only Lutheran church near Portsmouth.
- Community and acceptance during a rough time
- Pastor Opderbecke gave an hour of his time to a stranger who walked in the door in a time of need.
- My friend who worships here.
- I love the Lutheran liturgy and hymnody. I also love the mix of people drawn to HTELC. Even with all the change in membership, the membership remains diverse and involved.
- Only Lutheran church in the area
- We were looking for an ELCA church in our area.
- ELCA
- It's a Lutheran church.
- Closest Lutheran church to where I live; was friendly and moderately progressive.
- Children's programs, bells, and convenient times
- Website
- My spouse and the warm midwestern welcome

- Witnessed a strong feeling of community and vitality many years ago.
- Lutheran denomination
- The powerful sermons that get me to think and make changes, interesting people, caring people, giving people, laughter, friends
- The fact that it is a Lutheran church. After first time visiting the Pastor and members were very welcoming and friendly. We have been here for many years.
- Memorial service for a friend. Upon entering I felt a warmth, a haven. Pastor Rhoades was welcoming and answered questions I had about the Lutheran faith. I felt I was home.
- We were Lutherans and were assigned to the area. This was the only Lutheran church.
- I am Lutheran from birth. We began coming many years ago. We left during a prior Pastor's time here. We returned because Pastor Snyder was just what we needed in spiritual leadership.
- Faith; belief in God's
- I have been a member for many years. ELCA is and was my only option or desire.
- Attended a few denominations as a child, teenager, young adult. Spouse was a Lutheran so decided to be a Lutheran.
- Moved to the Seacoast
- Local Lutheran church
- It was the only Lutheran church around and I was baptized and raised Lutheran.
- I recently joined the HTELC community. I am a life-long Christian who was looking for a new parish. I appreciate the faith and welcoming spirit of HTELC.
- My parents are members and my brother, and I were confirmed here.
- My partner was raised Lutheran.
- Moved nearby and wanted an ELCA church
- Holy Trinity is a congregation which reaches out to others in need, such as: offering a home to the Indonesian congregation; supporting the Tanzanian church in many ways; making and serving meals to the needy on Tuesdays; supporting Families First; supporting immigrants (e.g., marching around courthouses where immigrant hearings were occurring); also, our excellent adult forums with so much active participation.
- We were married here and decided to worship here.
- When we moved to the area, we had small children and we had been practicing in Lutheran churches. We looked up HTELC in the phone book and checked it out. It was the closest Lutheran church, had a lot of energy and a lot of families with children similar ages.
- My wife and I moved to the area many years ago. We have always been active in a church, so we visited several in the area. We were looking for a place where we could actively worship and participate in the church activities. Although our background was mostly Lutheran, the key to our decision was based on "Could we be active in this church?" and were there people here with similar interest in being active participants. It did not take us long to learn that Holy Trinity would be where we wished to worship.

## Question #2 – What makes Holy Trinity right for you?

- The fellowship and support from the people combined with its outreach mission.
- Proximity
- Do not have to “toe the line” in terms of church doctrine; am welcome to grow my faith through the belong, behave, believe model.
- Fellowship with others, Bible study, alternating Sunday liturgies, provides opportunity to serve others, developing my faith
- It’s a small intimate environment that makes me feel included.
- It has not been right for me/family for several years
- I love the music and agree with what is taught.
- We are “dyed in the wool” Lutherans and our options are limited within a reasonable driving distance.
- The Bible study I attend.
- Location, liberal atmosphere, friendliness
- It is the right church for me because of the worship with the liturgy of the Lutheran church, the music, the church family who I love, the fellowship with sharing the work of Christ.
- The spirituality. Regardless of the pastor, HTELC stays true to the core of Christianity: its belief in the Trinity, its values, its willingness to help others. Also, THE PEOPLE! I have made some wonderful relationships here. People are warm, non-judgmental, intelligent, helpful.
- Welcoming community, RIC and non-fundamentalist theology
- Many wonderful people, caring, helpful
- The things that make HTELC right for me are the same things that keep me coming back.
- Sunday School
- It’s Lutheran and the community.
- Good question – I’m struggling with how political sermons became part of HTELC.
- The people – their caring, sharing, action orientation.
- It is Lutheran.
- Feeling of welcome, acceptance and community
- Only Lutheran church in a reasonable travel time
- Friendly congregation; heavily into supporting community in many ways; more casual ways when worship; pastors are people too and approachable
- Jon and Jonathan
- It is welcoming as a community. The weekly sermons strengthen me and help to guide my actions throughout the week.
- Services
- Location, location, location
- Proximity, friendly, moderately progressive
- Welcoming sustained by members
- The feeling of community and family
- The Lutheran principle of grace is for all. My sense of community has decreased considerably due to my children now being adults, my pull into work and other activities and our church needs so much effort/energy to run. Is there enough to go around?

- Liturgy, music, sermon content
- Welcoming; service focus; ministries near and far; current events are incorporated into sermons/prayers/adult forums; different perspectives and stimulating conversation; changing service modes.
- The people and that it is a Lutheran church.
- People – welcoming, helpful, caring; Communion – especially now that we are back to normal; Availability of ways to help – altar guild, council, library, special events, Dover friendly kitchen, Easter breakfast.
- We feel comfortable with the people and love the liturgy.
- We have looked forward to worship and to camaraderie we find here. Our children have been educated in the church here and our grandchildren. We must bring back regular quality instruction for the youth of our church and those who may come to join us for that.
- Grow up with the same affiliation
- Community
- The worship liturgy is on point. We have communion every service. Sermons have a message I can take home. Good fellowship; Tables of 8.
- Open, tolerant church
- The service, music, and people
- Over the years meaningful worship, thoughtful and caring pastors, an outward focus. Have thought about changing churches but have stayed. I don't do change easily. HT is a good Christian community. There have been difficult people here over time but that is so everywhere.
- The people and the beliefs
- I appreciate that there are children at this parish. I like seeing them in church. I appreciate that I see people of color at HTELC. I appreciate the Indonesian brothers and sisters.
- I like coming here.
- Closeness and ELCA; caring and accepting congregation
- Personal involvement in helping foreign families fleeing from war, etc. Also, we just love the Bible studies. About a dozen of us are there and we are all very open in our discussion and questions. It is very helpful and is our favorite times of the week.
- I mostly enjoy the community of people. They are caring, compassionate and of like mind. I enjoy the liturgy format. I am drawn to the mission to always look outward and to help one another.
- Holy Trinity gives me an opportunity to learn, worship and serve in many ways. It feels like home to me, so it is a comfortable place to be. I felt a warm welcome when I first started worshipping here and try to extend that feeling to any newcomers I meet.
- Holy Trinity became “right” for us as we tried to meet people and to find opportunities where we could participate in the church. We knew this was the way for us to have Holy Trinity to become “our home church”.

### Question #3 – What will keep you coming back?

- Because we minister to others: local and international ministries
- A pastor who loves God and people and the church community connections make Trinity a part of my life.
- A pastor who accepts all views on the faith continuum and does not have a “my way is the only way” approach. Church must also connect to the real world in terms of applying the weekly lessons to what’s going on in the world right now.
- Fellowship, Bible study, involvement in various committees, hopefully for a new pastor to continue showing real world application to various lectionary passages, contemporary worship, and music
- It is discouraging to continually have a pastor leave. I have only been attending this church for a couple years and have already seen 2 pastors come and go as well as several interim pastors. It makes one wonder what is going on behind the scenes that is not visible to the parishioners. Is this not the loving, welcoming church that I thought I had joined?
- A Pastor more Biblically focused (with regard to sermons/services) and using this focus to relate on a more individual congregant level; following a more traditional Lutheran service; less emphasis on the outside social and government policies.
- My connections with the friends that I’ve made and a Pastor who makes us feel welcome and appreciated that we’re there.
- Continued broadcast of the entire worship service, return of Pastor Opderbecke, or improvement in our health.
- The Bible studies.
- Family continuing to attend, services less than 1 hour, outreach to new families and younger audiences, evolve with times
- I keep coming back because I’m uplifted by my church family and our worship and faith in our Lord.
- If the core of Christianity remains strong, I will continue to come. I hope, however, we will figure out how to attract younger families.
- Growth of congregation to bring in younger families; continued attendance by my other family members; theology that does not tilt too liberal
- Not going anywhere
- My husband keeps driving the car to HTELC so, in fact, he keeps bringing me back.
- Coffee hour
- The community
- YES!
- I’m a Lutheran.
- Revival of children’s programs (we may be too late); a moderate pastor who keeps politics out of church.
- Feeling of welcome, acceptance and community
- A traditional service using the organ and preaching from the Bible
- Continue adult education after Sunday service.
- Not sure
- Continuing to fill needs as previously mentioned: teachings, guidance, community
- Sense of community
- Lutheranism and location

- It grows in faith, mission, and numbers. It is not afraid to speak the truth in progressive realities.
- Social ministry that follows Christ's progressive teachings
- Welcoming feeling; community and family
- Need a stronger sense of community both in work and joy.
- Being with the community of believers
- Opportunities to serve; fellowship; be challenged; be educated about interest and efforts to make change for topics of those in need, the environment, RIC; diversity in whatever way it can be mustered.
- The generosity of members to help others – social ministry; the Lutheran faith; friends; a Pastor who will guide and teach us through the Bible.
- That HTELC is a RIC sanctuary
- Biblical preaching, fellowship, Lutheran liturgy
- Our church must hold fast to the words of God and Jesus, and we hear them loud and clear in the Bible. If we distrust the Bible as the Word of God, as we say in our liturgy and our prayers, we have an empty witness. We will leave if that happens here at any point in the future.
- To thank life blessings
- Community
- Meaningful sermon I can bring home. I must relate to the message. Prayers as a church. Making an impact in our communities. Communion – I like Pastor Roades style of communion.
- Yes
- The music, service, and people
- HT is not a social club. I come to worship and learn, grow, and engage. Let's become more outwardly focused.
- I like the congregation and I want to remain Lutheran.
- Continued attention on children and people of color. I also appreciate the music and singing at HTELC. Keep it up!
- It is a nice church and close by.
- Biblically based, inspired, referenced sermons like Pastor Luther's.
- It continues to feel like home. I feel heard here and appreciate the caring spirit at HTLC.
- I would like to see continued opportunities for gathering. I also feel an emphasis on social ministry and continuing (if not increasing) our relationships with outside organizations serving people in our neighborhoods and abroad. Because we do not have young children ourselves, I enjoy the intergenerational activities to support the few young families we currently do have. I think it is unrealistic to think that all of a sudden, we are going to be a church of young families.
- When Holy Trinity gets our next Pastor, we would all hope to continue our outreach programs, local, national, and international. If possible, it would be good to be able to again do the "Intern Program". There are so many interesting possibilities for study and growth. LET'S GET THE NEXT PASTOR, SO WE CAN GET STARTED.