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Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
**Annual Congregational Meeting**  
January 28, 2024

*“Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the Lord”*

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*(Budget Reports will be available on Sunday Morning)*

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## **Proposed Agenda**

**Call to Order** – Judy Evans, Congregation President

**Confirm quorum** – Judy Evans, Congregation President

**Opening Prayer** - Pastor Luther Zeigler

**Review/Approval** of Semi-Annual Meeting Minutes - June 11, 2023

**Review/Approval** of Annual Meeting Agenda

### **Old Business**

- 2023 year in review – Judy Evans
- Support for Imanuel Indonesian Congregation – Ed Mallon
  - Motion for funds to support immigration process for Pastor Esther
- 2023 Annual Ministry Allocation Plan Review: Kristen Crawford, Congregation Treasurer

### **New Business**

- Look ahead to 2024 – Erlinde Beliveau
- Motions related to budget designations
- Vote to approve the 2024 Annual Ministry Allocation Plan: Kristen Crawford, Congregation Treasurer
- New England Synod Assembly: June 6-8, 2024 in Worcester, MA
  - Vote to allow two members to represent us at the Synod Assembly: Cristina Dolcino & Mike Gass.
- Acknowledgement of council members completing terms: Steve Bauer, Kristen Crawford, Judy Evans

### **Congregation Council Nominations and election for 2024 Council (Bold = New member/New Role)**

- **Erlinde Beliveau- Congregation President**
- **Russ Hilliard – Congregation Vice President**
- **Dan Scammon - Congregation Treasurer**
- **Julie Anderson - Congregation Secretary**
- Ed Mallon - Council at Large - Come Together Ministries
- Tom Bernth - Council at Large - Grow in Faith Ministries
- Pam Shaw - Serve the Lord Ministries
- **Nominations from the floor**

**Closing prayer of thanksgiving and guidance** - Pastor Luther Zeigler

# **Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church**

## **Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting**

**June 11, 2012**

**Call to order** – Judy Evans, Council President

**Confirm Quorum** – Judy Evans, Council President

**Opening Prayer** - Pastor Don Larson

**Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting January 29, 2023**

**Approval of Today's Semi-Annual Meeting Agenda**

### **Old Business**

Budget – Kristen Crawford, Treasurer

Projected to be \$20,000 shy of budget by year-end; however, as of financials set thru the end of May, budget is \$26,300 in black. This may flex based on individual schedules of giving.

\$86,500 scheduled for pastors in 2023; however, \$24,000 spent to date and \$51,400 to be spent with Pastor Don and Pastor Luther, totaling \$75,400, providing wiggle-room in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

Surplus in 2022: At January meeting a motion made to spend \$10,000 determined by social ministry team but it was decided to hold off until now. A surplus of \$48,000 provides \$4,800.

The motion to spend \$4,800 was introduced by Ed Mallon and carried by unanimous vote.

Semi-Annual Report – Judy Evans, Council President

The report is available in the meeting handouts

### **New Business**

Property Team - Dave Mercer

Dave requested authorization to allocate up to \$15,000 for the remainder of the budget year for currently unbudgeted property maintenance and repair projects as may be approved by council, such as steeple repair, painting, exterior wood maintenance, and others.

The motion to allocate up to \$15,000 as noted was carried by unanimous vote.

Future considerations – Judy Evans, Council President

- Develop systems to protect church
- Electronic keyboard
- Possibility of bringing on an intern in 2024-25
- How to best support Indonesian congregation

Congregational Questions/Comments

Closing Prayer – Pastor Don Larson

## Pastor Luther's Annual Report

This past year has been a surprisingly wonderful year of transition. Let me just remind you where we were last year at this time: When I penned the Pastor's Annual Report in January 2023, I was then your "Interim Pastor," with utterly no expectation of staying on at Holy Trinity for the long term. You were at the time in the midst of your search for a permanent pastor and I was confident you would find just the right fit from among the ranks of eligible Lutheran clergy. Accordingly, I was convinced that when I said my farewells just before Easter, that would likely be my last service at Holy Trinity.

But God clearly had a different plan! Your Call Committee and Council utterly surprised me by saying that you would be open to calling an Episcopal priest as your pastor, even one who was already tethered to a seasonal chapel in Massachusetts. Boy, did I underestimate your creativity in fashioning a new model of ministry. Then, over the next few months, after many prayerful conversations, we worked out the delightfully innovative partnership that we are now enjoying. And so, I was both excited and humbled when you formally called me as your permanent pastor on October 1, when we celebrated together our new, shared ministry in that festive service we all remember so well.

In the four months since then, we have experienced some real signs of renewal and vitality:

- Most notably, our January 14<sup>th</sup> service welcoming sixteen new members to the congregation, in tandem with a baptism and confirmation, gave visible expression to the bright future I hope and pray lies ahead for us. Moreover, in the ten days since that service, I have been approached by two other visitors also interested in exploring membership!
- In addition, attendance at our regular Sunday services since October 1 has been consistently strong, and, just as importantly, there has been a great spirit of hopefulness in our worshipping life. More and more people, for example, are volunteering to greet, usher, read, deacon, and help with coffee hour.
- This congregational vitality is likewise reflected in our financial health, especially in the substantial increase in pledges from 2023 to 2024, with budgeted pledges going from \$285,000 to \$335,000 in the space of just one year.
- We've also enjoyed a number of fun community-building events in the last four months, including cooking classes with our Indonesian brothers and sisters, an over-subscribed

Advent wreath-making workshop, three well-attended adult forums (on the Indonesian support initiative, the meaning of Advent, and a session on “Lutherpalianism”), along with strong turn-outs for the three Wednesday evening “supper and Holden Evening Prayer” events during Advent.

- I also am grateful for a strong, positive, and supportive Council who has guided me in these initial months of my pastorate. Judy Evans has been a superb leader during this transitional time, and everyone on Council has worked well together as a team. Our time away on retreat in October at Camp Calumet was especially memorable and fruitful.
- We are also extremely fortunate to have an excellent and reliable Office Administrator in Mark Donahue. He is a joy to work with, and a highly competent, faithful, and reliable colleague who has made my transition much easier than it otherwise would have been.

Looking ahead to 2024, I am thrilled by the slate of new leaders who have been proposed to lead your Council and I know we will work well together. One of our priorities, as you have heard, is to give further support to our terrifically talented group of musicians and singers by searching for a new Director of Music to work with us to coordinate our worship life. Your incoming Council and I also look forward to building out and extending our social outreach and pastoral caregiving ministries in ways that we’re only now beginning to explore. So, stay tuned on that front.

Christian formation is also a passion of mine and, as we get going this year, my hope is to offer more and more opportunities for teaching and learning, working in tandem with our Faith Formation leaders. Plainly, as for children’s and youth programming, we have some work to do in recruiting families with children and growing these ministries. But we do have a small confirmation class of five young people in place currently, and we’re looking at opportunities for youth and young adults to attend events at Camp Calumet and at the national ELCA Youth Gathering in July in New Orleans.

I am also pleased to announce that Pastor Don Larsen has committed to lead worship on Easter Sunday and during the summer months of 2024 while I am tending to my flock at Emmanuel Church in Manchester, MA. The friendship Don and I formed over a decade ago serving together as Harvard chaplains has served us all well in this new chapter of our lives.

For all the foregoing reasons, I am hopeful about our future. That said, I am also not naïve; there are lots of challenges ahead too, not the least of which is the troubled state of our nation and world, with a contentious election cycle looming on the horizon. There is certainly reason to believe that it could be a difficult time. And yet, if we remain strong in our faith and give bold and creative witness to the power of God's love, I have every confidence we will not only weather whatever adversity may lie ahead, but thrive as a local expression of Christ's Church.

What I said last January in my Interim Pastor's Report still holds true today: God is always calling His people forward into an uncertain future and we should always trust in the new creation God is fashioning. So, rather than fearing change, let us be creative and embrace it. In the prophet Isaiah's words: "Do not call to mind the former things; pay no attention to the things of old. Behold, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it?" Isaiah 43:18-19.

Faithfully in Christ,

Pastor Luther

### **CaringConnections**

In 2023 Caring Connections:

- provided meals for 5 members
- provided rides for 2 people
- distributed 9 shawls to various individuals
- sent numerous cards and notes for various occasions to countless individuals
- provided prayers and comfort for all the prayer requests received

In addition, CaringConnections took part in a very successful Advent Soup in December. Soup, bread and desserts were supplied by the team. The team also coordinated the set-up and clean-up.

Caring Connections lost one of our beloved team members this year, Gisela Wemple. Gisela was an intricate part of the team with her caring spirit and her involvement in so many things. We were so blessed to have her as a part of the team. She truly is and will always be missed!

## **President's Annual Report**

As I outlined in my mind the events of our Holy Trinity journey during the past year, I am humbled and in awe at how we have been led by the Holy Spirit and richly blessed beyond measure. I give thanks. At the start of 2023, we had no idea of where our journey would take us, but we had faith that we would continue to be led by our Lord and Savior. We were a bit discouraged that the Ministry Site Profile that we submitted to the Synod had not generated more interest among pastoral candidates, but the good news was that Pastor Luther Zeigler was our interim pastor, and was helping us to refresh and rekindle the spiritual life of our church family.

Following the Annual Meeting on January 29, 2023, we established a small group, comprised of call committee and council members, for the purpose of brainstorming and exploring options for moving forward, including such questions as whether we were comfortable calling an Episcopal Priest as our Pastor. As history will confirm, the answer was of course yes.

Shortly after, Pastor Luther met with Dick Topping, Chair of the Call Committee, and me as President of Council, to say that he was interested in being considered as an applicant for our pastoral vacancy. His application was unusual in that he was choosing to continue as the pastor for his summer chapel at Emmanuel Church in Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA, which required his presence during summer months, along with Easter and Christmas. This was the start of a new journey for Holy Trinity and required some new thinking about our model of ministry. Dick Topping and I referred his application to the Call Committee.

The Call Committee quickly scheduled an interview and voted unanimously to proceed with a congregation vote on April 30 preceded by a congregational meeting on April 16. The vote was unanimous in supporting the decision to call Pastor Luther as our permanent pastor. Plans were a bit complicated by the fact that prior to these events, Pastor Luther's last worship service as our interim pastor with us at Holy Trinity was scheduled to be Good Friday, April 7. Pastor Don Larsen, who had been our supply pastor in August 2022, was scheduled to begin as our interim pastor on Easter Sunday continuing through the summer months. Pastor Luther joined us for the Congregational meeting on April 16, and again on April 30 for the call vote and for several discussions and meetings during the summer, but did not begin as permanent pastor with us until September 2023. On September 17, we welcomed Pastor Luther as



our permanent pastor and held his Installation service on October 1. Thanks to the Worship and Music Team that worked joyfully to plan the Installation service.

As we began the work of establishing new relationships, the council led by Pastor Luther traveled to Camp Calumet for a planning retreat. The topics discussed included enhancing volunteerism, reviewing committee structure and function, enriching worship, and evaluating our local and global initiatives. These areas of concern will continue to be addressed during the coming months and years.

We give thanks to the congregation of Emmanuel Church in Manchester-by-the-Sea who graciously offered to change the time of their Christmas Eve worship, so that Pastor Luther could join us at Holy Trinity for our two Christmas Eve services.

During these final months of 2023, we welcomed 16 individuals interested in joining the Holy Trinity family. They were formally acknowledged in January 2024. Individually and collectively, they have become a vibrant force in our midst. We ended 2023 poised to tackle the challenges that many churches are facing: decreasing numbers of youth whose busy lives leave them little time for focusing on their spiritual growth, ever increasing social service needs both locally and abroad, finding and establishing effective ways to help us grow spiritually, and encouraging each other as we continue on with our faith journey. We give thanks to those in our midst who joyfully volunteer time, expertise and finances to support our ministries. And we give thanks to our spiritually driven paid staff, musicians, Mark, our office administrator, and of course to Pastor Luther all of whom help us, both individually and collectively, to grow in faith and serve the Lord.

Faithfully,

Judy Evans

## **Faith Formation Team**

This past winter and spring there were Sunday morning Confirmation Classes on most Sundays. The Confirmation Class did participate in the Calumet Confirmation Retreat in April when Lara Scammon and Glenn Oswald taught the learning sessions. There were two Rites of Confirmation, one in January and one in May to accommodate the youth as per their age. Since September, Confirmation Classes have been coordinated by Pastor Luther.

For the children, we are grateful for Pastor Luther's regular children's sermons this year, as well as those of Pastor Don Larson, our supply minister last summer, and the many other supply ministers who have ministered to us. This has been the primary faith formation provided for our children this year. In addition, we were happy to welcome ten children to Vacation Bible School from Sunday, July 9 - Wednesday, July 12, focusing on God's grace given through Jesus Christ our Savior. Meeting from 5-7:30 each evening, we shared dinner, Bible stories, songs, games and crafts. As part of our planning, we sent out a survey about Vacation Bible School to get input for future planning, and we encouraged the congregation to share favorite memories from their VBS experiences. There were also four Sundays when special activities were offered after church for the children in conjunction with special parts of the church year: Lent, Easter, Reformation, and Advent/Christmas. In addition, we planned for extra activities for the children to do at the children's tables in the sanctuary during the Advent and Christmas season. This past summer, we also provided a \$200 scholarship for four campers who attended Camp Calumet for a total of \$800.

Our hope is to hear from all members of the congregation what kinds of programming would suit their needs for faith formation. We have been very pleased with the growth of the Wednesday morning Bible study. In addition, Russ Hilliard took on the roll of planning adult forums on Sunday mornings after church and already began these plans in the fall. We would like to thank everyone who has made each program happen this past year. Your generosity with sharing your time and faith has provided so many meaningful experiences for us all to grow in faith. Please prayerfully consider how you might like to support our faith formation programs at Holy Trinity. We have heard some good ideas from you of ways we can pursue faith formation for every age in our congregation. There are good resources available, but we will need to have a pair of co-leaders/co-teachers for each program we would offer in order to make it a good experience for all participants. We ask that you would prayerfully consider how you might be willing to participate in our future programs. Many thanks to all of you for your support,

Lara Scammon and the Faith Formation Team

## Property Team

First things first! Thank you to all those folks, regular Property Team volunteers as well as other volunteers who have stepped up to help with a variety of property tasks, inside and outside the building, during the past year. Your contributions are very much appreciated and valued. Our numbers have often been few, but we got a lot done and made a difference.

As for the state of the property, it is hanging in there, though it often shows its age and lets us know when it needs attention. There were several things of a routine nature that did not get done before cold weather arrived (trimming of several bushes, staining and sealing the wood church sign on Fox Run Road, cleaning up of the gardens and plantings). We wish we could have gotten that work done, but it will wait for spring. We were also hopeful of getting a cement pad poured for our trash dumpster and doing some repairs to our storage barn. Those items will also have to wait. Some repairs were needed in a couple of our restrooms to keep toilets functional and to resolve some significant water leakage issues which also caused damage to ceiling panels in the basement. These panels have been replaced. We experienced water intrusion issues in the basement a couple of times this year as a result of water buildup behind one of the basement walls during heavy rain events. I believe this problem can be resolved by installing rain gutters on the right side of the main entry. Until this problem is fully resolved, everyone needs to be aware of the potential for casual water on the basement floor, the potential for slip hazards and damage to materials stored directly on the floor. ITEMS STORED DIRECTLY ON THE FLOOR COULD GET DAMAGED IN THE EVENT OF ANOTHER WATER INTRUSION EVENT.

We have used contractors for selected work this year and will continue to do so when the need arises and we do not reasonably have the people or skills for a given task. Work completed by contractors this year included routine inspections and testing of our basement sump pump and de-humidifier, the fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, and road sign electrical components, replacement of a demand water heater, replacement of the ceiling fan in the sanctuary, replacement of valves and seal components for one of the restroom fixtures, repair work on one of the emergency exit doors, installation of additional electrical outlets above the sanctuary entry doors, installation of two emergency lighting fixtures, and riding lawn mower service. We planned to clean and paint the steeple and to clean and stain the exposed exterior wood around the sanctuary and main entry. Funds for this work were

approved at a previous congregational meeting and contractors were selected. The work did not get done because of contractor issues, scheduling or availability. We will seek new contractors in the spring. Some of these same tasks and additional tasks such as selected painting for portions of the building interior, painting of the basement floors which have not been painted in many years and which have seen some paint damage from water exposure, cleaning of tile and grout at the altar and in the kitchen, carpet cleaning, installation of rain gutters near the main entry, and other tasks that might arise could involve contractor services.

I continue to be concerned about our heavy reliance on volunteers to keep our property safe, legal, and presentable. This includes completion of property related maintenance and repair work as well as work to evaluate, hire, and monitor work by contractors or other service providers. If I had to pick a theme song for my report this year and several previous years, I think I would have to select Bob Dylan's anthem from the 60's, The Times They Are a-Changing ... not because it is a quintessential protest song, but because it seems so appropriate. It reminds us that change is constant and inevitable, that we must deal with it or get out its way. The overall thrust of the song has all kinds of applications, not the least of which is the nature of church volunteer work and how things get done. Even though change is inevitable, people react to it differently. Some embrace change and value the opportunities it presents. Others see change as a challenge to what has been comfortable in their lives. The world, globally and locally, is dramatically different from what I knew growing up in rural Ohio or from what I have experienced over many of the forty or so years since being involved with Holy Trinity. For more than half of my life I imagined volunteerism as a dependable constant. I perceive it differently today. People that once seemed readily available, are now less available, busier, more protective of their available time. As our property has grown larger and older over the years, folks available for volunteer work have become fewer and older. That is not a good omen for a process that relies so heavily upon volunteers. This is a significant challenge that demands our attention for the times they are a-changing!

David Mercer, Property Team Leader (pro tempore)

## **Social Ministry**

On behalf of the Social Ministry Committee, I would like to thank the members of our church family for your continued support during the past year.

Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions has been a slow process. During the month of October, we continued the practice of inviting representatives of four (4) of the various local ministries and groups that HTELC supports to present a Ministry Minute detailing how our monetary donations help them.

The collection of food items for Operation Blessing's (OB) Thanksgiving boxes turned out to be most timely. When the items were dropped off on Monday, they were warmly received. Apparently OB had received requests to feed additional, and unanticipated, families in need. HTELC helped to fill that emergency gap. Our annual collection of the Mitten Tree was very successful. This year we donated all the collected items to CrossRoads House. This enabled them to wrap and distribute gifts of warmth to their residents on Christmas Day. Additionally, the gift cards that everyone donated to OB for teens was greatly appreciated.

Dover Friendly Kitchen and Ending 68 Hours of Hunger continue as their needs are unabated. Volunteers are always welcome.

Finally, thank you for the additional \$4,821.00 which was allocated to SM after the July semi-annual meeting.

Jessica Feeley for the Social Ministry Team

## **Stewardship**

Generally, when we think of Stewardship in the Church, we think of giving money. That is certainly a major part of Stewardship. During the three years of the COVID pandemic, our regular Sunday attendance was down substantially. As a result, some of the families who pledged or gave regularly didn't come to Church and were not giving regularly.

Stewardship means so much more than just giving money. It means watching over or caring for the flock or the environment or one's assets.

With our new Pastor in place, the membership has increased, and more people are returning to Sunday Worship. The number of pledges has grown and the total pledged amount has increased significantly. Some of those would have happened as a matter of course. A significant portion are a result of the stewardship (the watching over) of our new Pastor.

## **Statistical Report for 2023**

2023 Average Sunday Worship Attendance:  
In-Person (88) & Online (30)

### **Baptisms: (6)**

Gabriel Simamora  
Hunter Farley  
Harrison Brosseau  
Hunter Schleicher  
John Rogers  
Roy Rouleau

### **Confirmed: (3)**

Emily Goupil  
Noah Berg  
Eric Berg

### **Funerals/Deaths: (10)**

Jeanne Dalzell  
Ron Evers  
Joe Lugalla  
Grover Marshall  
Marilee Clark  
Geri Seig  
Gisela Wemple  
Edith Rowan  
Frederick Nohmer  
(non-member funeral)  
Joyce Nohmer  
(non-member funeral)

### **Members Transferred Out (2)**

Susan Goodman  
Bernie Olsen

### **Active Confirmation Students (6)**

Penelope Williams  
Naomi Stephen  
Nathan Goupil  
Nico Pakasi  
Adrianna Marcus

### **Active Members on roll**

293 People

### **Active Attenders**

256 people

### **Active Worship Assistants**

Estimated 63 people

### **Marriages: (0)**

### **First Communion: (0)**

### **New Members: (0)**