



Trinity Lutheran Church and School
45160 Van Dyke
Utica, Michigan 48317-5578

A Church of



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SUMMER 2020

WHEREVER WE ARE
WE ARE THE CHURCH

*The Trinity Lutheran Foundation of Utica, Michigan
is celebrating it's 50th Anniversary in 2020!*

BY PETER RYNEARSON

The Trinity Lutheran Foundation of Utica, Michigan is celebrating it's 50th anniversary in 2020!

In our last article on the Trinity Foundation we shared how the Foundation started. Over 50 years the Foundation has now grown to \$1.45 million as of the end of March 2020.

The Foundation grows from almost \$1 million in the blessing of gifts given and the growth in value of the investments. In 2019 the balance grew by \$300,000 in investment value and so far in 2020 it has shrank by a similar amount. God has clearly taught us that He is control of everything. The simplicity of the Trinity Foundation is it only spends the actual dividends and interest received and not any change in investment value.

In 2019 the Foundation had \$40,000 in net interest and dividends and gave out \$37,000 in grants towards things like a super-cool helicopter for the children's

ministry Easter extravaganza, new pew and children's Bibles, beautiful new altar paraments, 7th grade confirmation retreat, church leadership training and much more. These are all things that are not in the budget, but extras that the Foundation can supplement to help grow God's great church.

Over the past 50 years the Foundation has returned \$500,000 to support Trinity's ministry growth.

None of this would be possible if it wasn't for the many gifts to the Foundation over the past 50 years. The multitude of gifts many of you have given is what is building an annuity of blessings to Trinity that will continue to help it grow today and into the future.

Please tune into the next issue of *Trinity Matters* on what the future could hold as we celebrate all year the 50th anniversary of Trinity's Foundation. ■

Our Vision Statement:
Establishing 20,000 relationships
through the ministries at Trinity

Our Mission Statement:
Go and Make Disciples who Share
Christ's Story with Love

Core Values:
Love, Learn, Live, Lead

Discipleship Strategy:
Our community's focus points...
Heart (worship services)
Head (educational opportunities)
Hands (service ministries)



Trinity
Matters



Trinity Matters,

You Matter

BY REV. JUSTIN KRUPSKY, SENIOR PASTOR

Four months ago when we saw how Covid-19 was affecting the world, Jesus' words recorded for us by Matthew came to my mind and heart: "On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Much has happened in the last 1990 years. Wars, famine, disease, pestilence, earthquakes, fires, floods, corruption, and so much more, but the truth that Jesus spoke that day has remained.

In 1882 a group of Jesus' disciples, out of response to His words and promises, founded Trinity. Since 1882 disciples have been sharing Christ's story with love. Through economic turmoil, wars, disease, death, political unrest, technological advances, internal pastoral and leadership changes, God's mission has thrived in reaching not just hundreds of people, but thousands.

Trinity matters. From the beginning of this pandemic, God's light has shone brightly, and not just through our staff and ministries, but also through each of you in your homes. Children have been blessed through remote Christian education, the hungry have been fed through our social ministry, souls have been strengthened through online worship and Bible studies, comfort has been given through prayer and wise counsel, but even more than, that neighbors have been blessed by your respect and love shown to them as you humbly listened to the recommendations and mandates by our health-care officials and government officials.

There is no doubt in my soul that Trinity matters. We have learned in the past three months that the church is not a building, it is a people. That our ministers are indeed called for such a time as this and that loving our neighbors

and respecting authority are indeed truths from God for the disciples of Jesus to embrace and proclaim. We have learned that social media is our modern day Roman road, which was built for such a time as this. We have learned that the only conspiracy that exists is that of Satan seeking to divide us, destroy us, and cripple our resolve to persevere in faith, hope, and love. Yes he is very real, but he has not, will not, and will never prevail against us.

Trinity matters! You and I have heard truths about the essentials of our faith, our perfect Savior, how to stay anchored, pressing on, giving one another grace, Nehemiah's plan to return, and so much more. As you read this edition of *Trinity Matters*, I pray that you know that Trinity matters, but this is only because **you matter**. You are God's treasured possession, and we are here for you, because He is here for you. God is with you. He is your Rock and your Shield. He is your Provider. He will provide, not just your daily bread, but relationally. You are not alone. He is not done with you yet. His mission and purpose remains.

This has been Trinity's finest hour. Why? Philippians 4:13 says, "We can do all things through Him who gives us strength." He has given us strength, is giving us strength, and will always give us strength. We are the church, and hell will not prevail against us. We might be hard-pressed on every side, but we will stay the course. We will continue to run the race marked out for us. We will continue to be who Jesus proclaimed that we are: "The Light of the World."

As we move forward together know that Trinity matters, you matter, and your neighbor matters. ■

Trinity Financial Update

BY: CYNDI CARPENTER,
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE

During the last couple months it seems like we were hit by a freight train. Our lives have all been changed and we didn't have much time to prepare. We still really don't know how long this will last and when we will be able to go to normal. But through it all God's Word stands strong, and you have all been overwhelmingly faithful and generous to continue to give your first fruits.

Through these unprecedented times we have also seen the Word of our Lord continue to be preached and the Good News spread not only within our Trinity community but virtually shared everywhere. Additionally, with your help and continued support, our staff and volunteers (around 95 staff) have been able to put all our ministries online so we don't have to stop praising and feeding our souls with His Truth as we battle this pandemic.

On behalf of Trinity and its entire staff, I personally want to say "Thank you"! Thank you for not losing faith and for continuing to GIVE. Through your generosity and support we are able to continue educating our students in our Early Learning Center and Preschool – 8th grade programs remotely; we are able to continue to have online worship services, bible studies, devotionals, chapel, Live Prayer, fun activities and story time for children. We have also been able to feed over 450 people a week through our carry out food ministry and provide other resources to help those who are in need and much more. And through all of this, we are able to remain debt free. THANK YOU!

By continuing to contribute to what Trinity is doing in our communities, we are using what God has given us to share the good news of Jesus by serving others. We give not because we have to, but because God first gave to us, and we do so with a joyful heart and generous spirit.

Trinity has changed our on-line giving system to be linked to Church Center. Church Center is our new and improved membership and contribution system. There are new benefits to using our online giving system that make it convenient and easy. Now when you give online, it will be posted to your contribution statement automatically and you will have access to view your giving as well as see your membership profile at any time. All you need to do is download Church Center using one of the three options:

1. Go to: <https://trinityutica.churchcenter.com/home>
2. Or download the app: **Church Center**
3. Or you can also access by our website www.trinityutica.com and click on the **Give** link.

Then set up your log-in information and how you want to give, the amount you want to give along with the frequency (one-time or recurring). Going forward you will be able view your giving history under your membership profile.

Due to the stay-at-home order, we encourage you to give online or mail in your offerings. Please do not drop them off in person at the church if possible. For questions please email either Cyndi Carpenter, ccarpenter@trinityutica.com, Janet Joseph jjoseph@trinityutica.com or Laurie Hilligoss, lhilligoss@trinityutica.com if you have any questions or need assistance. Any of our business staff would be happy to help you. Thank you so much for your support of Trinity Lutheran Church.

Please find the financial update for April 2020 below. ■

April 2020 Financial Report

	Month Actual	YTD Actual
Church & School Income:	\$ 293,367.17	\$ 3,791,102.94
Church & School Expenses:	\$ 297,904.17	\$ 3,751,256.48

Trinity's Facilities

BY JEFF PIOCH, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

I hope this time finds you well amid the many changes to our normal routines these last couple of months have brought us. As you may suspect, Trinity's leadership have been working to resolve the many challenges that exist following our governor's stay-at-home orders. While we haven't solved all of the challenges, we hope to at least have addressed those most critical at this time.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has caused our nation to take health and safety measures never seen before. This has caused virtually all public gathering spaces to remain closed for extended periods of time. We are currently taking steps in planning for the reopening of our facilities while limiting the number of occupants and guests in accordance with federal and local guidelines. While the causes of this virus are not fully known, we will be taking universally accepted measures to mitigate the transfer of this disease. Trinity expects all who enter our facilities to wear a nose and mouth covering material to reduce the risk of expectorating bodily fluids. Also, certain doorways may be propped open to reduce the frequency of touching door handles as well hand sanitizing stations throughout. It is expected that people occupying our facility will observe health and hygiene practices by frequently washing their hands, using hand sanitizers, covering their nose and mouth when sneezing, and practicing social distancing. Areas of the building that experience human traffic and frequent touch points will be disinfected daily. Routine general cleaning of other areas will resume as normal.

Generally speaking, Trinity's facilities remain closed to guests with the exception of certain worship services. Please note our staff is still available to you either by phone or email during normal business hours. At the time of this publication Trinity is offering "Mini-Communion Services" on Sunday, May 31 in the sanctuary. Beginning the first weekend of June we will pivot from our 8 mini-worship services to three on-site worship services while continuing to livestream our worship services online. Please refer to Trinity's enews for the latest details of these worship opportunities as they may change by the time of this publication.

We are excited for your return! When returning to Trinity for worship services, please be mindful of universally accepted health and safety precautions for your safety and others returning to Our Father's House. If you or your household members exhibit any of the following symptoms, we respectfully ask that you self quarantine for 14 days and be free of these symptoms before returning to Trinity. We are eager to welcome you back, but we also want you to remain healthy.

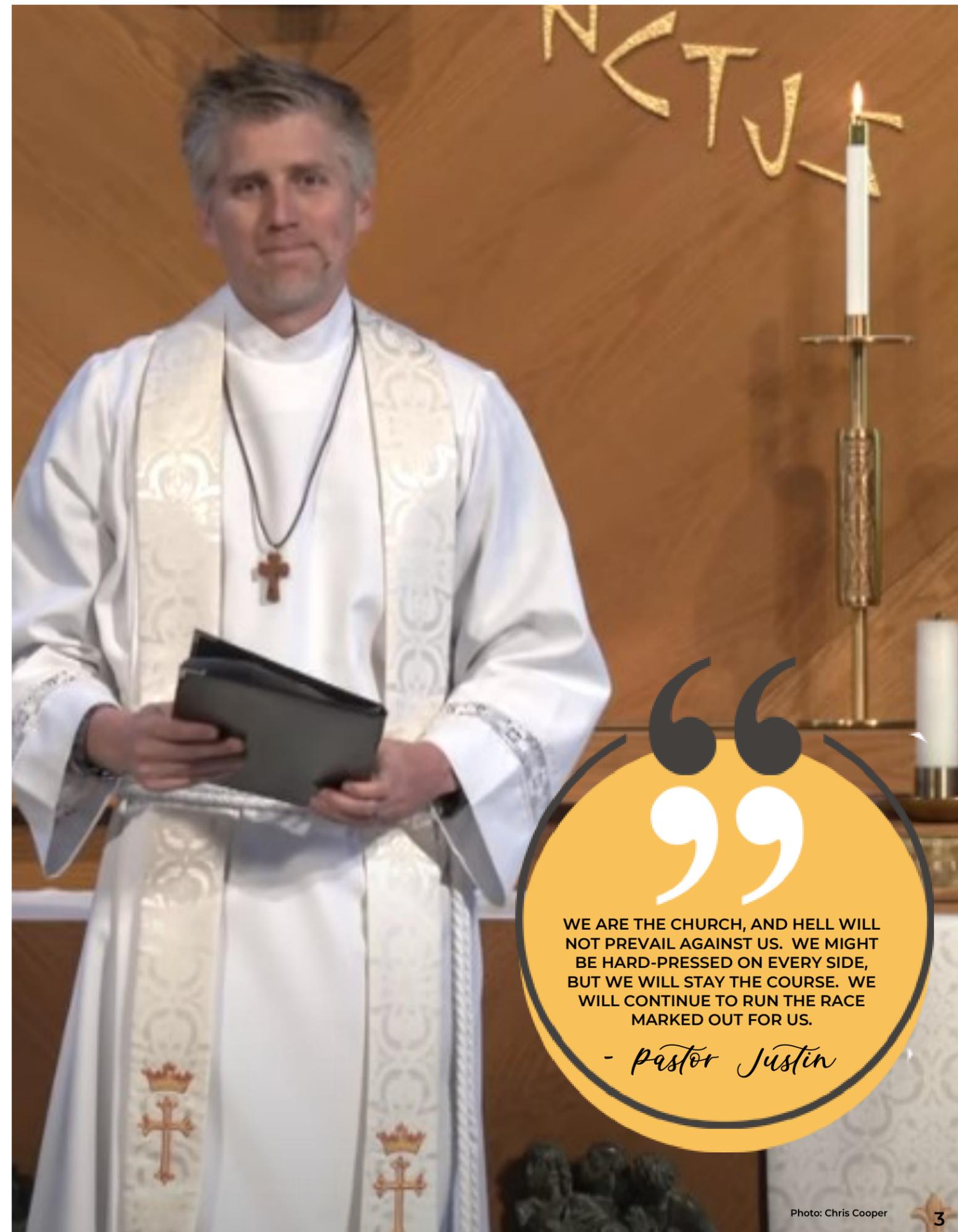
COVID-19 symptoms:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle aches/pains
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Or; have recently been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

All guests are expected to participate in the following for the health and safety of others:

- Take your own temperature before arriving at Trinity's facilities. If a fever is cited (100.4F or higher), please do not enter Trinity's facilities and self quarantine for 14 days before returning to Trinity.
- Wear nose and mouth covering while in public areas or working with others where 6' social distancing cannot be adhered to (Please supply your own covering as most people find some facial coverings to be more comfortable than others)
- Refrain from gathering with others
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Practice 6' social distancing

Room reservations are not being accepted at this time. No group gatherings will be permitted. We encourage the use of digital media for group meetings. ■



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WE ARE THE CHURCH, AND HELL WILL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST US. WE MIGHT BE HARD-PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE, BUT WE WILL STAY THE COURSE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO RUN THE RACE MARKED OUT FOR US.
- Pastor Justin

A Reason to

Worship

BY JOSH BRITTON
DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP & MUSIC

Change. It's inevitable. One never really knows what tomorrow holds. For instance, if you would have told me at the beginning of March the events that would unfold and where we would all be by the beginning of May, I would have probably done my best to not be rude and laugh at you when I realized that you were actually serious while simultaneously accurately predicting the future.

To borrow from a man named Bob, the worship ministry the past few months at Trinity was forced to "start swimming" in attempts to not "sink" during the "times that are a-changing." We had been building on a plan to be able to livestream by Holy Week with the goal of actually livestreaming our 9:45 Easter service. Boy, does God have a sense of humor!

Not only did all of that change dramatically, but we were forced to immediately scrap that timeline. We had to adapt and go with the flow on a day-to-day basis, not knowing what the next few weeks would hold and how long we would have to utilize our facilities in the ever-changing landscape that the COVID-19 virus presented us all with.

Chances are that if you are reading this, you have most likely seen and experienced first-hand what the worship life at Trinity has looked like. While this reality is one that really no one prefers, it is the one we have been dealt. By God's grace, a team of faithful people who love Jesus and love every one of you, have stood in the gap working tirelessly for over two months straight. Because of them, we have been able to stay connected over this vast digital sanctuary so that our

focus can remain fixed on Christ. I am so thankful for the ministry partners and leaders at Trinity. They have sought to live out what Jesus would have them do during this hard time. In order for these services to become a reality that blesses others, every single team member has put their own needs on hold so that they could be "others focused" in how they give of themselves, even when it's very draining and inconvenient.

All of these people have had to learn new skills, adapt their lives, and morph their schedules so that they can accommodate the extra serving time demands on top of balancing their work and family schedules. All of this effort is to the glory of God. We, the church, are the ones who benefit, are blessed, strengthened, connected, and encouraged during this time. It is my hope and prayer that we all realized how truly blessed and fortunate we are to have the team of skilled people around us as many churches are not as fortunate. We try to keep motivating and encouraging each other daily to be good stewards of the time, talents, and treasures Jesus has entrusted us with.

No matter what the landscape of life looks like, Jesus remains constant. He is our Rock. He is our Anchor amidst the storms. Because of Him, we always have a reason to worship and rejoice, always. In some of the shortest, yet most power packed verses in all of scripture, Paul reminds the church in Thessalonica, and us as well, to rejoice (worship) always, pray always, and give thanks always. May we keep doing this by God's grace, no matter what! ■

Seniors and Golden Circle

BY DAVE SHELDON,
SENIORS & MEN'S MINISTRY

I just wanted to take a few moments and visit with you a little. First of all we miss seeing your happy, faithful smiles here at Trinity. It has really brought forth the fact that a church is not a building, but the church is its people who do life together in a variety of ways: worship, meet for Bible study, go out to dinner, attend baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals; our lifecycle all wrapped together in the loving arms of Jesus.

There are still more questions than answers when it comes to attending church and the many activities here. In regard to Friday Flock we know that it will be difficult to socially distance from others and wear face masks. We will communicate with our assisted living managers and learn from their perspective when it will be safe to do Friday Flock again. We are planning to get back as soon as it is safe for all involved.

The Golden Circle is under similar constraints. I have made many phone calls to our Golden Circle in the last month and have learned much in our conversations:

1. You miss each other and your friendships.
2. You sincerely value Trinity and anxiously await returning for worship.
3. As a result of being at home there is a yearning for talking with each other and hearing the news about your friends. (Don't feel bashful about phoning a friend and seeing how they are doing.)
4. There are some folks who might be running out of staples. If you need something such as groceries, please call Trinity. We have a boatload of volunteers who are ready to shop for you.

Right now our plans are to get back to Golden Circle activities in late June. Or we may kick off a return to events at the July picnic. It's not that far away.

Well, whatever the case may be, we know that God's got this. Your testimonies of faith are amazing. Praise God for that. We know that no matter what, we shelter in place with our God who is faithful. ■

“WE KNOW THAT NO MATTER WHAT, WE SHELTER IN PLACE WITH OUR GOD WHO IS FAITHFUL.”

- Dave Sheldon

Grandparenting WITHIN Grace

OVERCOMING FEAR & DISAPPOINTMENT BY SUE SHELDON

We have all faced fears and disappointment, but in the age of Covid-19 everyone has been facing hardships as a community. Our regular routines have been interrupted, and I don't know about you, but I miss worshipping God in our church community at Trinity. Our grandchildren have all been disappointed over missing milestone events. Our oldest grandchild, Leah, is a freshman at Hope College and was to study in England in early summer. Libby is a sophomore in high school and had just earned a spot on her nationally ranked soccer team. Noah and Hannah are 8th graders who will miss all of those activities before starting high school next year. Abby is a 5th grader and she has activities she will miss before moving on to middle school. Dave and I missed 3 major events and trips that we had planned.

So how do we move on from disappointment? We look to God's Word. Romans 5:2-6: "Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."

Sometimes disappointment can't be overcome, only endured. In moments like that it's important to remember that we have hope on our side. Hope in Christ's love, hope for better days to come, the hope to know that things will get better, and we can try again. So when the storms of life come your way, pick yourself up and remember with God there will always be hope.

On that note, I decided to poll some grandparents on how they communicated with their children and grandchildren during this pandemic. Patti and Mark Kuppe have 3 grandsons. Patti said, "I was able to hold our newest grandson yesterday. I have only held this little guy twice since he was born so this was a little taste of Heaven. Besides the Facetime and



Family Zoom sessions, I sent the grandboys a picture of things we had done together since they were born.



Kay and Mike Greve have 4 grandchildren. She says that they FaceTime a lot with their kiddos. They are praying for their son-in-law who is an OT and daughter who is an OB nurse in Atlanta. They have no babysitter, so they meet in the parking lot to exchange kid duty. So hard not to be able to help.



Kim and Chuck Beauchamp have 6 grandchildren. Kim says, "We spent Easter on a 90 minute Zoom call between Shelby Town, Ann Arbor and Bettendorf, Iowa. We have still only seen our newest grandchild Anna, born March 28th over video screens. Can't wait to hold her.

Kathy and John Zappitell have 9 grandchildren. They are zooming with their grandkids and learned that a short time limit is best. She sent them care packages of treats around Easter but says she might send a package a month to let them know she is thinking of them. Here are 3 of her grandkids on Easter.



Dave and I have 9 grandchildren. We sent out Easter surprises to them all. However, we got a surprise of our own when our youngest son and family paid us a "social distancing" visit.

So when the storms and disappointments of life come your way, remember to keep your eyes on Jesus. Pray that He would keep us, our children, and our grandchildren in His perfect peace through the winds of change in our lives. ■

God's Perfect Timing

BY CHRIS COOPER
VIDEO EDITOR



NO MATTER WHAT THE LANDSCAPE OF LIFE LOOKS LIKE, JESUS REMAINS CONSTANT. HE IS OUR ROCK. HE IS OUR ANCHOR AMIDST THE STORMS. BECAUSE OF HIM, WE ALWAYS HAVE A REASON TO WORSHIP AND REJOICE.

- Josh Britton

For a couple of years now, the idea of livestreaming our worship services has been in the back of our minds. In February, I received a call from Josh Britton asking if I would be willing to take lead on getting our services livestreamed. With no expectation of a national quarantine, we ordered the proper equipment and spent hours reorganizing/cleaning the media room to start live-streaming by Easter Sunday. It wasn't more than a day or two after the cameras and equipment were set up that we had to cancel in-person worship and transition to an online venue, an entire month ahead of when we originally planned to live-stream! Looking back, it is impossible to ignore God's timing. I saw Him reaching people through our online content that have not been to church in years or have been homebound for other reasons. The excitement of playing a part in helping to bring God's Word into the homes of many during these times continues to keep me motivated. I pray that we will be able to worship in-person together soon; but in the meantime, stay safe and take solace in His Word! ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: CHRIS HAS BEEN VOLUNTEERING AT TRINITY SINCE 2007 WHEN HE STARTED PLAYING GUITAR IN JOURNEY. HE OBTAINED HIS B.S. IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE FROM OAKLAND UNIVERSITY. IN EARLY MAY 2020, CHRIS COMPLETED MEDICAL SCHOOL. ON TOP OF ALL OF THAT, HE HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING TRINITY'S LIVESTREAM UP AND RUNNING, AND HAS SPENT COUNTLESS HOURS EDITING VIDEO TO PUT OUR WORSHIP SERVICES TOGETHER. HE DID IT ALL WITH HUMILITY AND GRACE. WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO CHRIS, AND WISH HIM GOD'S BLESSINGS AS HE BEGINS HIS RESIDENCY IN EMERGENCY MEDICINE AT DMC DETROIT RECEIVING HOSPITAL IN THE MIDDLE OF JUNE. —MICHELE GRUPE

SERVICE Schedule

Wednesday & Friday
11:30am-2:00pm

Sunday
1:00pm-3:00pm

ITEMS Needed

- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Fresh Fruit or Fruit cups
- Bottled Water
- Zip-Lock Snack or Sandwich Bags
- Napkins
- Plasticware
- Gift Cards (Gordon's, Kroger, Meijer, Walmart)
- Individually wrapped desserts

Items can be delivered to Trinity on
Wednesdays, Fridays or Sundays from
10 am-2 pm at Door #3.



In Social Ministry OUR GOD PROVIDES

BY JENNY JARONESKI,
SOCIAL MINISTRY ASSOCIATE

The parking lot is empty... the pews are silent... the classrooms still. It is easy to see the quiet of our building now when we compare it to the energy a few short months ago. It seems that in moments that we are quiet, our God is able to be heard the clearest. And when the rooms are empty, we can see with clarity the works that God has prepared for us and have faith that He will provide.

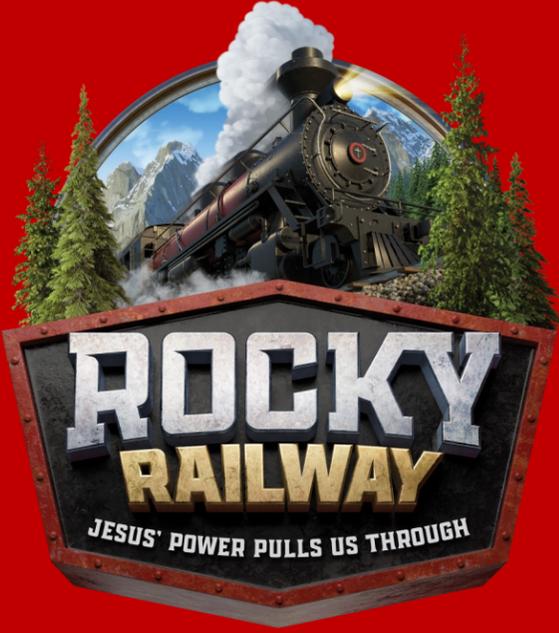
At least three times a week we hear our kitchen is buzzing, volunteers spread across the Fellowship Hall and our church lobby is transformed into a meal distribution center for "to-go" meals only. Carts rattle through the hallway with food ready to be handed out to people in need. Pantry items go out to families with parents off of work due to COVID-19. Our God provides.

When other meal programs in our community are unable to meet demands, our congregation has been blessed with volunteers and means to fill in the gap. Prepared meals are transported across the parking lot to our walk-in freezer to be stored until they can be delivered to senior living facilities and others in need. A new pilot ministry called Delivering Disciples is thriving during this global pandemic as our God Provides.

We have worked closely with the Macomb County Department of Health in order to ensure that we take the proper precautions to keep our volunteers and those that we serve safe. Our mantra is now: Six feet away, wash your hands and change your gloves! While the way of doing things might have changed, our God still provides a way.

When a large portion of our food donations have ground to a halt as restaurants and catering companies have closed or transitioned to carry out only, other avenues have opened and donations have increased exponentially. Our ministry has been on the verge of purchasing an item to complete our meal (chips, hot dog buns, bread, and meat) but before we can do so, a donation of the exact items that were needed arrives through the church doors. Our God knows exactly what we need and He provides.

Not only have we continued to serve a weekly hot meal every Sunday, we have been able to offer lunches on Wednesday and Friday as well. We will continue to serve in this capacity as long as we are able and as long as we are needed. Through our congregation and for our community, our God provides. ■



VIRTUAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

July 13—17, 2020

All Aboard! Vacation Bible School will look a little differently this year, but we are so excited to learn that Jesus pulls us through life's ups and downs during Rocky Railway Remote VBS! Premiering at 10:00 AM daily from July 13th-July 17th, 2020, VBS videos will be available to families to experience Rocky Railway from the comfort of your living rooms! Registration is OPEN to children completing Preschool-3rd grade. Participants will receive an At-Home VBS Kit that will be available for pick-up at Trinity before the event! For more information or to register head to:

[HTTP://WWW.TRINITYUTICA.COM/VBS](http://www.trinityutica.com/vbs)

TRINITY LWML SUPPORTS CAMP RESTORE DETROIT

BY GAIL TEREY

We may have been "sheltering in place" across the country, but the "Mighty Mites" from our Mite Box donations just keep on working. One of the projects that was selected at the National Convention in Mobile, Alabama, last year is something close to home for us. The women chose to give a \$100,000 grant to Camp Restore Detroit. Our own Pastor Lew Stier is on the Board of Directors for this organization. The grant will fund the renovation of two previously abandoned houses into community outreach centers as well as provide funds for furnishings and outreach materials. As we know, there are many people in Detroit living in poverty, and Camp Restore has tried to step in the gap to provide a safe nurturing Christ-centered place for children and their families to come and learn about God's love as they participate in art, theatre and music class and receive homework help. Adults are offered help with parenting, finance and job application skills as well.

Please pray for Camp Restore Detroit that they may continue to reach more and more people in need. Keep filling your Mite Boxes at home! On that glorious day when we will once again be able to come to church and worship together, put your contribution in the large wooden Mite Box to the left of the front entrance. When you do this through Trinity's LWML Society, you help the organization keep sharing Jesus with the world through all the mission grants both at the Michigan District and National level. ■

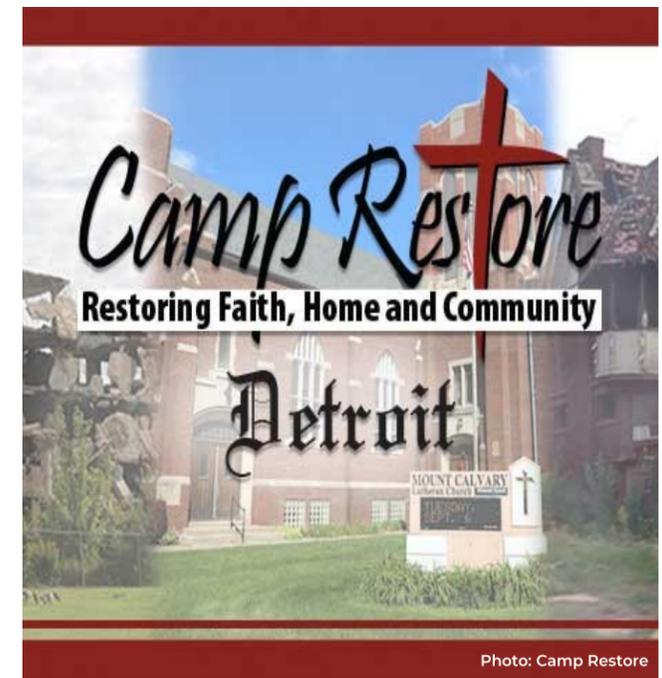


Photo: Camp Restore

Connecting Families to

Christ



Photo: Allison Carr

BY ALLISON CARR, CHILDREN'S MINISTRY AND FAMILY LIFE ASSOCIATE

As a Children's Minister, Sundays are typically filled with off-topic questions and answers, the latest updates about everyone's new toys or pets, smiling little faces, multiple requests to use the restroom, and the correct answer almost always being Jesus. But, during a pandemic, there are fewer inquisitive questions given by little faces when there are few, if any, face to face interactions. Nonetheless, the same truths remain and the answers and topics are still almost always about Jesus!

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GOD IS STILL MOVING AND HIS KINGDOM CONTINUES TO EXPAND!

- Allison Carr

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Deuteronomy 6:6 says, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." In a world operating almost entirely online, it is even more evident that we as parents and our homes continue to be the first line of defense and the foundation for sharing the Gospel with our children. Through this pandemic, we are learning more ways that we can leverage technology to continue to encourage parents and share Christ's story with love from the comfort of their homes in unprecedented ways!

Even though I am missing all of our awesome kiddos, I still want to try and bring a little bit of Kids' Connection to families remotely. Because we are utilizing social and digital media more than ever before, it has allowed me to be creative in the writing, recording, and editing of weekly Children's Messages that tie into Pastor's sermon, rather than relying on a store-bought curriculum. It has been a learning curve and it

is always interesting to see and hear myself on a recording, but I pray that the messages have been a blessing to your kids and have hopefully inspired some conversations together at home.

Another way I have been connecting with our kids and their families that I hope has been a blessing is by doing Facebook Live readings every Thursday of different children's books. Whether reading a Max Lucado favorite or working through a 6 chapter mini-story about 4 adventuring friends, the stories always point back to our Creator, the selfless sacrifice of His Son, or the amazing creations we were all made to be. We have such an amazing opportunity to care and connect with our children at bedtime and there are so many amazing children's books with great Christian principles and values. In Philippians 4:8, we are encouraged to think about what is true, noble, right, and pure. What better way to send our children off to bed than taking time out of our day to decompress and devote to them, share highs and lows, and reading some amazing truths that get us thinking about our Savior before saying our evening prayers and heading off to sleep? I pray that an evening routine sharing God's truth with your children will be a routine that you continue long after this pandemic.

As we expand Trinity's social media presence, we have launched our "NexGen Ministries at Trinity Utica," Facebook group to connect and encourage families of the next generation. Through social media, we also had the opportunity to have a Pillow Fort Competition where we received over 30 amazing and imaginative submissions! As we continue to move forward, we will also be using social media to have an unprecedented remote Vacation Bible School this summer as we come right into your living rooms to learn that Jesus pulls us through life's ups and downs on "Rocky Railway!" So things may have looked differently over the last couple of months and perhaps it seems easier to focus on all of the things we feel like we have been missing out on, but God is still moving and His kingdom continues to expand! We will continue to provide content and support families to continually look towards Jesus as He pulls us through! ■

Ministry VIDEOS



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IT SEEMS THAT IN MOMENTS THAT WE ARE QUIET, OUR GOD IS ABLE TO BE HEARD THE CLEAREST.

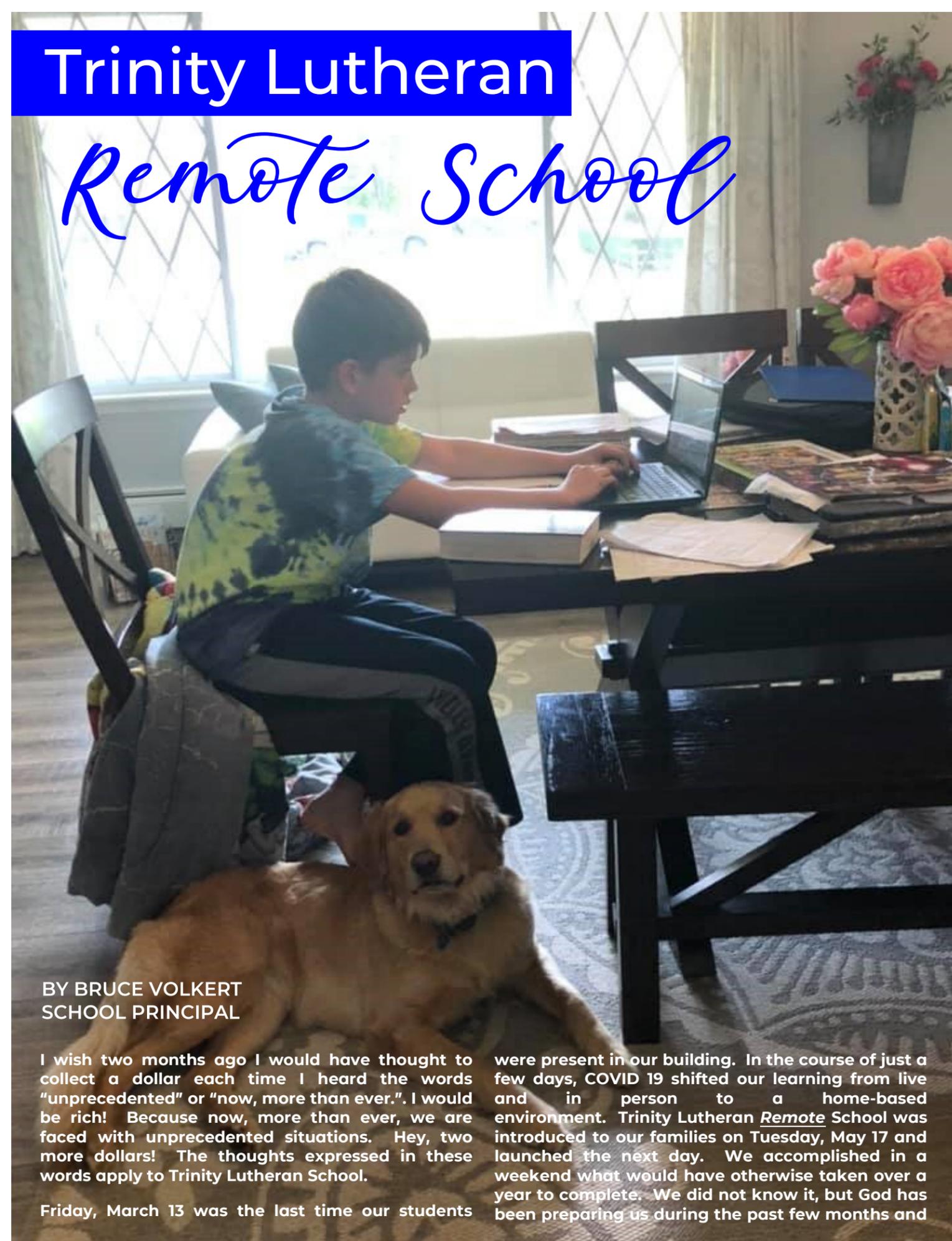
- Jenny Jaroneski

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Photo: Jenny Jaroneski

Trinity Lutheran

Remote School



BY BRUCE VOLKERT
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I wish two months ago I would have thought to collect a dollar each time I heard the words "unprecedented" or "now, more than ever." I would be rich! Because now, more than ever, we are faced with unprecedented situations. Hey, two more dollars! The thoughts expressed in these words apply to Trinity Lutheran School.

Friday, March 13 was the last time our students

were present in our building. In the course of just a few days, COVID 19 shifted our learning from live and in person to a home-based environment. Trinity Lutheran Remote School was introduced to our families on Tuesday, May 17 and launched the next day. We accomplished in a weekend what would have otherwise taken over a year to complete. We did not know it, but God has been preparing us during the past few months and



Christian Care

Photo: Chad Wright

BY REV. CHAD E. WRIGHT
ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING

As the Associate Pastor of Christian Care and Counseling, I have pivoted in my ministerial role in ways similar to the other pastors regarding preaching and teaching. It has been a major shift learning how to prepare online format services and sermons.

During the COVID-19 Shelter-in-place order, I have also been manning the emotional and spiritual support hotline at Trinity. I have answered calls and offered spiritual and mental health support as we navigate this difficult time together. It is normal to experience stress, anger, anxiety and fear during a crisis. Being aware of your reactions can help you decide how best to cope with these feelings. If you are having trouble coping, I am here for support. You can call (402) 851-9289 to speak directly with me.

I have also been writing devotions to encourage members during this difficult time. We have been looking at the articles of our faith from the Apostles' Creed and Scripture. I am going to start focus on the comfort we find in the names that Scripture uses for believers. You may receive these devotions via email or text on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you would like to sign up, you can go to the Christian Care tab of <http://www.trinityutica.com> and fill out the form on the link listed there.

Directed by Pastor Justin, I have also been writing a blog to help people connect their faith to the current issues brought up by the pandemic. You can find a new post every Monday. These blogs offer practical suggestions for living out the Christian faith even when times are difficult. You can find it by clicking on the word "MEDIA" at the top of our website, and then select "Church and School Blog" to read it.

I welcome any feedback or ideas you have for my role as the associate pastor of Christian care and counseling. You can reach me at cwright@trinityutica.com or at my phone listed above. I pray you stay safe and healthy.

BY REV. CHRIS TROXEL,
ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

"Help carry each other's burdens. In this way you will follow Christ's teachings." - Galatians 6:2 (GW)

Right now connection matters more than ever. Connection helps you face harsh truths. Connection helps you remember that there is life and a whole world going on around you, even if your interaction with it is limited for right now. Connection reminds you that you are *not alone*. God works through faith to make that connection with you. Through that faith, God works through you and others to connect you to his larger family, and to this world. There are three things that you can do to help grow that connection.

1. Vulnerability. Be willing to share. Even sharing simple things like your favorite color or movie or what you've binge-watched recently can help you establish common ground with others, and them with you. Common ground helps develop comfort and trust, which is pivotal when it comes to facing your struggles. Everyone has them. Too many people try - or think they have to - go it alone. You don't. They don't. Sharing even simple pieces of life can help dispel loneliness or other darkness. We're all better together.

2. Validity. What you are feeling is real. Some feelings are healthy and good, others threaten to crush connections with others - all of them are real. In a connection where you have common ground and growing trust, you are able to share these feelings knowing you will be heard and respected.

3. Understanding. There are few things that compare with feeling heard. As someone who likes to listen, I treasure the opportunity when someone wants to listen to me. Being a listener has also taught the value and strength of connection in giving another person the experience of being understood. It can ease the burdened or troubled soul, mind, or conscience. Doing so tells the other person they are valued, cared for, and safe.

These are good things to write or read about, but what does this look like in real life? Jeannie, one of our small group leaders, says this:

"Our small group started meeting about 20 years ago, adding a few new members along the way. We have experienced the growth of our children to adulthood. It has given us all a comfortable place to share when we were hurting, battling an illness, or saddened by the death of a loved one---always with God's promises as the foundation on which we rely."

Another small group leader, Holly Wiseman, says this: "The connection [in our group] has been a lifeline during our Shelter in Place. So much so that we've continued "meeting" via zoom each week to just catch up & check in on each other."

My family and I joined a small group our first year at Trinity, and have since started two more groups. Connection has not only changed my life and that of my wife and children, it's also impacted a number of other families and individuals in their connections with one another and how we interact with the world around us. Vulnerability, Validity, and Understanding are some key ways to strengthen your connections to your family, your people, and your world. It is one powerful and dynamic way that together we share Christ's story with love. ■



Three Keys for

Connection

years to be able to complete this task. We have benefitted from plans we have made, implementation of ideas, items purchased and taking part in a variety of trainings. Our building is closed but school remains in session.

Our parents have responded in surveys and other ways with an overwhelming number of positive comments and support of our school and faculty. Teachers are providing distant instructional content to all of our students in grades 3 year olds through 8th grade. Our two main digital learning platforms Google Classroom for grades three to eight and a product called Seesaw for the younger grades. Both allow for online interaction between the teachers and the students. The teachers have made this transition appear simple, but it is not. They burning the candle at both ends to give instruction, receive work, answer questions, serve as IT specialists, assess work and provide feedback. The teachers are quick to point out that they are missing out on a lot of the fun and enjoyment that comes from having kids actually in the classroom. Of course, our students report that they really miss seeing their friends and teachers. This is not the type of learning that they signed up for. We are proud of them as they assume different levels of responsibility in their education. Our parents are to be commended for the additional roles that they have accepted the last two months. We miss you all! We are definitely thankful to be part of the new Zoom nation, but it is much different than being together in person. Despite these obstacles, real learning continues at Trinity Lutheran School.

My daily calendar alerts me to school events that will go by unattended but certainly not overlooked. We look forward to once again being able to attend concerts, musicals, take part in athletics, and enjoy parties and end of the year celebrations. We cannot gather together for graduation this year. So instead, we are taking graduation on the road! Every 8th grade student will receive a package that includes a yard sign, awards, and their diploma in addition to other items. Members of our faculty will deliver these in person and congratulate each graduate while observing proper social distancing in the front yard of each student. We hope to have an in person celebration at some time in the future.

I was wondering why the baseball was getting bigger... then it hit me! Every morning students are provided with morning announcements that include the most spectacular side splitting jokes that you could imagine. Well, at least that is what I believe - please don't verify this with the kids! The announcements continue our time honored tradition of beginning a new day of learning by also focusing on a Bible verse and having prayer time. Jesus remains the center of our school. Teachers lead devotions and have religion class. We continue our theme this year of "Raise the Praise; Sing to the Rock

of Our Salvation" even though we are not together. A talented team at Trinity is preparing weekly chapel service for our students and families.

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WE DID NOT KNOW IT, BUT GOD HAS BEEN PREPARING US FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS AND YEARS TO BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THIS TASK.

- Bruce Volkert

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We are blessed that all of our day school families have remained with us during this closure! We thank God we are able to stay together as a school family. We look forward to having all of our families returning in the fall. Each family is a unique part of our community. We are making tuition assistance available to more families as needed. People are going to have the excellent question of, "What will the fall look like at Trinity?" At this time, we simply do not know. Schools in our area, in Michigan and across the nation do not yet have an answer. There is uncertainty (another word that I should gather a dollar when used) and we pray that things will become clearer as we move forward. This doesn't mean that we are not planning and thinking. We study plans and models as we determine options that could best fit our distinctive Christian school ministry. We will continue to seek input from our stakeholders. We take part in conversations with other private schools as well as public school districts in our area in addition to the rest of the country. We will insure that information is made readily available to our Trinity community.

Keep our students, families and staff in prayers as we go about Creating Disciples Who Share Christ's Story With Love. ■

A New Beginning

BY JANE STRYBIS,
CHRISTIAN GROWTH ASSOCIATE

It is indeed a new beginning for our latest members of our congregation who attended our New Member Class. We are honored and privileged to have such wonderful people as part of our family. We had the misfortune of having to end our class a few weeks early, but we have been able to keep in touch during this unprecedented time. I have asked the participants to help me with my article this quarter by sharing in their own words and with their own photos how they came to know Trinity and what it now means to be a part of the Trinity family. **Trinity is truly blessed by our new family members and we hope that Trinity will be a blessing to each and every one of them as they begin their new church life here at Trinity!** Here are their responses:



Lyn Boyd

I was first invited to worship at Trinity with a friend of mine, Iris Catell, who lives in the same complex as I do. Iris drove me to the 9:30 am worship service until she had to sell her car. Now, Eileen Dunlop drives both Iris and me to the 9:30 worship service which I truly enjoy. I enjoy the traditional worship style and used to be a member of the choir so the traditional hymns and songs resound in my soul so I really feel I get something out of worship. I wanted to become a member of Trinity because I am a 'joiner' and I would also like to be a contributor through my faith to keep Trinity moving forward. The best part of being a part of Trinity is having each other and I have enjoyed getting to know the others who are in the new member class.

Darline White

I was invited to join my friend, Jeanette Taylor and her family for Sunday service 3/25/2018, and have been with Trinity ever since. I love hearing God's Word, receiving forgiveness, and celebrating God with others. It brings me peace and joy! I am thankful to be part of Trinity Utica Lutheran Church.



Ashley Ackerman

Honestly, from the first year of Charlotte attending preschool I didn't realize how much we would grow to love the school and community. My husband and I originally had a different plan for Charlotte's education; but, I just couldn't part ways and neither could Charlotte. We love that our daughter will have the teachings of God along with great education. It's also leading me down a spiritual path that I needed to reconnect with again and Trinity provides me that comfort.



Matt Goldsworthy

I started coming to Trinity with my wife, Sara, shortly after we started dating back in 2012. I felt an instant connection with the worship style and the preaching of Pastor Justin. Once I moved closer, we regularly attended services at Journey and it felt like our home church. Since then, we have been married, had our son Steven baptized, and soon our next son Andrew will be baptized all here at Trinity.



The Gagnon Family

Jacques, Tiffany, Gianna, and soon to be baby number two are excited to be part of the Trinity family. Jacques was a student at Trinity along with his sisters and now his nephew and nieces. Tiffany will be a brand new member of the Trinity family. We are drawn to Trinity because of the values and sense of family instilled throughout the organization. We look forward to connecting with our fellow members.



Phillip & Theresa Foss

After retiring from Oakland County as a deputy sheriff for about eight months, I became bored and began looking for a part-time job in whatever position the Lord might send me. I was driving by Trinity and saw the billboard that said "career opportunity" and I immediately applied the following day. Two days later I got hired as a curator/custodian and became a Trinity team staff member. After working there a few weeks and attending many worship services, I asked my husband who was already Lutheran if he was interested in attending any of the worship services with me. Phillip eagerly said yes! After the second worship service we both agreed we wanted to be part of the Trinity Lutheran Utica family. A few weeks after that I took the job as Trinity's first female safety/security manager and worked for a year and a half before I resigned to go travel with my husband. It has been a blessing and an honor to be part of Trinity. I know in my heart one day I will be back on staff because that's where my heart tells me I'd belong. We are excited about becoming members of such an awesome family.



Jennifer Parison

I was referred to Trinity by several friends who had kids in the preschool and young 5 programs. They couldn't say enough good things about the teachers. My husband and I attended an open house for our son for the 4-year-old preschool program in the fall. From the moment we walked in the door, we were very warmly welcomed, and everyone was so nice and helpful. Usually when I attend these types of events, I feel a little nervous, but that was not the case at Trinity. I immediately felt that this was the place for us! Since my son was going to attend school in the fall, I decided that I would start attending church at Trinity so that I could instill faith-supported teachings in him. Once I started, I felt an overwhelming sense of God's presence and the Holy Spirit like I had never experienced before. I truly believe that I was called to Trinity by God to revive, renew, and strengthen my faith in Him. We have been attending Trinity Church now for a little over a year and the pastors and staff are amazing! I am so happy to be a part of the Trinity community.

