





Trinity Lutheran Church in Darmstadt
Showing the Renovation of the Church Exterior in 2012
and the Addition of the Parish Hall in 2019

The 175th Anniversary Logo, which is shown on the front cover and displayed on the anniversary commemorative items, was designed by church member and artist Chanda Ramsey, who also created the church pictorial directory for 2022.



***Built on Christ, Crucified and Risen,
Trinity Lutheran Church Shall Stand***

Written for

**The 175th Anniversary of Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt
Evansville, Indiana
1847-2022**

by Rev. Dr. Stan Temme

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I Love My Church

By Kandi Jackson

I love my church because it's not just bricks
It's more than mortar, stone, and sticks

That's not the reason why it still stands strong
One hundred seventy-five years is long

Here's some thoughts why I love it so
For I really want the world to know

The one for sure is Christian love
Sent from our Savior Jesus Christ above

Another is the Holy Ghost
the good and pure Heavenly Host

Finally, Our Father who created me
Plus everyone in our family tree

Thanks solely to this Triune Godhead
There's so much more that must be said

My many friends and family here
All of whom I love so dear

Hardworking, thoughtful, joyful, just
With them my heart I gladly trust

Youth league friends from way back when
Others love me despite where I've been

Our Pastor's strength to see us through
the toughest times as we grew

There are many souls now in the past
We miss them all to the very last

They made such a difference like a cure
Now they're with angels above for sure

My church has had its ups and downs
But here we are quite safe and sound

So many things have come and gone
Yet still we stay and carry on

Based on this solid, firm foundation
Christ guides us to our destination

So now let's celebrate with joyful song
For this is where we all belong!

Poem author Kandi Jackson with her
husband Charlie Jackson, chairman
of the 175th anniversary committee,
on their wedding day, October 9, 2021



Preface

When I was a young boy, one of my early memories of my father occurred on a Sunday morning. My mother woke me and announced breakfast to get me moving and dressed for Sunday school and worship at Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt. It was early and still a bit dark, so I squinted and shielded my eyes from the brightness of the hallway light. I remember looking into my dad's study as I stumbled toward the kitchen. Dad was standing there in his underclothes, sipping coffee, and watching the sunrise. On the desk were his briefcase, strewn papers, and open Bible. He had just finished preparing his lesson for the young people's Bible class. On his one day of the week to sleep in, he had been up since 5 a.m. to study God's Word, review the lesson, and prepare to teach. I encountered this scene many times, year after year. During my childhood, my father taught me much wisdom through home devotions, his godly example, and when he taught me as a youth in his Bible class, but what was burned into my brain to this day was this regular Sunday morning scene of my father in his den, studying the Word of God. I realized from an early age that the Christian faith was important to Dad. And so, it became important to me, too.

Four years ago, as the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt, I buried my dad. As a layman, Dad spent a lifetime studying God's Word of Law and Gospel and teaching it to youth and adults. Like many laity in our church, Dad had served on many boards, held quite a few offices, and chaired a number of committees as one of the living stones in Christ's Church. He was laid to rest beside my mother in our church cemetery. In Dad's humorous fashion he had pre-engraved on his gravestone the words, "Gone to another meeting."

Today I am living in my dad's old house, and my son is sleeping in my old bedroom. I have taught him through home devotions, a godly example, and confirmation instruction. He has often seen me at my desk, studying the Word of God. He knows the Christian faith is important to me, and so it has become important to him, too.

This is how the Lord builds His Church and rebuilds it. Saints are born in Holy Baptism, nurtured by God's Word of salvation in Christ, and kept in the faith through the means of grace - the Word of the Gospel and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Saints die and enter the kingdom of glory, but in their place on earth the Lord adds another living stone to His Church. The Christian faith is passed on from father to son, from mother to daughter, from teacher to pupil, from godparent to godchild, from pastor to parishioner. Though the visible Church on earth may change in number, increase, or decline, Christ's Church is always growing as the Lord adds to the number daily both those on earth who are being saved and those who have entered glory in heaven. Christ is always building and rebuilding His Church.

When I first came to be pastor at Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt, I sat in the office formerly occupied by Pastor Rau who baptized me, Pastor Boettcher who confirmed me, and Pastor Keller who installed me into the office of the holy ministry here. Pastor Rau has passed and is enjoying rest in heaven while Pastor Boettcher and Pastor Keller have retired and are enjoying rest on earth. Today, I am writing this last 25 years of our church history from a new office. The former teacherage, once occupied by the sainted Loren Doehrmann who served as my teacher and principal, was torn down to make room for our new parish hall. Across the entry drive, the Lutheran parochial school which served the congregation for 157 years had closed, but today an early childhood ministry for outreach to young families in the community has risen. Old saints depart, and new saints are born; church buildings fall, and new ones rise; long time ministries cease, and new ones begin; but through it all, the Lord is always building and rebuilding his Church.

For our 150th church anniversary in 1997, the sainted Chet Behrmann authored the book *150 Christmases*. Compiled from church documents and personal interviews, his monumental work narrated the first 150 years of our church's history. This historical narrative, entitled *Built on Christ, Crucified and Risen, Trinity Lutheran Church Shall Stand*, will pick up where Chet left off and document the last 25 years of our church's history from 1997 to 2022. The primary source of information came from the church's annual reports and monthly newsletters. Today, we remember with thanksgiving the Lord's building of His Church in the past, but we also look forward with hope to his continued rebuilding until He comes again in glory to claim His bride, His Church.

In the service of our Lord,

Pastor Stan Temme

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

(Revelation 21:1-5)

This 25-year historical narrative of Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt is dedicated to my sainted mother, Nadine Temme, former Lutheran teacher in our elementary school and then lifelong homemaker and servant of the church, and to my sainted father, Kenneth Temme, who served as my best example and wisest teacher of the Christian faith and life. Though his only formal education was Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt elementary school and mechanic arts high school, he was self-taught and never stopped learning. He taught Bible class for youth and adults for 65 years, sang in the choir for 70 years, organized educational workshops, seminars, and retreats, ran a successful business, traveled the world with his beloved wife, and faithfully served as a leader of his family, church, and community all his life. When business colleagues, pastors, and professors asked him where he went to college, he would simply smile and say, "I didn't have to go."

Shown below are Kenneth Temme, his son Pastor Stan Temme, and his son Silas Temme, all confirmed in the Lutheran faith at Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt.



Introduction

“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Jesus said these words to His disciples just after Peter confessed him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Upon what foundation would Jesus build His Church? Just after Jesus said these words, He promised to give His Church the keys to the kingdom of heaven to bind and forgive sins. He then began to tell His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things, be killed, and on the third day rise. Jesus would build His Church upon the confession of Him as the Christ and the forgiveness of sins which He won through his suffering, death, and resurrection. (Matthew 16:16-21)

For any building project, however, an old building is often knocked down so that a new building may be raised. The temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians but rebuilt after the exile during the time of Ezra. This temple was knocked down during the days of Herod the Great who built a new and more glorious temple during the days of Jesus. When the Jews questioned Jesus for purging this temple of the merchants and money changers and asked by what sign He did this, Jesus responded, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” But He was speaking of the temple of His body. (John 2:18-22) His body would be knocked down and destroyed during His crucifixion and death, but after three days in the tomb His body would be rebuilt and raised new.

Destroying the old and raising the new is often the pattern Jesus uses in building His Church. He knocks down, and He rebuilds. Built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets with Christ as the cornerstone, the Lord builds His Church with His saints who are like living stones being built up as a spiritual house. (Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Peter 2:4-5) The Lord destroys and rebuilds our spirit. In baptism He drowns the old man and raises the new man. The Lord does the same with our body. The mortal body is destroyed by death and laid in the grave, but the Lord will raise an immortal body on the Last Day.

The Lord is always building His Church. After a lifetime on earth, saints die and leave the Church Militant to enter the Church Triumphant. New saints are born of water and the Word and are raised up to take their place. Likewise, ministries of the church begin, thrive, decline, and eventually die, but new ministries are born and raised up in their stead. Church buildings grow old and dilapidated, but those are knocked down to make room for the new. The Lord’s Church is always in a state of change and turnover as He builds and rebuilds. Sometimes the Church may look aged, shrunken, and fallen, but one thing is guaranteed. Built on Christ, crucified and risen, His Church shall stand.



Cornerstone from the former church building which stood from 1881 to 1958
“German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church – Unaltered Augsburg Confession”

The Year of Jubilee

“And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan.” (Leviticus 25:10)

Every fifty years the Lord commanded the Israelites to observe the Year of Jubilee. It was a year of much celebration as the people, animals, and land had rest for an entire year. Debts were canceled, servants were freed, and family land was restored. The people remembered the Lord's goodness, provision, and deliverance for a year long celebration. 1997, the 150th anniversary of Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt, was also a year-long celebration of God's grace in the lives of His people. God's many blessings through these years were recognized in many ways.

The year of celebration began in January when the congregation was invited by letter to attend a 150th anniversary kickoff luncheon after worship.

“For 150 years God has blessed Trinity congregation. Beginning in a log cabin church in 1847, the Trinity family has grown to its present size, bringing the Word and Sacraments to its members and offering a Christian witness to the Darmstadt community and beyond. In 1997 we plan to celebrate God's loving kindness and to glorify His name with many special services and activities involving every member, young and old. An anniversary committee has been at work since 1994, and now we're ready to tell you about these plans.”

The congregation enjoyed a luncheon with a delicious German menu of brats and sauerkraut, red cabbage, German potato salad, kuchen, and German chocolate cake. The anniversary committee, chaired by Greg Kahre, gave details of the anniversary two-year thank offering and listed the special events planned for the year. On display were anniversary commemorative items of sweatshirts, T-shirts, and caps with a picture of Trinity along with Christmas tree ornaments and Christmas cards designed by Evelyn Steinkuhl. Each family received an anniversary history calendar for 1997.

A German Heritage Sunday was held on February 9. Parts of the liturgy, hymns, and lessons were sung and spoken in German. The offering was taken with klingelbeutels, a cloth pouch with handles. Pastor Martin Keller conducted a Christenlehre (instruction in the Christian faith) with the confirmands. During the service, new side light fixtures were dedicated for the sanctuary. Evening festivities included a dinner featuring German food with music from the Rhein Valley Brass German band from Germania Maennerchor. Pictures from church archives were displayed on tables in the gym, and all available confirmation pictures were displayed in the cafeteria. Janet Doehermann directed Trinity's handbell choir shown below.





The worship service on March 9 dedicated a drawing of the church from Lutheran Brotherhood and a 150th Anniversary Banner made by Dottie Kahre. The banner depicts the cross, a symbol of the Trinity, and the anniversary theme “Christ Our Cornerstone – Yesterday, Today, and Forever.” Shown to the left are Greg Kahre, chairman of the anniversary committee, Pastor Martin Keller, and John Brock, chairman of the congregation.

Sunday, May 25, served as the featured day of celebration. For the morning service, Janet Doehrmann played the organ and directed the handbells, accompanied by brass and timpani. Shown below are Erich Keller, Jeff Sensmeier, Jon Patton, and Greg Downes.



The Hymn of the Day was *Father, You Have Led the Way*, written by Chet

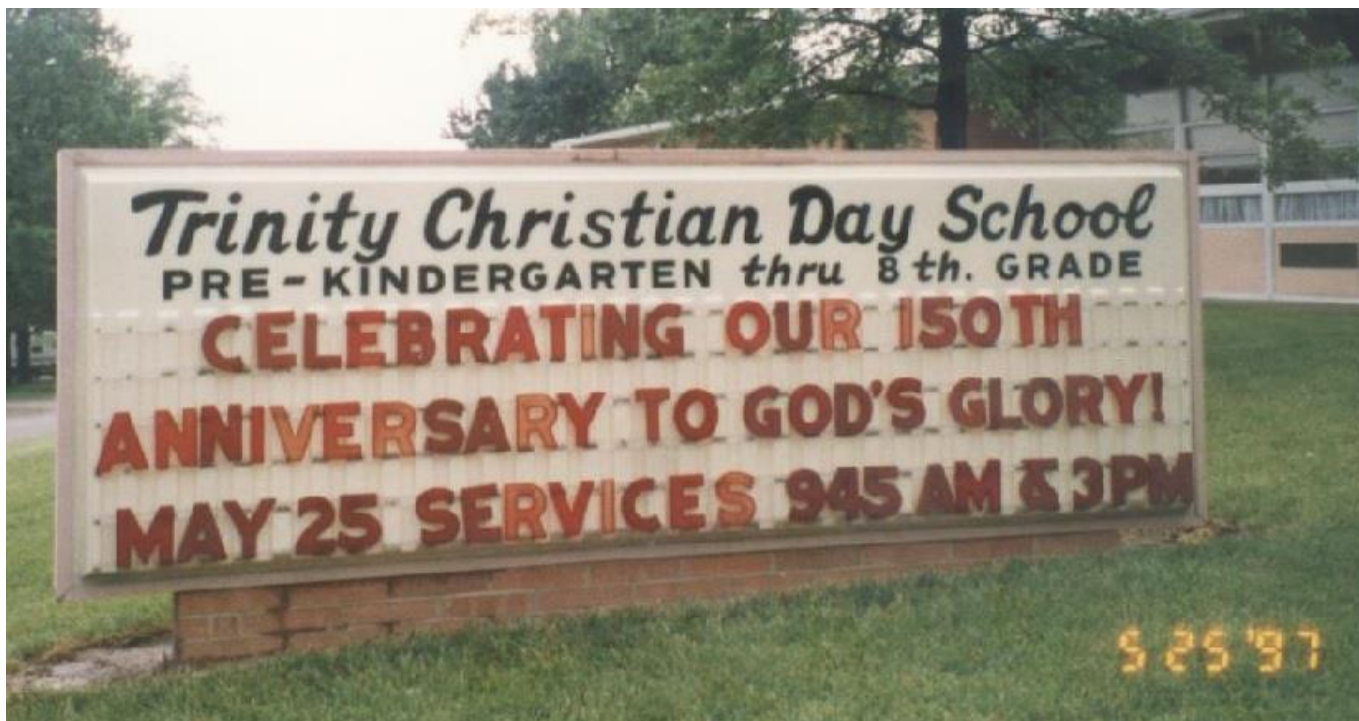
Behrman and composed by the school band director, Jon Patton. The robed choir, directed by Loren Doehrmann, processed to the balcony, singing “Holy, Holy, Holy.” Choir members for 1997 are shown below.



During the worship service, Evelyn Steinkuhl's painting of Trinity's three church buildings was unveiled on the south wall of the sanctuary. Shown to the right are Pastor Keller, Evelyn Steinkuhl, and District President Rev. Tim Sims. Pastor Keller preached the sermon, entitled *God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity*. Following the service, two time capsules – one filled with religious items and the other filled with secular items – were buried on the southeast corner of the church and marked with a stone marker.



Children of the congregation released 150 helium-filled balloons, each with a message from a congregation member. During a catered luncheon in the gym, Chet Behrman, author of *150 Christmases*, a history of Trinity's 150 years, read excerpts from his book and gave autographs. Dr. Tim Sims, president of the synod's Indiana District, spoke at the luncheon and preached at the afternoon service. Each family received an anniversary ring binder with a pictorial directory of the congregation.



On June 8, Pastor Loren Boettcher, former pastor at Trinity from 1976-1986, preached during the worship service. Pastor Boettcher thanked the congregation. "I thank you for the invitation to share His Word who was and is and will be – our eternal loving God. It was like being home, stepping into the pulpit again. Some things have changed, but not our changeless Savior Jesus Christ. Him we proclaim to one another through Word and Deed. It was heart-warming to see the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of His people at Trinity. It is our prayer that you will never lose this desire to serve your Lord and His people."

The congregation invited the entire community to attend a birthday party and open house on the afternoon of August 3. Cake and ice cream were served in the gym, and the handbell choir provided beautiful music.

A Mission Festival was celebrated on September 14. Rev. Larry Merino from New Life Lutheran Church in Ft. Wayne preached and spoke about overseas missions to the Gypsies in Slovakia.

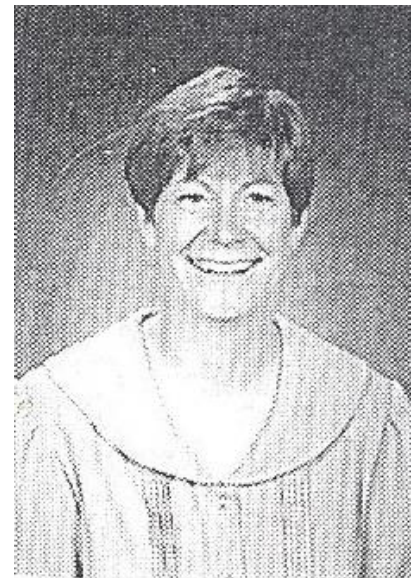
Following the service on September 28, the congregation hosted an old-fashioned picnic and confirmand reunion. The tables were decorated with small wooden models of the log church and the old brick church made by Bill Gann for previous church retreats. Confirmants were seated at tables by year of confirmation, and many enjoyed catching up with old friends. Clarence Sensmeier was recognized as the oldest confirmand present from the class of 1929. Adults enjoyed games of clabber, the children received prizes from the traditional fishpond, and the youth group sold root beer floats to help finance their youth gathering in Atlanta the following year.

For the Lutheran Layman's League (LLL) zone rally on October 5, Dr. Walter Rast of Valparaiso University gave a presentation on the archeology of the Dead Sea and its surrounding cities. On October 12, Dr. August Suelflow, synodical historian, spoke on the heritage of the LCMS. On November 2, Ken Temme gave a slide and video presentation of Darmstadt Germany and the Minden area from which many of the members of Trinity emigrated.

The year of festivities concluded with the Loyalty Sunday on November 23, the last day of the Church Year. Pastor Keller's sermon encouraged all to watch and be ready for the return of our Lord who will come on the Last Day. During the offertory, the congregation came forward and gave their offerings for the day and their pledges for the coming year. The Loyalty Banquet in the gym featured "The Darmstadt Players" (participants from church retreats), who presented a skit written by Chet Behrman. Two groups in costume portrayed simultaneous meetings of the Ladies Aid and the Voters Assembly from 1902 in a humorous presentation of excerpts. Trinity's bell choir, Die Glockenspieler, played several selections of music. Several members were recognized for their loyal service: Betty Woodburn for 20 years teaching Sunday school, Ron Korff for concluding 16 years as Sunday school treasurer, and Lynn Stephens for 20 years of service as the director of the board of Christian education. Greg Kahre thanked the anniversary committee and reported that the current money collected in anniversary contributions, including bequests from wills, now totaled over \$127,000.



The year of 1997 also saw some changes in staff as the baton was handed from one saint to another. Loren Doehrmann retired as choir director after 39 years of service, and teacher Sandy Beerman became the new director. Loren thanked the congregation. "It has been the joyous privilege of mine to direct the adult choir of Trinity for 39 years. It has been a wonderful and fulfilling experience. The enthusiasm and faithfulness of the choir members have touched and impressed me deeply. Being able to deliver the Gospel message through the singing voices helped all of us to respond to Jesus' call to make disciples of all nations."





Janet Doehermann retired as the church secretary and thanked the congregation. "I have truly loved the past few years of service to the church and school and have met and worked with many wonderful people. I have especially enjoyed the friendships made with many of the school families." Trisha Letterman became the new office manager and is completing her 25th year of service this year. Delores Heeger retired as the 7th and 8th grade teacher and was replaced by Chelsea Brown.



Besides the church's anniversary, the Ladies Aid celebrated their 100th anniversary of serving the congregation. The LWML adopted and supported St. Louis seminary student Dan Schlensker, a son of the congregation and graduate of the day school. A new lighted church and school sign was installed on the southwest corner of the main driveway and still stands to this day. The school Christmas program was directed by Sandy Beermann, and 540 people gathered to hear the school children sing, play in the band, and play handbells. The elders reported 538 baptized members for the year of 1997 with an average weekly attendance of 243 worshippers.

In his annual report for the year, Pastor Keller gave thanks for the past but also encouraged hope for the future. "What a wonderful celebration it was! But now our eyes must be fixed on the future. God has blessed us with 150 years of proclaiming the Gospel and administering the Sacraments of Christ. But what is in store for the future? Only God knows, but what can we do to prepare for it? How can we address and meet the challenges of what is to come? A long-range planning process needs to be put in place to help guide our congregation in our thinking about who we are and where we are going."



Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Darmstadt in 1997

Plans for Growth

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

In response to Pastor Keller's encouragement for a long-range planning process, 1998 began with the parish planning council appointing a long-range planning committee. The long-range planning committee, chaired by Jeff Sensmeier, met monthly to discuss the ministries and facilities of the church and school for future growth. School enrollment was growing, necessitating more classrooms. To make space, the library was relocated to the Christian Fellowship Room (CFR). Principal Stephen Mearling noted, "God has through His grace brought us into our 144th school year. We have more children in our school now than at any time in our history. We also have separated 1st and 2nd grade for the first time and have welcomed Kelli Schaedig and her husband Harlan to our school family and congregation. The challenges before us at this time may seem immense, but what a blessing it is to be able to be a part of this growth and have the privilege of finding solutions to the challenges God has given us."

At the end of the year, the board of elders proposed, and the voters approved a new position, the Director of Christian Growth (DCG). The DCG would help the congregation and pastor serve youth, adults, and families. He would also assist with Bible classes, community outreach, and teacher training. A rotating staff of 25 teachers and staff served the adult Bible classes and Sunday school which had a weekly attendance of 88.

Two laymen in the congregation received special honors in 1998. Chet Behrman received an Award of Commendation for his book *150 Christmases* at the annual awards banquet of the Concordia Historical Institute at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Many in the congregation remember Chet's days working for the television station and his role as "Uncle Dudley." Chet served as church archivist and historian, and he wrote many humorous skits for church retreats which brought participants out of their shell and revealed their hidden acting talents. Shown below at the awards banquet are Shirley Nicholson speaking with Chet, and Bob Nicholson chatting with Ray Laughbaum.



Ken Temme was chosen by Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to receive the *Christus Vivit* (Christ Is Alive) award which was presented at the seminary's spring commencement. It expresses the faculty's gratitude to God for Ken's many contributions made to the Church through active and dedicated Christian service. During his lifetime, Ken taught Bible class for 65 years, sang in the choir for 70 years, represented the circuit as synodical delegate, served on the synod's board of evangelism, and organized many educational seminars and church retreats. The *Christus Vivit* award represents the highest honor the seminary can bestow on a layman. Ken thanked the congregation for a special dinner and wrote, "I have been part of this body for 62 years, and that is all I am, just a part. You can't honor just one part of the body without honoring the whole. I was just chosen to pick up this award for us all. In synodical circles I'm known as 'That Guy from Darmstadt' and I'm prouder of that than any award. However, let me say this, I will be keeping the medal at my house." Shown on the right is Ken teaching Bible class.



Over this quarter century, the church hosted several high school, college, and seminary choirs and instrumental concerts in the sanctuary. Congregation members often provided a meal before the concert and housing for the students. In January of 1998, The Valparaiso University Chamber Orchestra performed works from Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Bach's *Jesus, Joy of Our Desiring*. Other concerts throughout the years are listed below.

- 1999 - Concordia College-Ann Arbor Wind Ensemble
- 2000 – Concordia Theological Seminary Kantorei for an Easter Choral Vespers
- 2003 – The Lutheran High School Vocal Choir of Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 2006 - The Lutheran High School Concert Band of St. Charles, Missouri
- 2016 – Concordia Theological Seminary Kantorei for an Epiphany Choral Service



In the fall of the school year, Eagle Scout Kevin Kahre entered West Point. The congregation expanded the school staff and called Kelli Schaedig, shown on the left, to teach second grade and direct the adult choir in place of Sandy Beermann so she could focus on music programs in the school. In addition to singing in the adult choir, Sandy directed the school's choir, handbells, annual Christmas program, and Dessert Dinner Theatre.

At its November meeting, the voters adopted the *Hymnal Supplement '98* as a resource for congregational worship. The supplement introduced new hymns and liturgy arrangements for field testing in the LCMS congregations before introducing a successor to the *Lutheran Worship* hymnal in the following decade. Many members enjoyed the "Service of Light" liturgy during midweek services.

In 1999, the long-range planning committee proposed to the voters a strategic planning process called the Mission and Ministry Planning Process (MMPP). Under the auspices of the LCMS Foundation in St. Louis, the MMPP helps congregations define its mission and target and how best to accomplish it. Congregational leadership is tasked to establish goals, critical targets, key impact points, and action plans. The congregation completed two surveys to help establish Trinity's vision for ministry to members and the community. On a Friday evening and Saturday in December, 65 members gathered in the gym under the

direction of Ernie Heinicke of the LCMS Foundation and developed the following mission statement for the church.

United by the Holy Spirit, Trinity Lutheran Church and School joyfully proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ and serves all people with Christian Love.

Shown below are members of Trinity participating in the Mission and Ministry Planning Process.



That same year the long-range planning committee also received voter approval to retain the services of Jack Kinkel and Son, Architects to evaluate the structural integrity and long-range usefulness of the current facilities and to help develop a master plan for future growth through expansion and renovation.



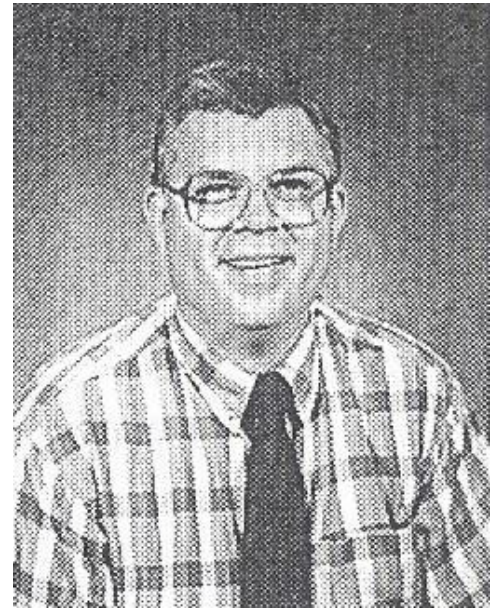
The board of elders, chaired by Bernie Kahre, continued their work toward the DCG position by arranging a 6-month internship for Mark Moog, who was a member of St. Paul Lutheran in Evansville and who was completing his lay ministry degree. After the internship, the congregation called Mark in November to serve as the Director of Christian Growth. As a full-time, non-ordained parish worker, he would assist the pastor in the areas of Youth, Evangelism, Parish Education, Community Outreach, and Family Life ministry. Additional staff was certainly needed as the school enrollment grew to 143 students and the Sunday school and Bible class weekly attendance reached 94.

The church and school music programs continued to grow as well. "Since 1982 our congregation has been blessed with having 49 handbells which make up four octaves of bells. On February 14th we were happy to dedicate a fifth octave which consists of twelve more bells, seven large and five small, for a total of 61 bells. These bells, along with additional tables and coverings, were given in loving memory of the Rev. Omar and Ivera Rau who served Trinity from 1955-1974." The school's spring music festival featured choir, handbells, chimes, band, and song flutes, directed by Jon Patton and Sandy Beermann.

1999 also saw the beginning of the church web site, created by Nathan Kahre, and a new phone system for the church and school, installed by Alan Letterman. The congregation thanked treasurer George Krietemeyer for all his duties to prepare 17 paychecks twice per month, remit all payroll taxes, and pay all the bills for the church and school.

Unfortunately, two servants of the church and school were stricken with severe health afflictions during the year. Stephen Mearling underwent bypass heart surgery and had to resign as principal to reduce his stress level, but he recovered well and continued to teach 5th and 6th grades. Steve reflected, "It has truly been a privilege to serve as your principal these past eight years. Trinity is indeed a very unique place where God's word is taught each and every day and those of us who teach and work here are allowed to be a small part of the children's lives in our school."

Del Somers was teaching a ladies Bible study in her home when she was struck with a brain aneurism and was rushed to the hospital for surgery. After months of recovery, she thanked the congregation and particularly the members of Project Compassion. "Thanks to Project Compassion for all of their help. We had complete meals brought in by members of that group. Their prayers, smiling faces and wonderful food certainly were appreciated. Thanks for your Get-Well cards, calls, visits, and especially the prayers. We love you all very much." Walt and Del Somers



The year of 1999 ended with some apprehension about what would happen to everyone's computer systems when the year rolled over to 2000. Alan Letterman calmed many nerves by providing an informative meeting about what to expect. Pastor Keller noted in his annual report for the year, "There were some dire predictions about what would happen when this year was over, but the false prophets proved to be just that, false! Millennium Fever or Y2K Panic fizzled with the dawn of the new year, and we now wonder 'what was all the fuss about?'"

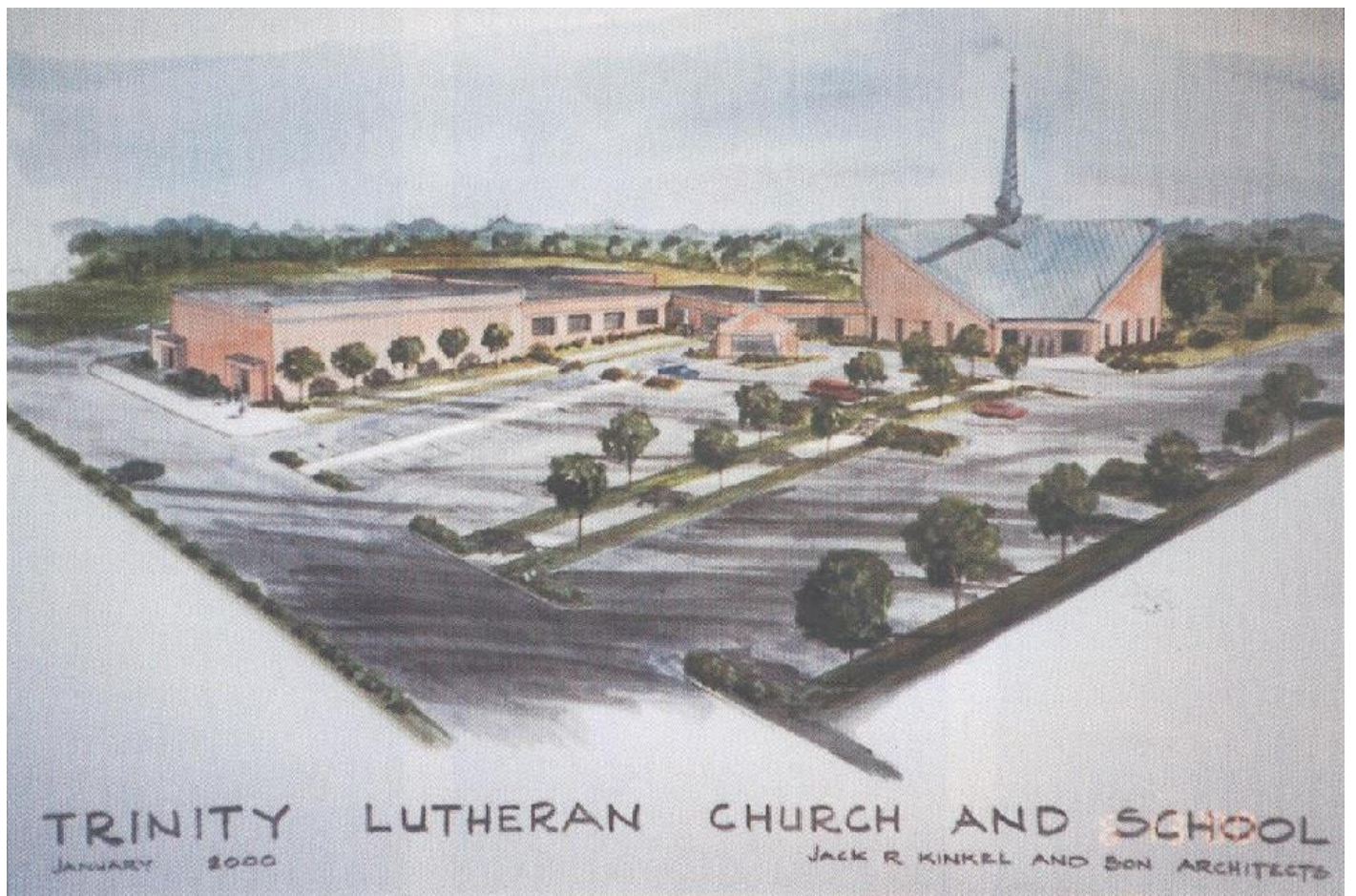
Therefore, the year 2000 began for the church, not with a national panic and disarray, but with several well-ordered Mission and Ministry Planning Process meetings led by Ernie Heinicke of the LCMS Foundation. The congregation chose to pursue seven critical targets: non-active member ministry, facilities and building, ministry to young families, stewardship, youth ministry, communication, and local outreach. The long-range planning committee also recommended, and the voters approved at the February meeting, the Sustained Giving Stewardship Emphasis (SGSE) program. "The purpose of this program is to unite our members in a journey of spiritual growth and challenge to raise major dollars for our congregation's ministry, based on sound Biblical and ethical stewardship principles. With the Holy Spirit's blessings, the Word of God, and the witness of fellow Christians, the intent is to move our members to joyfully and willingly give sacrificially to our clearly defined goals."

At a prayer vigil in the sanctuary on April 29, shifts of congregation members spent hours in prayer throughout the day in preparation for beginning the emphasis on GROWING together in Christ. On June 11, the church kicked off the capital fund campaign with a celebration and commitment dinner at the Bauer House in Darmstadt. Congregation members pledged \$817,000 to the SGSE program over a three-year period toward construction of a new building. The voters also accepted the \$7.5 million dollar proposal from Kinkel and Son, Architects to build a new church and school north of the current parking lot.

Shown below are the members of the Sustained Giving Stewardship Emphasis Program committee.



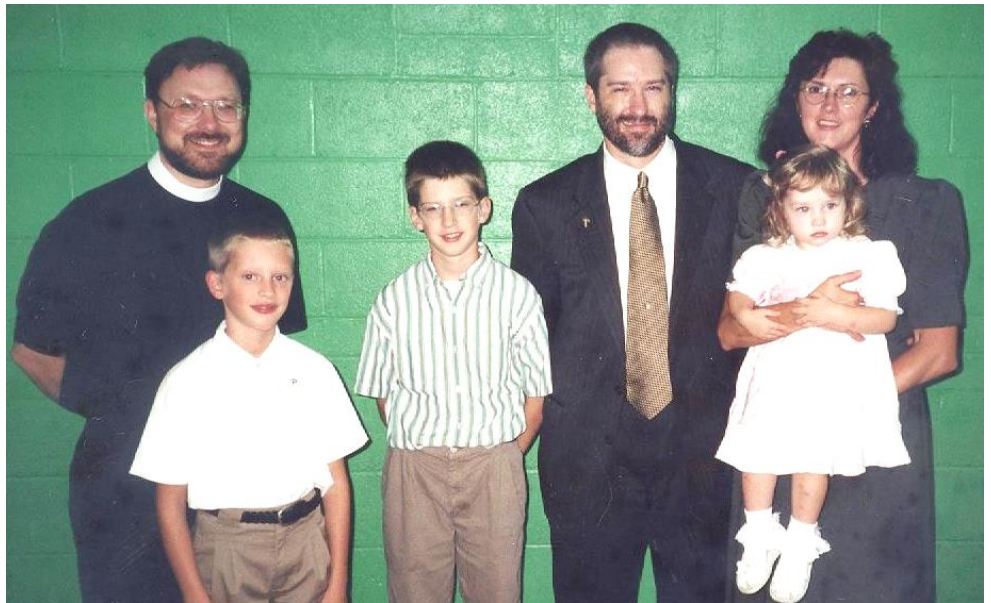
Shown below is a drawing of the planned new church, school, and gymnasium from Kinkel and Son architects.



Below, Dennis and Gloria Clark review the floor plans for the new campus.



The growth of facilities for the school couldn't come fast enough for new principal Tom Wrege, who was called from St. Peter Lutheran in Columbus, Indiana. Shown on the right at the new member reception are Pastor Keller with Principal Tom Wrege, his wife Keven, and their children Coleson, Caleb, and Katie.



The school year began with a separation of grades 3 and 4 into two classrooms with grades 7 and 8 moving to the basement in the CFR. The former teacherage was also converted into a parish house

for office space for DCG Mark Moog and for church meetings such as youth group, quilters, and a new board of parish education which was initiated for educational programs beyond the school.

As part of the critical target for stewardship beyond capital funding, the stewardship board, chaired by Keith Kahre, strove to publicize different organizations in the congregation and opportunities for service. "Three of the most important goals in your Christian life are to discover, develop and use the gifts God has given to each of you. These goals are not reached by attending a workshop, completing a survey, or reading a book. These goals, once established, become a lifestyle. Trinity offers many volunteer opportunities for each of us to discover, develop, and use the gifts God has blessed us with. In 2000 we are going to strive to make all aware of those opportunities." Some of the featured ministries and organizations that year are described below.

Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) – "This group of ladies is affiliated with the International LWML organization and meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Christian Fellowship Room. We have opportunities to attend zone workshops and district and national conventions. We have devotions, topic discussions, collect mites and items for special projects for national and foreign

missions, and sponsor a seminary student. We also do special projects for our home congregation and assist with Lutheran World Relief.” Helen Marie Wortmann

Lutheran Laymen’s League (LLL) – “This group of men is affiliated with the international group based in St. Louis, Missouri, which is the sponsor of the Lutheran Hour. This group meets the 1st Monday of each month at 7:30 PM in the Christian Fellowship Room. Their meetings consist of topic discussion, business, and fellowship. They undertake various projects such as the church sign on HWY 41, prepare and serve the Easter Breakfast, and support the Lutheran Hour Rally. They usually have two ladies’ nights a year, treating their spouses to dinner.” Chuck Fellwock

Over the years, the LLL sponsored many education seminars for the Lutheran community by hosting a variety of speakers and topics with a catered dinner (ministry to the whole man) and musical entertainment in the gym. Some of the seminars are listed below.

1997 – Dr. Walter Rast, Valparaiso University, “Archeology of the Dead Sea and Nearby Cities”

1999 – Dr. Richard Bimler, president of Wheat Ridge Ministries Chicago, “Holy Hilarity”

2001 – Rev. Mark Loest, Concordia Historical Institute, “Luther and the Reformation”

2002 – Dr. Louis Brighton, Concordia Seminary St. Louis, “Revelation and the End of Time”

2003 – Dr. Paul L. Maier, Western Michigan University, “The Odyssey of St. Paul”

2004 – Dr. David Menton, Washington University School of Medicine, “God’s intricate and wonderful creation of the eye, ear, feathers, and hair which reveal His intelligent design”

2005 – Dr. Robert Weise, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, “Playing God – Redesigning Life, bioethical issues of reproduction, cloning, and embryonic stem cells”

Altar Circle – “This group of ladies takes care of all the communion ware, church flowers, Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving decorations and altar linens. The group works closely with the pastor to see that the worship service runs smoothly.” Linda Rae Korff

Church Greeters – “These volunteers welcome our worshippers at all services, pass out bulletins, and assist visitors.” Gloria Arendt

KIT – “Our small group of four members meets nine times a year in each other’s homes. We write a newsletter and send birthday cards to our college students, servicemen and others who are temporarily out of town, or who have just moved out of town, to keep them in touch with what is happening both in the church and in the community. We also let them know they have not been forgotten. About thirty-five letters are mailed each month. The students and servicemen also receive a small gift at Christmas time.” Janet Doehrmann, Mevelyn Feagley, Goldie Kahre, Linda Rae Korff

Sunday school – “The purpose of the Sunday school is to offer assistance to the home in Christian instruction and shall strive to meet the following objectives: To lead the student to a knowledge of the True God, to faith in Jesus Christ as his only Savior and Lord, and to the truths of the Bible so that by a growing knowledge of the Word of God his Christian faith and character are built and developed so that he lives as a member in the Body of Christ and participates in the life and work of the church, the Christian home, and community. This past year our Sunday school staff completed the Indiana District Evaluation and Accreditation for Sunday schools and received a first-class accreditation. We thank our Sunday school staff for their faithful service and dedication!” Stan Temme

Shown on the right are Sunday school superintendent Stan Temme with Karon Wathen, who has served as Sunday school secretary for 50 years.



Quilters - “Trinity Quilters meet in the parish house to make quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Experience is welcome but not necessary. Don’t miss this opportunity to help others and enjoy great fellowship.” Helen Marie Wortmann

Youth League – “This growing group of youths (freshmen in high school through age 21) meets the first and third Sunday of each month at 6:00 PM in the Parish House for fun, fellowship and service. They plan all types of interesting social and spiritual events. They also hold fund-raisers to help support their attendance at Synod sponsored Youth events.” Mark Moog

Prayer Chain – “The Prayer Chain receives, passes on, and prays for prayer requests for members of the congregation, their families, and neighbors. It is available for anyone to use at any time.” Linda Orr

Fun Fund Raisers – “This group, as the name implies, has fun raising funds to help with special projects at the church and school. Through their efforts at the West Side Fall Festival, they now have their own deluxe-wagon stand, serving bratwurst, Italian sausage, burgoo, and drinks. They usually solicit help from the congregation for assistance in filling the long hours during the Festival.” Alan Reininga

Friends in Christ Circle – “This group of ladies arranges all new-member receptions; special dinners for bereaved families and disaster situations.” Hazel English

Shown below are some of the ladies who have served over 100 bereavement meals for our congregation: Hazel English, Vivian Ruff, Linda Rae Korff, Liz Krietemeyer, Linda Brock, Nancy Korff, Gloria Clark, and Kathy Bumb. In 2019, Paula Reininga assumed responsibilities for the meals, shown with Hazel below.



Project Compassion – “Project Compassion has been active at Trinity since 1982 and it provides many services to our members. These services include: home visits to shut-ins, hospital visits, nursing home visits, newborn visits, follow-up family visits after a family death, food preparation for members needing help, Sunday worship tape delivery, birthday greetings to all members over 80, Holiday greetings to senior members and shut-ins, summer picnic for senior members and volunteers, errand running for those who need assistance, and the lending out of durable equipment (crutches, walkers, eggcrate mattresses, gowns, etc.). Volunteers with loving hearts and helping hands are always welcome. Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of every month.” Goldie Kahre

Shown right are some of the Project Compassion members in 1999: Dean Kahre, Pastor Keller, Helen Kahre, Carol Kahre, and Goldie Kahre.



In September of that same year the congregation mourned the death of Goldie Kahre. As a lifelong nurse, she had founded, led, and administrated Project Compassion for 18 years. One of the saints passed on to heaven, but the Lord raised up other saints to carry on the ministry, Dean and Carol Kahre, Ray Laughbaum, Chuck Fellwock, and Liz Krietemeyer who still serve to this day. Project Compassion continues to show compassion through the services above and also hosts an over 65 banquet and educational meetings on such topics as hearing loss, hospice care, and use of new technology.



For the Festival of the Reformation, the congregation hosted the Joint Reformation Service in the sanctuary with a fellowship dinner following in the gym. The combined choirs of the churches of the Evansville east and west circuits sang together as well as the children's choirs from Trinity Lutheran School and Evansville Lutheran School.

At the Loyalty banquet, the congregation recognized and thanked the Sunday school teachers and staff on their five-year anniversary of service: Chuck Fellwock – 15 years, Chet Behrman – 20 years, and Wayne and Karon Wathen – 30 years (shown on the left). Stan Temme received the Sunday school superintendent of the year award from the Indiana District.

Other items of note for 2000: The board of elders completed new guidelines for weddings and funerals. Pastor Keller began offering private confession and absolution before the Saturday evening service. The LWML hosted the District Convention. The cemetery board cut down the trees lining the road in front of cemetery because roots were damaging the tombstones (shown right). The Youth attended the Higher Things youth conference in Laramie, Wyoming. The Fun Fund Raisers raised \$12,142 through the fall festival booth and other contributions. The average worship attendance remained steady at 242, and the weekly Sunday school and Bible class attendance increased to 100.



Shown on the right are Pastor Martin Keller and his wife Sammy with their four sons Erich, Paul, Michael, and Andrew in 2000.



In 2001, the Lord continued to build and grow His Church at Trinity Darmstadt through the preaching of His Word, the Christian education of His people, their outreach to the community, and their stewardship in response to God's gifts.

Besides the regular worship services on Saturday evening and Sunday morning, Pastor Keller began an additional service on the first Wednesday of the month at noon. The service followed the Communion liturgy from the former Lutheran Hymnal (TLH), page 15. The board of elders experimented with a form of continuous Communion for one Sunday, but it was not adopted.

The congregation began addressing the critical targets passed in 2000 for the Mission and Ministry Planning Process. As part of the critical targets for youth and young families, DCG Mark Moog led a time management workshop, led a marriage retreat in the mountains of Tennessee, led a Confirmation retreat at Burdette Park, accompanied ten youth to the synodical youth gathering in New Orleans, and organized a youth picnic for 6th through 12th graders and families. The members of the youth group also participated in a 30-hour fast to raise funds and food for World Vision's hunger drive.

As part of the critical target for stewardship, the board of stewardship, chaired by Darlene Moog, organized cottage meetings for the congregation. 61 families participated and learned about stewardship. Several members expressed concern about continuing the building project when the church was having difficulty meeting the yearly budget and giving the staff adequate pay raises. However, the board of stewardship reported an increase in giving, up 27% over two years, and an initiation of school tuition for members. Half of the pledges to the SGSE campaign had been received and invested in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF).

Besides finances, the Board of Stewardship established a "Faithful Steward Award" to recognize the time and talents of a faithful steward of the congregation each year. "The congregation may submit names of people who meet the following criteria: exhibits a commitment to the mission of Trinity Lutheran Church and School; lifelong servanthood to others through acts of compassion, service and sacrifice to the community and the world; active participation in the study of God's Word through regular church attendance, attendance at Holy Communion, prayer life and Bible study; builds up faith in others."

In 2001, Loren Doehrmann was the first to receive "The Faithful Steward" award. Besides serving as schoolteacher and principal, Loren coached the basketball team, directed the school Christmas program, taught music, directed the adult choir, taught Bible class, served on the board of outreach, and participated in church retreats and the life of the congregation.

A plaque with the names of the other yearly recipients of "The Faithful Steward" award hangs on the wall at the entrance to the church narthex. Their year of recognition and notable faithful service to the church is listed below.

- 2001 – Loren Doehrmann – schoolteacher 37 years, principal 35 years, choir director 39 years
- 2002 – Ken Temme – Bible class teacher 65 years, organized retreats/seminars, chairman, elder
- 2003 – Jerry Korff – chairman of properties, elder, LLL, painted everything on the premises
- 2004 – Chet Behrman – Sunday school teacher 20 years, church archivist and author, choir
- 2005 – Janet Doehrmann Temme – organist 40 years, director of handbells, church secretary
- 2006 – George Krietemeyer – church treasurer 15 years, board of finance, LLL
- 2007 – Ivan Wortmann – Sunday school teacher, treasurer 15 years, chairman, board of education, LLL
- 2008 – Jim Kahre – board of stewardship, elder, chairman, LLL, LMAC, District Board of Directors, synodical representative, Orphan Grain Train, New Guinea mission field

As part of the critical target for local outreach, the board of outreach, chaired by Helen Marie Wortmann (shown on the right with husband Ivan, faithful steward for 2007) and working with DCG Mark Moog, mailed 462 invitations to the community, inviting them to Holy



Week services. The Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ spent a weekend at Trinity where their youth and the congregation members completed a community campaign, knocking on over 400 doors. Prospects received follow up visits and mailings. The board began a witnessing booth at the 4-H county fair where congregation members engaged 450 people with conversation and tracts. Visitors to church were identified and greeted, a tract carousel was installed in the narthex, and new members received an orientation packet. 109 children attended Vacation Bible School. Average church attendance for the year increased to 250.

As part of the critical target for building and facilities, the long-range planning committee reported that the surveying, drainage, and ground core sampling work was completed for the site of the new facility. The board of properties, chaired by Jerry Korff, installed new carpeting in the church sanctuary and organized a workday for the Outdoor Worship Area to fix the crumbling brick. Shown on the right are Jerry Korff, faithful steward for 2003, and his wife Linda Rae, Director of the Altar Circle.



As a part of social ministry, stewardship, and local outreach, Dottie Kahre and Kris Kahre of the board of social ministry revived the congregation's chicken supper. The congregation served the community a delicious fried chicken meal in the gym with proceeds going to the church and a local need. Shown right are Anitra Gann and Theresa Hoffherr and shown below are Linda Brock, Wilma Fehd, and Ruth Mans serving at the chicken supper.



The board of public relations, chaired by Alan Letterman, initiated a bi-annual rummage sale. Congregation members donated their old clothes, furniture, kitchen wares, books, and antiques for sale to the community, who lined up from the parish house to the gym doors to purchase new treasures. Proceeds went to the church, school, and a local mission.

The school continued growing with a record enrollment of 151. However, Tom Wrege noted, "The goals for higher growth are always to share the Gospel message and bring others to Christ." As part of the critical target for improving communication, the school began publishing the EAGLE newsletter,

the website was updated for witnessing, internet was provided in every classroom, and the children sang in worship many times. Grades 5-8 were departmentalized for teaching, and speech and drama teams were initiated. The school also began an accreditation process. Of special note, Stephen Mearling was recognized in the worship service for 30 years of teaching.

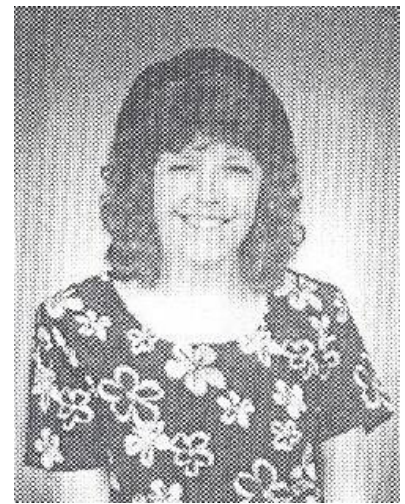
Below are school staff for 2001: sitting Principal Tom Wrege, Office Manager Trisha Letterman, Teachers Donna Swallow, Marilyn Mearling, Kelli Schaedig, and Phyllis Dardeen; standing Custodian Ken Scheller, Teachers Steve Mearling and Chelsea Brown, and Director of Christian Growth Mark Moog.

The year of 2001 was marked by two tragedies, one in the school and one for the nation. Debbie Rothrock, beloved teacher of the preschool was suddenly called home to heaven. The school children sang at her funeral, and Tom Wrege expressed his feelings. "Miss Debbie Rothrock was a beautiful



human being and Christian teacher. Her leaving us has created a void at Trinity Lutheran School. Time and time again in the last ten days I have heard it said that because we have Jesus and because we know that Miss Debbie is in heaven, our faith in Him is what has held us all together."

The nation also reeled from the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers and Pentagon. Pastor Keller wrote, "September 11, 2001: A day that will live in infamy. 2 passenger airplanes were crashed into the World Trade Center destroying those Twin Towers and inflicting great damage to surrounding buildings. This is a unique moment in our country's history and in our faith life. As individual Christians, we have the opportunity to show others what we believe. Our response, as individuals, should be repentance, knowing that for our sins we deserve nothing but temporal and eternal punishment. We should also have faith that God does not treat us as our sins deserve, but for the sake of his Son Jesus, passes over our sin and forgives us. We also pray and ask that the Triune God preserve us from further attacks, and that He use His servant who bears the sword, the Governing Authority (Romans 13), in this case the President, to defend us from all danger and punish those who perpetrated this crime, so that we may live in peace and quietness."



At the end of the year, Pastor Keller reflected again on God's grace, goodness, and deliverance for Trinity Darmstadt and the nation. "Our Triune God has been good to us this past year. In spite of the terrorist violence of September 11, our faith has not been shaken in the belief that He will continue to care for us in the future. Our life as a congregation is in His hands. We will remain faithful to His Word, rooted in Holy Scripture and receiving His life-giving gifts of the Holy Sacraments of Christ."

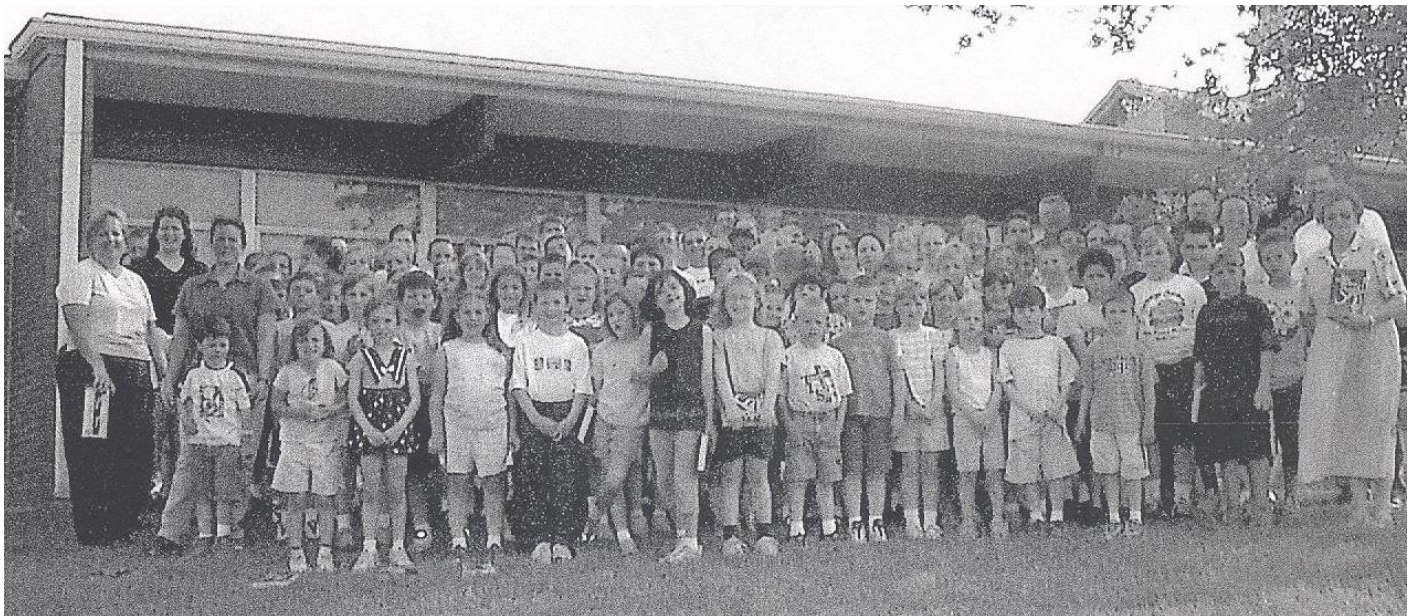
Shown above is the church in 2001.

Shown below are the bell choir in 2001, directed by Janet Doehrmann.



In 2002 the congregation mourned the loss of another servant of the church and school when Loren Doehrmann passed away on May 10. Born in Iowa and a graduate of Concordia Seward in Nebraska, Loren and his wife Janet came to Trinity Darmstadt in 1957. Loren taught grades 7-8 for 37 years and served as principal for 35 years. The congregation, circuit, and community filled the church for his funeral. Cantor Randy Sensmeier, a son of the congregation and graduate from the school, played the organ and directed the choir. Following the service, Loren's wife Janet thanked the congregation. "Your outpouring of love and support given to Loren and me the past several months has been overwhelming. I cannot possibly mention every act of kindness shown to us, but heading the list are the many prayers lifted on our behalf."

2002 also marked the beginning of the 150th year of the school teaching the Christian faith to the children of the congregation and community. Principal Tom Wrege wrote, "Trinity Lutheran School of Darmstadt, Indiana will soon begin its celebration of 150 years of educating children when its doors open on the first day of school for the 2002-2003 school year on 12 August. With 150 students ranging from 3 to 14 years old, the preschool to grade 8 school is known throughout the community for its family atmosphere, its Christian emphasis, and its excellence in education. Classroom sizes are small, averaging about 12 per room. As one walks into the building, it is at times possible to witness the unusual scene of the older children caring for the little ones." The school classes for 2002-2003 are shown below.



After much effort and labor of the principal, staff, and board of education, chaired by Lynn Stephens, the school received the National Lutheran Schools Accreditation. Grades 3, 6, and 8 were administered the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) test. School enrollment decreased slightly due to a rise in tuition costs. Of special note, the 7th and 8th grade girls' volleyball team, coached by Alan Letterman, went undefeated for the entire season.

The voters agreed to build the new church/school facility in phases, beginning with the central hub. Estimated cost of Phase 1 was \$2.5 million and would require a loan of \$1.7 million at 6.25% interest from the LCEF with loan payments of \$150,000 per year for 20 years. Groundbreaking was initially scheduled for September. However, the long-range planning committee recommended a delay of the building project until 2003 for the following reasons:

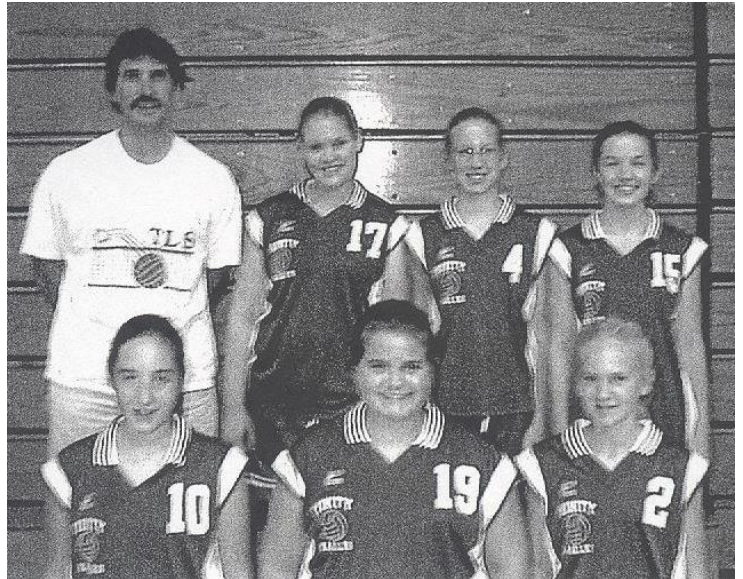
“A sluggish economy prohibits a phase 2 of a capital fund drive; lower enrollment in the school means that a budget surplus for mortgage payments would not be achieved which prohibits a loan from the LCEF; the bids from construction contractors were 15% higher than the targeted \$2.5 million estimated for phase 1. Therefore, the project is not feasible at this time.”

At the end of the year, Pastor Keller reflected, “Our building program had to be delayed due to higher-than-expected costs and lower than expected overall income. Not wanting to burden our congregation with a heavy debt and unmanageable loan repayments, we decided the thing to do was to wait. God in His good time will let us know when the time is right.”

In 2003, the school continued the celebration of its 150th anniversary. Principal Tom Wrege wrote, “Trinity Lutheran School is now an officially accredited school, a distinction that is very lofty indeed, but one where we give all credit and glory to God! He has enabled us to grow bit by bit for over 150 years to be a place of mission and learning. The mission is His – building (or in some cases, beginning) a strong foundation through teaching the faith, as well as strong academics and extra-curricular activities. Our goal is to graduate Christian citizens for the world!”

Marilyn Mearling reached a milestone and celebrated 25 years in teaching. “Dear Trinity Families, I would like to thank you for your very kind wishes and special gift in recognition of my 25 years in Lutheran School ministry. I feel very humbled and extremely appreciative of the love you have shown me over the years. Trinity is my home and my ‘other’ family, and your children have been my children, too. There is nowhere else I would rather serve, and I hope that we can continue this partnership for as many years as God has planned.”

A portrait of Loren Doehrmann was unveiled at the school’s 150th anniversary dinner and was hung in the school hallway. Evelyn Steinkuhl again used her artistic talents and made paintings of the school and bell for the 150th anniversary. After four years serving as first grade teacher, Kelli Schaedig moved to Michigan for her husband Harlan’s job transfer.



The congregation conducted another successful rummage sale, collecting \$1900 for the church, school, and charity. Alan Letterman thanked the congregation. “The Stewardship Board would like to thank all of the volunteers that assisted with the Rummage Sale! There is a long list of people that donated items, sorted and priced them, and helped sell them. What a wonderful use of Time, Talents and Treasures! Many of the people from the community commented on how nice our Rummage Sale was and that they would be back next year. 10% of the proceeds will go to a local charity, 45% will go to the church general fund, and 45% will go to the school general fund.” Shown below is the rummage sale for the year of 2019.



The congregation was sad to receive the resignation of DCG Mark Moog who left to begin serving as a lay minister at Trinity Lutheran Church in Henderson, Kentucky. Tom Wrege thanked Mark for his servant heart. “In service to Trinity, Mark has preached when Pastor Keller was out of town, he has led children’s messages, has taught Bible study, has visited shut-ins and those in the hospital, he has been our Youth leader and taken them to youth events, has worked diligently with the Elders, has been worship assistant, has instructed Confirmation, has been very visible within the school, has worked with our Speech and Drama Club, has assisted in In-Service programs, as well as countless other aspects of what goes on day in and day out. And as any child within the school family can attest – they truly love him!” Many in the congregation also remember Mark for his good humor, quick wit, encouraging newsletter articles, and trivia contests. Mark went on to serve in the Holy Ministry by entering the Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO) program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He was ordained at Trinity Henderson and serves there to this day.

That same year, Stan Temme, son of the congregation and graduate of the school, moved to Ft. Wayne to begin his education for the Holy Ministry at Concordia Theological Seminary. He and his wife Linda thanked the congregation. “We have been truly blessed here at Trinity and very much appreciate the love and support you have given us. No matter where the Lord takes us in ministry, we will always remember the Christian fellowship, care, and love we have shared with our brothers and sisters in Christ at Trinity Darmstadt.”

The congregation remembered in its prayers Lieutenant Kevin Kahre, recent graduate of West Point, who was deployed north of Baghdad, Iraq.

The building program remained on hold. The long-range planning committee reported that Phase 1 may need to be scaled back. The committee felt that 50% of the funds should be on hand or committed and the budget must support a line item for debt retirement. The long-range plans for building and growth would have to come in the Lord’s time.

A Change of Plans

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

“What is God’s will for us as a congregation? Only God knows! We may think we know, but someone else may have a different read on what God’s will is for us. He has not revealed a specific blueprint for what we should do, whether it has to do with staffing or building or anything else. He has only given us a general plan, which he has given to His whole church on earth: Make disciples by baptizing and teaching them the whole Word of Christ. And His promise is that He will be with us to the End. We cannot know with certainty that what we have planned is God’s will. We use the gifts He has given us to make our plans, the gifts of reason, love, good minds, and sound planning, and then commit it to God’s hands, saying, ‘If it be your will, O Lord, bring it to fulfillment.’ In our life together as a congregation, let us humbly acknowledge our limited knowledge of the will of God. Let us not belittle one another as lacking faith or being selfish if they do not share our conception of God’s will for our future. As fervently as we may believe that we know the will of God, let us humbly acknowledge that the firm foundation on which we stand is Christ and Him crucified, not our own reason or strength or plan.” Pastor Keller

In 2004, following the departure of Mark Moog, the congregation called Jeremy Zieroth from Concordia River Forest to serve as Director of Christian Growth and Director of Music. His duties were to serve as choir and handbell director, play for all Saturday and midweek services, and share organ playing on Sunday with Janet Doebrmann, now Janet Temme. He was also responsible for all youth and evangelism activities, parish education, and Vacation Bible School.

Under Jeremy’s direction that year, the youth participated in a Bible study on life issues, sang Valentine grams, skied at Paoli Peaks, served at Lenten dinners and VBS, raised funds for the national youth gathering by having a carwash, and enjoyed fellowship at a lock-in, a trip to Holiday World, and a bonfire and hayride.

As weekly worship attendance decreased to 214, the boards of elders, outreach, and publicity worked to increase attendance and awareness of the congregation in the community through an initiative called “Lambs for Christ.” The congregation held a Mission and Ministry Planning Process workshop to review and continue the seven critical targets. Though 98% of the SGSE commitments had been received, the building program remained on hold. Because a budget deficit required cuts to staff salaries and benefits, the congregation instituted a Special Solicitation Deficit Reduction Fund Drive.



Fifty members of the congregation attended the movie, *The Passion of Christ*. Pastor Keller remembered, “This was a tremendously moving and powerful film. It graphically showed the suffering of our Lord Jesus, his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the cruelty of the crucifixion, and how much our Savior endured to take away our sins.”

Kindergarten teacher Phyllis Dardeen was recognized for her service. “Thank you to Trinity Lutheran Church for the recognition and monetary gift in acknowledgement of my 25 years in the teaching ministry.”

Seminarian Stan Temme thanked the congregation and the LWML for their yearly support. “Thank you for your prayers and loving support as I study for the holy ministry. Your generosity is a constant reminder to me of our Savior’s abounding love and your desire to extend His kingdom of grace to all people. May God continue to bless you with His gifts in the same way that you have blessed our family.”



The year ended with a record snow fall of 22 inches and sub-zero temperatures, necessitating the cancelation of the Christmas Eve and Day services. As is typical in southern Indiana, it had all melted away a week later.

In 2005, principal Tom Wrege accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church in Jackson, Michigan. In 2013, while at Trinity Lutheran School in Utica, Michigan, Tom was the only LCMS principal chosen by the National Association of Elementary School Principals to be among the 61 "National Distinguished Principals."

Steve Mearling resumed his former duties as principal. The Special Solicitation Deficit Reduction Fund Drive was successful, and the congregation restored school staff salaries. Steve thanked the



congregation, "On behalf of the teaching staff, I would like to thank the congregation for the wonderful check we all received. Each teacher who received a reduction in salary last year was given a check as full repayment of that salary reduction. This year's salaries also contain that repayment plus a raise. A BIG thank you to everyone who donated to the fund to repay salaries and also to all of you, the members of Trinity, for your support."

School Staff for 2005 are shown above: Top Row - Principal Tom Wrege and teachers Steve Mearling, Phyllis Dardeen, Stephanie Wargel, Sara Korte, and Sarah Wallace; Bottom Row – teachers Sara Williams, Leah Hoffherr, Connie Walts, and Marilynn Mearling. Shown below are custodians Tom and Doris Turpin.

Jeremy Zieroth continued his work as DCG and director of music. Six members of the congregation went on a Servant's Heart Mission trip to Guatemala, the youth attended a servant event in Junction City, Kansas, and 70 children attended Vacation Bible School. The handbell choir had 13 ringers with 3 backups, and the vocal choir had 14 singers. The congregation enjoyed special music at its services for Easter, Confirmation, Mission festival, Reformation, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

In October, the congregation met to address where it would be in 10 years. The special meeting addressed reaching the growing population, increasing Sunday school attendance, and increasing participation in church and school activities and service. The congregation again hosted the Joint Reformation service, followed by a fellowship meal in the gym. The board of stewardship educated the congregation with a Bible study and sermon series entitled "Using God's gifts of Time, Talents, and Treasures for the Community, Church, School, and Family."

The mission quilt committee dedicated 50 quilts, bringing their total to 141. The LLL and other congregation members also participated in works of mercy by collecting for the Orphan Grain Train.



Sunday school and Bible class teachers for 2005 are shown below.



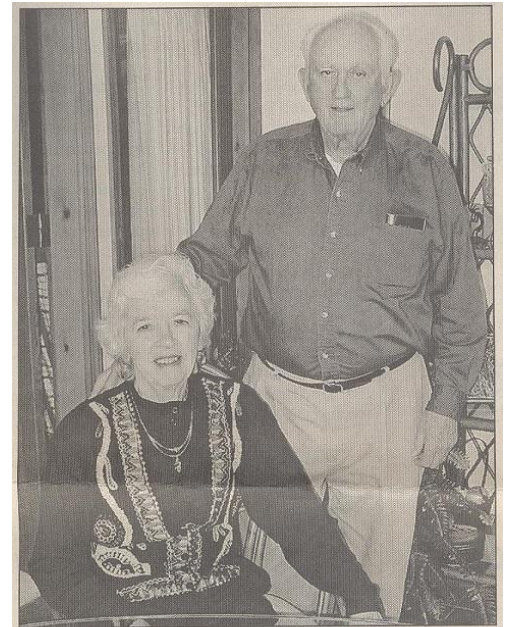
Adult Choir and Handbell Ringers for 2005 are shown below.



Shirley Nicholson (shown on the right), former writer for the “Darmstadt Reporter,” wrote the book *Darmstadt, the Little Town that Could*, a book of the history of Darmstadt with many personal stories. A few years later, she authored the humorous book *Thoughts While Waiting in the Doctor’s Office: The Funny Side of Life*.

At the February voters meeting in 2006, the congregation discussed moving the worship service time to 9:00 AM with Sunday school and Bible class afterward in order to increase Bible Class/Sunday School participation and so choir members and handbell players would not have to leave Bible class early for practice; however, the proposed change was disapproved by the voters.

The congregation completed a survey for review by the board of elders and church leadership. Among the things the members thought Trinity did well were visitor friendly, good music program, good Christian school, Project Compassion, strong Lutheran tradition, and solid preaching and teaching of the Gospel. There were suggestions for hymn selection and timely sermon ideas, regular contact by pastor/elders, caution about cliques and gossip, starting another Bible class on Sunday, handling of prayer requests, and announcements at the beginning of the service.



ANNE SCHLEPER/Courier & Press
Shirley Nicholson wrote “Darmstadt: The Little Town That Could” with help from her husband, Bob.



DENNY SIMMONS / Courier & Press
Barber Ron Korff of Darmstadt, Ind., finally gets a moment to sit in his barber chair and shoot the breeze with his oldest customer, Edwin Semsmeier, 100, also of Darmstadt, on Wednesday afternoon. Korff celebrated his 50th anniversary of cutting hair by putting down his shears and spending the whole day partying with his friends, who also happen to be his customers, at his Village Square Barber Shop.

At its May meeting, the voters approved the adoption of the Lutheran Service Book (LSB) as the new hymnal. Members were given the opportunity to donate hymnals in memory or thanksgiving of loved ones. The LSB was dedicated and first used in October.

The items remaining from the spring rummage sale were given to the Orphan Grain Train to help the victims in the gulf from hurricane Katrina. Also in 2006, Ron Korff, shown on the left, celebrated his 50th year as a barber, both in the military and in the town of Darmstadt.

At the end of the school year in 2007, Pastor Keller reflected on

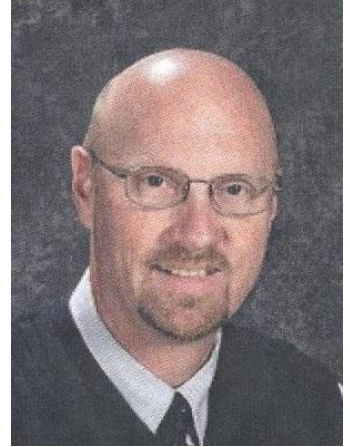
his last child to graduate from Trinity. “Trinity has been extremely good for our children, Erich, Paul, Michael and Andrew. I cannot imagine them elsewhere. We drive by an excellent public school (Cynthia Heights) every day to take them to an even better school which bears the name of our congregation, Trinity. They have been nurtured with a caring and loving faculty. They have had the privilege of relating to children as many as 11 years younger than themselves, when they read to younger children or pair up during chapel. They have been sheltered from the pressures which our world puts on middle school kids with respect to the opposite sex. They have been taught to look at the world from a Christian point of view, namely that God created all things in heaven and earth, that Christ gave his life that we might have life, that the Holy Spirit leads us to follow Christ, and that we forgive as we have been forgiven. Our children have been in classrooms with small numbers of students (10 or 12) so that personal attention can be given to each

and in which children can help each other. I heartily recommend Trinity for any parent who is looking for an excellent education in a caring, safe environment.”

At the end of that same school year, Steve Mearling retired for the second time from his duty as principal. “I’m looking forward very much to the new school year in August when we will welcome a new principal and many new students to our Trinity family. We will also welcome the many challenges that a new school year will bring with it. The most gratifying part of my ministry as your principal was the opportunity to work with so many dedicated teachers, parents, students, school board members, congregational members, and friends of Trinity. The talents you all exhibit and the many hours of your time you freely give are what makes Trinity a very special place to teach and serve. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.”

Wesley Wrucke accepted the call to be the new principal. “I look forward to what God has in store for TLS in the future. He has blessed us for 155 years, and I am confident that the Gospel message will continue to be shared for many years to come as we ‘Transform Lives’ with Christ at the heart of all we do.”

The spring chicken supper continued to grow with the addition of a country store. Dottie Kahre announced, “Please use the talents that God has given you and make something for the COUNTRY STORE to sell at the Chicken Supper. Some of you can paint beautiful pictures, some of you can work wonders with a piece of wood, others can sew, still others can make jellies and other food items, some of you have a green thumb and could pot plants. We want and need any craft you can make.” The chicken supper that year was a huge success. Dave Ellison provided and prepared all the chicken at no cost to the church. The congregation served 600 people and made \$9,329 from the dinner, country store, and a match from Thrivent.



To improve communication, an Every-Member Call List was established to aid in getting special pertinent information to the church membership in a timely manner. Sara VanStone and Dottie Kahre served as captains of approximately 15 lady volunteers.

New chairman, Alan Letterman, encouraged the congregation in its giving. “We are nearing the end of the fiscal year 2006-2007. To remind you, last July the Voter’s assembly passed a budget with approximately a \$50,000 deficit. At this time we are very close to balancing the budget! We must remain diligent in this effort to make sure that all bills are paid and commitments are met.” To that end the board of stewardship began publishing stewardship sentences in the bulletin and stewardship articles in the newsletter. The board also hosted the stewardship seminar “Living in His Image,” by Dave Ramsey, attended by 90 members. Shortly thereafter, God did provide for His Church through the bequest of the sainted Frances Vette. The Vette estate established an endowment of \$1 million dollars to be managed by the Lutheran Foundation. Trinity was designated to receive the annual interest with 75% going to the General Fund and 25% going to Missions.

At the annual Loyalty banquet in November, the congregation celebrated its 160th anniversary. The banquet after the service again featured Chet Behrman’s skit “The Voters and the Ladies Aid Meeting” with District President Rev. Tim Sims as speaker. Del Somers and Bernie Kahre were recognized for singing in choir for 50 years.

At the end of the year, Wes Wrucke reflected on his first months as principal. “What better place to transform, grow, nurture and develop disciples than here at Trinity Lutheran School. Each day we have the opportunity to share the Gospel message, be in the Word, and assist each child in applying their developing discipleship in their daily life. It is truly a joy to share the love of Jesus with the children, but we would be remiss if we stopped there. It is our task as congregational members, parents, and teachers to encourage our children to share what they have learned. They need to transform their head knowledge into daily practice. Our children should be encouraged to be bold in their words and actions that proclaim Christ as Savior, and not reject Him.”

The congregation would also have an opportunity to show what they had learned, transform their head knowledge into daily practice, and encourage one another in their words and actions as their faith in their Savior Jesus Christ was soon tested.

A Time of Testing

*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,
for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (James 1:2-3)*

In the year 2008, the congregation lost another one of its beloved saints. On February 20, while at handbell practice in the balcony, Janet Doehrmann Temme collapsed from a brain aneurism. She was rushed to the hospital but died on the way at the age of 75. Pastor Keller remembered her dearly. "Janet was a vibrant, joyful, talented woman who was dearly loved by those who were privileged to be her family and friends. She had been at Darmstadt for 50 years, coming when her first husband, Loren, was called to be our principal. I would much rather she be here with us, but God had other plans and it is in his infinite wisdom that the Lord called Janet to her eternal rest."

The church leadership hosted three congregational forums in February with brief presentations from the pastor, principal, chairman, and the long-range planning committee to collect ideas and formulate planning for building a new facility. Action items from the meetings included developing a business plan, financing suggestions, and reviewing construction plans. It was noted that the budget passed by the voters included many challenges. It was anticipated that the congregation may have to borrow funds from the line of credit in order to pay the bills. The weekly worship attendance for the previous year had decreased to 190, and the school enrollment reflected a loss of 30 students with 77 enrolled. The school staff was reduced in order to return to multi-grade classrooms. A survey of school families noted strengths of family atmosphere, caring teachers, and small class sizes but concerns about the facility, technology, and cost. Principal Wes Wrucke reported, "Our congregation can no longer afford to supplement the difference between what is brought in by fees and tuition and the cost of the school budget. There are many challenges ahead for our church and school. Change must happen for us to continue to be a viable mission of the area. God has blessed us so much over the past 161 years, I am confident He will continue to guide us to be what He wishes us to be as we seek to proclaim Christ and serve all people in love." George Krietemeyer announced his upcoming retirement as treasurer. Shown on the left are George and his wife Liz, who still serves as one of the counters to this day.



Sensing uncertainty and unrest in the congregation, Pastor Keller noted, "This is a time of severe testing for our congregation and school, and for each of us individually. We cannot let the Evil Foe prowl among us like a wolf in sheep's clothing, wreaking havoc and devouring Christ's precious souls entrusted to our care. We must aim our spiritual weapons at Satan, and not each other." Principal Wrucke also recognized a time of testing. "We all have had or will have some moments in our lives that test our faith. The past few weeks for me personally would easily fit into that statement. During these times I find myself thinking of Stephen. One lesson of Stephen to me is that God, in His wisdom, will take us, no matter what our role is, and use us to be part of His plan. He finds a place for each of us to be His witness and to serve Him."

That spring, the quilters dedicated another 50 tie-quilts and shipped them to the Lutheran World Relief Mission Field. Trinity and Immanuel held a Joint Ascension Service with Pastor Horstmeyer preaching and Pastor Keller as liturgist. The congregations combined for choir, brass, and handbells. As part of the critical targets, the congregation formed two task forces: a new member task force for ministry and assimilation of new members and a young family's task force for ministry and retention. Cleoramae Stunkel became a regular teacher of the Sarah Bible Class which met weekly for refreshments, fellowship, and Bible study.

On July 8, following a parish planning council meeting, Pastor Keller returned home, but shortly thereafter he was taken by ambulance to the hospital. After evaluation he received a stress test and was

counseled by doctors, family, and the circuit visitor to take a week of rest and recuperation. A follow up doctor appointment confirmed that it was a stress related incident with no cardiac or arterial disease. Chairman Alan Letterman advised the congregation, "It is a fact that almost every liturgical church from nearly every denomination is facing issues like declining attendance, financial concerns, and pressures to 'change'. It simply isn't 'trendy' to attend a church like Trinity. We haven't existed for 150 years by being trendy. We haven't had a school for 150 years because it is trendy. We do these things because we are committed to the mission. Pray for our church, our school, and our mission. Prayerfully consider how you can serve God by serving the church, school, or your neighbor."

In the fall, the board of stewardship conducted a three-week Bible study and sermon series, entitled "Maturing as Stewards through Faith, Love, and Hope." The speaker for Celebration Sunday was Larry Jung, executive of finance for the Indiana District.

At the end of the year, Jeremy Zieroth accepted a call to Gethsemane Lutheran in Lemay, Missouri as director of music and family ministry. He and his wife Hattie thanked the congregation. "Our time here with you has certainly been very blessed. We have made many good friends, and some have even become like a family to us. We appreciate all you have done for us."

At the beginning of 2009, the congregation hired Matthew Wilson for a part time position as director of music. His former experience was as a director of music in the ELCA. His duties at Trinity were to play organ at all the services and direct the adult choir and handbells. After the retirement of George Krietemeyer, Mark Pries graciously volunteered to serve as treasurer for the congregation and still serves to this day.

Principal Wrucke gave his perspective of the church's ministry through the day school. "As Trinity Lutheran School seeks to move ahead with planning the new school year, I see a difficult task of planning for the future when the fiscal uneasiness of the congregation is playing a significant role in the outcome of those decisions. We have reached a point in our tuition fees where we risk losing families because they do not have the financial resources to continue to send their children to our school with another raising of the tuition we charge. That is a simple reality of the times, but if we do not collect all monies owed to our school, set a tuition that is close to per child cost, we may not be able to provide the education that people are seeking and pay fairly those who work in the school ministry. We will need to take another long look at how we can be functional but not straining on the budget of the congregation and the families we serve. It is a challenge indeed, a challenge that is frustrating to many, including me." Chairman Alan Letterman echoed his concerns for the congregation. "The line of credit is nearly exhausted. We have accumulated \$147,000 of debt on the Line of Credit to cover the deficits of the past few years. We are anticipating a deficit budget of more than \$100,000 for the next fiscal year."

At a special voters meeting on March 29, a motion was made and accepted to keep the day school open. Other approved motions were to contact delinquent members and members of school aged children not in the school and develop a balanced budget. A revitalization process with the Indiana District to look at a congregation's past, present, and an outline for the future was postponed to a later date.

That summer, Pastor Keller received and accepted a call to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Brownstown, Indiana. After serving at Trinity for 15 years, he expressed his feelings for the congregation. "I will miss Darmstadt, our congregation, and each of you. But I know that though we part, we remain united in the mystical Body of Christ. If death cannot separate us from each other in Christ, certainly distance cannot. God be with you till we meet again."

Shortly thereafter, the congregation called Rev. Robert Reinhardt as Intentional Interim Minister (IIM). The IIM specifically guides a congregation through the steps of healing and hope in preparation for renewed ministry before calling a resident pastor. Pastor Reinhardt, shown on the right, stated, "Our work together for this next year or so is an opportunity to refocus our direction as a congregation and to seek God's purpose for this community."

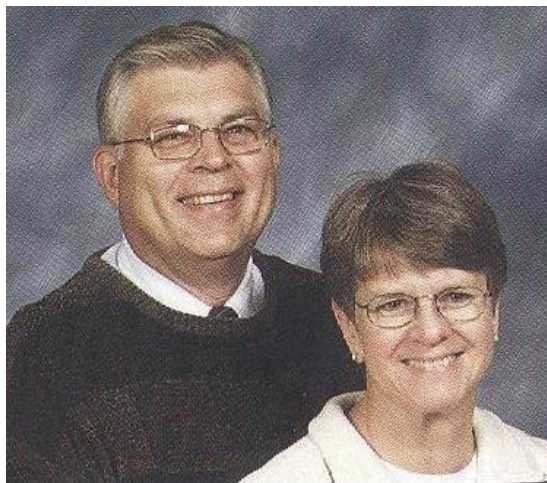


While we determine that focus (God's mission in Darmstadt), we will devote ourselves to prayer and planning."

That fall, the school opened with 48 students and further staff cuts. The call for teacher Stephen Mearling was revised to teach half time and serve as parish assistant half time. The voters also approved a committee to investigate the formation of a Day Care Ministry. The average weekly worship attendance for the year dropped to 112 with 468 baptized members.

In 2010, the congregation was encouraged to submit its joys and sorrows for publication in the newsletter, called "Cheers and Tears." Some of the "Cheers and Tears" that year are written below.

"Cheers to Sara Korte, (shown on the right) our 1st and 2nd grade teacher for her excellence in teaching school, and dedication to our church – bells, choir, LWML, Sunday school, church suppers, door to door evangelism canvassing, and the list goes on with her sweet disposition."



"Tears to Steve Mearling who is leaving us. Thanks for your dedication for 35 years to our church and school – always filling in as principal when needed for all the transitions through the years. The students, faculty, members and especially the seniors will definitely miss you. Wishing you a blessed

Retirement! God be with You!" Steve and his wife, Marylin, who also retired that year after 30 years teaching, are shown on the left.

"Cheers to Hazel English, who organizes the Bereavement Dinners after a funeral. She has a group of ladies whom she can rely on to help her make a special luncheon for the family and friends of the deceased. She has done 53 dinners to date."

"Cheers to Karon Wathen for 40 years of service as Sunday school secretary."

"Cheers to Chuck Fellwock who received the President's Gold Volunteer Service Award from Lutherans for Habitat (500 hours service) and Jim Kahre who received the President's Lifetime Volunteer Service Award from Lutherans for Habitat (1000 hours service)."

The congregation completed a survey with the primary question being "What activity have you enjoyed the most while attending Trinity?" Of the 53 respondents, 43% most enjoyed Bible class, 16% music, 13% attending weekly worship, 13% children's ministry, 11% fellowship, and 4% community outreach.

In the fall of that year, chairman Alan Letterman reported on news that left the congregation in great sorrow and tears. "On August 1, at a special voter's meeting, it was decided that after 157 years of operation that the school would be closed immediately. This was a terribly difficult thing to do, but it was the proper action. The school was founded in 1853 to meet the educational needs of the children of the congregation. The past couple of years have been fraught with rumors of closing and a severe economic downturn. These factors created a 'perfect storm' that lead to a severe decline in enrollment. In the end, it was not about whether there would be enough money in a fiscal budget to cover the costs of the school, it was about the education of the students. Would Trinity congregation be doing the best for the children in a situation where there were only 20 students spread across 6 grades (preschool through 3rd grade)? Not if there are no more than 5 to a class. In the end, the best for our children was to close the school and let them be educated elsewhere. A short, farewell ceremony for our school, entitled 'Fairwell to my Friend,' will be held after

church on September 12. That will be a chance for us to thank our friend for being there for us, for our parents, our children, and our community. God blessed us with a school for 157 years!”



Shown above is the painting of the day school by Evelyn Steinkuhl.



After years of work by the Lutheran Mission Action Council (LMAC), the Lutheran Community Outreach Center (LCOC) on Michigan street in Evansville was dedicated on Sunday, September 12. The 6200 square foot facility was occupied by the Lutheran Community Food Pantry, Bethesda Lutheran Communities, and the Lutheran Counseling Center. The main meeting room, which serves as a place for Bible study, worship, meetings for Lutheran churches, and education seminars, was named “Kahre Hall,” in recognition of the work of at least four of the Kahres who were members of Trinity: Charles and Gilbert

Kahre who founded the LMAC with Pastor Rau of Trinity, Jim Kahre who served for many years and still serves on the LMAC board of directors, and Steve Kahre who served as the general contractor for the building.

In October, Matthew Wilson resigned as director of music to return to service in the ELCA. Jo Casey was hired as an interim organist.

Trinity’s Fall Festival Booth was awarded the “Best of the Fest” new item – fried mac and cheese. Evansville Living magazine voted the Eagle Egg as one of the five best foods at the festival. Many thanks were given to all the countless numbers of people who helped with prepping food and serving in the booth. Shown on the right are Jeff Sensmeier and Ray Laughbaum preparing to deep fry some of the famous eagle eggs.



The Church worship time was moved to 10 a.m. to allow more connect time after Sunday school. For additional fellowship, a retirees breakfast also began to meet once a month at Denny's. For Advent, Hazel English (shown right) invited the congregation to bring their nativity scenes for display, and 38 members participated.

Below, Trinity members gather in the south courtyard for fellowship following the worship service.



In 2011, Trinity engaged Rev. Ed Keinath of Peacemaker Ministry, to lead the congregation in a seminar of learning how to be reconciled. Pastor Reinhardt wrote, "Trinity has experienced many years of real stress – emotional, relational, and above all spiritual. Now is the time to seek the healing council of God – peace from the Prince of Peace. We can give ourselves no greater Christmas gift; no greater Epiphany manifestation of God's presence, than the personal promise and commitment to participate in this January Peacemaker event." The congregation participated in three Peacemaker Ministry seminars in January.

In March, 113 members participated in a CrossLife Ministries reconciliation meeting led by District Reconciler Rev. Ed Keinath. Over 100 of the participants desired to restore relationships through the hard work of Christian reconciliation. However, the voters declined the motion to continue the reconciliation process as recommended by the Indiana District.

The board of social ministry organized a benefit breakfast brunch and bake sale for Scott and Jeni Mills and their six children who lost everything in a house fire. Jeni is the daughter of Pastor Kirk Horstmeyer of Immanuel Lutheran.

Lisa Keck thanked the congregation for its support during her time of testing and battle with kidney failure. "What a year it has been for my family and me. Many changes that I never expected. But throughout all these changes, I have been able to hold steadfast to God's love and rely on the love of my family and my church family. I am so humbled by the love that my Trinity family has shown to me through prayers, cards, gifts, and a benefit in my honor. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and may God bless each and every one of you."

The church continued its time of testing as three pastors over the last year returned the congregation's call. Average worship attendance for 2011 dropped to 95, and the number of baptized members was reduced to 410.

A Time to Rebuild

Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.” And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, “Let us rise up and build.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work. . . . So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God. (Nehemiah 2:17-18, 6:15-16)

“Dearest members of Trinity Lutheran congregation; It is with great humility and joy before our Triune God and before you, His redeemed people, that I accept the call to be your pastor. The office of pastor in His church is a vocation whereby God delivers to you His justifying Gospel in Word and Sacraments. I am completely unworthy and in awe to be His undershepherd among you, His little lambs. Confident in Jesus Christ my Savior and bold in the Confession of the Lord’s Church, I prepare to serve you as your pastor. In the name of Jesus!” Rev. Stephen Kieser

The congregation called Rev. Stephen Kieser from Zion Lutheran Church in Storm Lake, Iowa, and he was installed at Trinity on September 25, 2011. During the installation service, a rainstorm occurred, and 40 buckets were placed throughout the sanctuary to catch all the leaks. Born in Seymour, Indiana, Pastor Kieser attended Concordia Ann Arbor and served ten years as a Lutheran school teacher and administrator before entering the seminary at Ft. Wayne.



After discussion with the board of elders, Pastor Kieser began the practice of offering Holy Communion every Sunday. Many of the older members remember when Communion was offered only once a quarter, and heads of the household had to call at the pastor’s office beforehand. Younger members remember Communion once a month until the inauguration of the Lutheran Worship hymnal in 1982 when Communion was offered every other Sunday. Pastor Kieser wrote, “Trinity Lutheran congregation in Darmstadt is a blessed communion of saints, a true fellowship with a common confession. This reality is expressed most beautifully in the receiving of Christ’s Body and Blood every Sunday. With the renewal of the Lord’s Supper every Lord’s Day, Trinity joins other congregations of the LCMS who are also rediscovering the blessings of weekly communion.”

That same year, the board of parish fellowship, chaired by Trisha Letterman, organized the church picnic with a potluck meal, prizes, games, clabber tournament, and homemade ice cream. The board began an annual Pancake Breakfast for the community in conjunction with the Manger Scene Extravaganza and also organized carolers to delivered cheer baskets to shut-ins.

In October, Trinity hosted the Joint Reformation Service and fellowship meal for the area Evansville circuit churches. A missionary committee was formed, and through synod’s “Together in Mission,” the voters approved the adoption of missionaries Rev. Mark and Sandi Eisold, serving in Peru. The voters also approved a fund drive to purchase an electronic carillon.

The theme for the all boards planning meeting in January of 2012 was “Witness,” the first of the synod’s three-fold description of the Church – “Witness-Mercy-Life Together.” Pastor Kieser stated, “No matter how fierce the battle may be or has been, no matter how close to complete destruction and annihilation the Church may come, she has already been given the victory once and for all in the cross of Christ. The holy Christian Church will endure all calamity, dissent, warfare, injustice, wicked people, and

the final judgment. In the spirit of the New Year, I am proposing that the congregation take up a serious study of what it is that the Bible calls us to do as members of the one, holy Christian Church. The LCMS has given us some direction by delineating a three-fold focus for synod: Mercy, Witness, Life Together.”

At the Celebration Sunday on January 15, Rev. Tom Baker, host of KFUE radio in St. Louis, spoke about the Concordia Mission Society and its work in the Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzia. Newly adopted missionary, Rev. Mark Eisold, visited the congregation in July and gave a report on his mission work in Peru.

The congregation dedicated a new electronic carillon on the first Sunday after Easter. Besides the congregation’s enjoyment of the ringing of the bells at service time, several members of the community sent their written appreciation of the music broadcast throughout the week. Jo Casey resigned as organist, and John Posey replaced her. Jeff Sensmeier began directing the choir, and Paula Reininga directed the handbells.

The LLL sponsored a Sunday evening to eat pizza and watch *The Bible on Trial*. Pastor Kieser led the youth in a group discussion on the topic and planned youth activities for the coming year such as skiing at Paoli Peaks, a youth hand chime choir, square dancing, Bible study, and a Higher Things youth retreat. Pastor Kieser exhorted the congregation, “When the day school was alive and well, children had the opportunity to ‘read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest’ the Word of God on a daily basis in the Lutheran classroom. All too often, parents relied almost completely on the school to provide the initiative and structure under which the Christian faith was taught. After a school has closed then, parents, especially fathers, must reassert themselves in making sure that the Christian faith is being taught to the children. Who will witness of Jesus to your children? I pray that you will.” That same year the voters approved the appointment of a Lutheran Education Exploration Committee which began studying the possibility of beginning a preschool.

In July the board of social ministry hosted a Benefit Brunch for Kerry and Lisa Keck who were both in need of kidney transplants. “Words cannot express how much we have been uplifted by your support along the way. For all the care and love you have shown us, in countless ways, large and small, while we await kidney transplants, we quite simply and humbly say, thank you and God bless you.” Kerry and Lisa Keck

The board of properties, chaired by Steve Kahre, recommended and the voters approved \$200,000 from the SGSE monies to renovate the exterior of the church with a new roof and siding to address the water leaks and crumbling brick. During the remodeling construction, the sign in front of the school building read, “Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” (Psalm 127:1) Pastor Kieser encouraged the congregation, “The

way we have taken care of the space that has been set aside for Divine Service, is a statement of what we believe, teach and confess about our God and His Divine Service. Having said, ‘No!’ to a leaky roof and the accompanying problems of water damage, we also said ‘Yes!’ to Christ and His presence among us in the Divine Service.” The renovation was dedicated at the worship service on November 18, and Rev. Stan Temme served as the guest preacher. At a meal following the service, Pastor Kieser humorously remarked, “My wife and I have been at many churches during our lifetime and ministry together, but this church, beyond all others, is the church with the most leaks!”



The church's theme for the year of 2013 was "Mercy." The Lord was indeed merciful in granting Lisa Keck a successful kidney transplant which has extended her life to this day. After ten years, the mission quilters donated a total 744 quilts to such mercy organizations as the African Mission in Ft. Wayne, Ozamon Family Shelter, Evansville Rescue Mission, Orphan Grain Train, Pregnancy Resource Center, Katrina Victims, and Lutheran World Relief. The door offering of the third Sunday of each month was also designated for the Lutheran Food Pantry.

The board of outreach, chaired by Chuck Fellwock, developed a tri-fold brochure of the congregation's worship and ministry for mailing to all the new move-ins in the local community. New residents who lived close to the church received a front porch visit. As a community outreach event, Sue Laughbaum organized the first Trunk-or-Treat in the parking lot on Halloween. In the springtime, the congregation hosted square dancing for the community every Friday night in the gym, sponsored by the River City Ramblers Square Dancing Club. The LLL built an outdoor lighted nativity scene which the community could see on the front lawn of the church during the Christmas holidays.



At the mission festival, Rev. Jeff Horn spoke about his upcoming mission work in Papua New Guinea where Jim and Dottie Kahre (shown on the left) had served fifty years before. The congregation adopted him as a missionary for future financial support.

The voters approved a Campus Feasibility Study Committee to consider long and short-term improvements to the campus. The committee completed a congregational survey on a proposed expansion which would address the needs for a funeral visitation area, a bride's room, a multi-media conference room, an accessible pastor's office, a new front entrance at grade, altar circle storage, a music office, and choir loft access. The congregation also initiated a capital improvement fund to replace the school roof, repave the parking lot, replace the windows in the old school, tuck-point the school chimney, renovate the downstairs restrooms, replace the stalls in the upstairs restrooms, renovate the cemetery wall and landscaping, and replace the water damaged woodwork in the church. Cost to complete all the items was estimated at \$200,000. One immediate improvement was the installation of a new sound system in the sanctuary by Alan Letterman.

Loyalty Sunday featured the ten Concordia Universities. Speakers were Casey and Beth Kegley, recent graduates of Concordia Wisconsin. Casey was soon to enter Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, and Beth, daughter of Bob and Valerie Eberhart, was prepared to teach as a Lutheran school teacher.

The year of 2014 saw the departure of both Trinity's organist and pastor. After short tenures, organist John Posey resigned as director of music and returned to Georgia, and Pastor Kieser received and accepted a call to serve as associate pastor and headmaster at Faith Lutheran Church in Plano, Texas, where he had formerly served as principal. Pastor Kieser advised the congregation, "Your new minister will have strengths and weaknesses. Because of his strengths, some may want him to stay for many years. And because of his weaknesses, some may want him to move on as soon as possible. I encourage you to support him in his teaching, preaching, and administration of the sacraments by faithfully receiving what Christ has

sent him to give you. I have every reason to believe that Trinity's best days are ahead. God is for you. You are a blessed people. Your new pastor will be richly blessed as I have been to serve you." Pastor Keith Knea, who formerly served at Shepherd of Paradise in Newburgh, served the congregation during the vacancy. Ruth Temme, daughter of the congregation and student at Concordia Wisconsin in secondary education, served as organist during the summer months.

Trinity continued its mercy and mission emphasis through the program "Turning Dimes into Wine." The congregation filled empty wine bottles with dimes, change, and bills to buy wine for the Lord's Supper for needy Lutheran congregations in Papua New Guinea where wine is scarce and expensive. The board of social ministry, chaired by Crystal Kahre, hosted a benefit brunch and bake sale for Linda Hall, who became ill and began dialysis. She had taken instruction and joined the church while serving as caregiver for Clyde Broderhausen. Under the direction of the LLL and Jim Kahre, Trinity also served as the Evansville collection site for the Orphan Grain Train for winter clothing for Operation Ukraine. Members packed and sent over 300 boxes for the homeless in Ukraine during the harsh winter.

Loyalty Sunday showcased the Military Project which supports LCMS military chaplains in the field. Deaconess Carolyn Brinkley of Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne served as the speaker. The board of stewardship, chaired by Valerie Eberhart, recognized all the veterans of the congregation, shown on the right. As was his yearly custom on Veterans Day, cemetery sexton Ron Korff placed a flag beside the grave of every veteran. The veterans buried in Trinity's cemetery are listed below.



Sainted Veterans Who Served Our Country and Who Are Buried in Trinity Lutheran Darmstadt Cemetery

Charles Aguirre
Albert Balbach
Edward Broderhausen
Herbert Broderhausen
Karl Broderhausen
James Cheaney
Charles Crothers
Loren Doehrmann
Kenneth Fehd
Norman Hoffherr
John W. Hoffman
Paul W. Hoffman
Roy Ivy
Bernhardt Kahre
Gilbert Kahre
Henry Keck

Albert F. Klausmeier
Charles Korff
Gerald Korff
Tommy Korff
William Korff
George Krietemeyer
Ivan Kuester
Milton Miller
Herbert Mohr
Billy Orr
Alton Reininga
Wayne Reininga
Harold Reininga
William Reininga
Albert Rothmeier
William Rothmeier

Albert Schlensker
Oswald Schlensker
Karl Sensmeier
Ira Scott
George Sollman
Walter Somers
Clarence Steinkuhl
Edward Stofft
Evans Temme
Kenneth Temme
Walter Temme
George Traub
Charles VanStone
George Whitbeck
Ivan Wortmann

After a short vacancy, the congregation called a son of the congregation, Rev. Stan Temme, from Lake George Lutheran Chapel in Fremont, Indiana, to serve as its next pastor. Pastor Temme accepted the Call and was installed on November 2 by District vice-president Rev. Martin Keller, who formerly served Trinity from 1994 to 2009. Pastor Temme thanked the congregation, “Eleven years ago you sent me out to train and become a worker in God’s harvest field as a missionary from Trinity Darmstadt, and this year you called me back. Linda and I are thrilled to be back in Darmstadt with you to serve my home congregation. I was baptized here by Pastor Rau. I was confirmed in the Christian faith here by Pastor Boettcher, and I served as a layman here under Pastor Keller. Here is where I went to school and received the foundation for all of my education, particularly the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Here is where my baptism sponsors were and still are. Here is where my Sunday school teachers and day schoolteachers were, and some of them still are. Here is where people prayed for me, taught me the faith, and modeled the Christian life for me. Who I am as a redeemed child of God is what the Lord has done by our Savior Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit working through the means of this congregation. As I can never repay our Lord for His work in my life, so I can never repay His people here for what you have done for me. All I can do is say ‘thank you’ for this opportunity to serve you in return. And what a joy that is!”



Shown above is Pastor Stan Temme with his wife Linda and their children Lydia, David, Ruth, Jonathan, Lois, and Silas.



At the end of the year, Mr. Kevin Ellerbusch (shown left) began serving as church organist and still serves to this day. He has a master’s degree in organ performance from the University of Evansville as well as much experience serving in other church music programs. His duties are to play for worship services, accompany the choir, and direct the handbells. The elders appointed Jeff Sensmeier (shown right) to serve as director of music, and he continues to serve as choir director.



At the beginning of 2015, Pastor Temme initiated home visits with the congregation. “In the coming year I am planning home visits for all our congregation households. This is a ‘getting to know you’ visit where I hope to meet with you personally, learn about your interests, hear about your joys and sorrows, and listen to your hopes for our congregation and its ministry. As you have come to the Lord’s house to hear his gracious Word from His messenger, please graciously allow the messenger to come to your house and hear you.”

In March, Pastor Horn returned from Papua New Guinea to preach and present on his mission work there. Due to health concerns, he would not be returning to the mission field. In April, the LWML hosted Pastor Michael Paul of the Chinese Church in Evansville to teach and preach for a Mission Sunday. He had

recently accepted a call to serve as a theological educator in the mission field in Taiwan. The Missionary Committee transferred the support of Pastor Horn to Pastor Paul as the congregation's adopted missionary.

As a veteran of World War II, Alton Reininga attended the "Honor Flight of Southern Indiana" to Washington, D.C., in recognition of his service to his country. He and his wife Venita (shown right) celebrated their 75th anniversary in 2017 just before Venita's passing, and Alton celebrated his 100th birthday in 2018, before passing on to glory in 2019.



With counsel from Don Amt, architectural advisor from the LCEF, the Campus Feasibility Committee developed a new vision for the campus. Many of the issues with the existing facilities could be resolved through the construction of a building addition on the north side of the church and renovations of the existing church. Features of the new addition would include:

- A fellowship hall for dinners, meetings, and presentations, Bible class and weekday studies, refreshments before and after services, receptions, and other fellowship events for the congregation and community
- Several smaller meeting rooms for Bible study, Sunday school, and church meetings
- Staff offices located in close proximity to a main entrance
- Handicap accessible restrooms which serve both the church and fellowship hall
- A main entrance with a covered canopy
- A kitchen for preparing and serving meals
- Storage for tables and chairs and Sunday school and Bible class materials

The renovations to the church would provide a larger narthex by removing pews in the back of the sanctuary and would provide storage for altar guild, music, and archive materials by remodeling the existing choir room and pastor's office. These plans would provide a campus for the majority of Trinity's ministries under one roof and on one level. Funding would come from the remaining SGSE monies and follow in the spirit of the donations given. After approving the new vision for the campus, the voters approved the formation of a building committee to develop a new master plan for the facilities.

In order for worship services to continue in the congregation's great music tradition, the congregation appointed an organ committee to investigate solutions to its aging pipe organ. The existing organ (shown right) was original to the 1959 sanctuary and had received no renovation in nearly 60 years. In planning their music, organists had to work around pipe ranks and console stops which had ceased to function.



That fall the Lord blessed Trinity with a \$400,000 bequest from the sainted Tad Wollerman. Living a distance away on his farm in Knox County, Tad was not a member, but as a lifelong Lutheran, he frequently drove down to Evansville and attended services and Bible class at Trinity. Congregation members also joined Tad in canvassing the neighborhoods for the LMAC church mission plant in Loogootee.



The Loyalty Banquet featured the program “Name that Steward,” written by Cleoramae Stunkel. Attendees were challenged to guess the identity of costumed congregation members who portrayed saints from the Bible. The board of stewardship also completed a volunteer survey to determine talents of the congregation for service.

In December, the board of outreach, chaired by Chuck Fellwock, hosted a community outreach workshop with speaker Rev. Dr. Terry Tieman of Transforming Churches Network. The purpose of the workshop was to help the congregation become a more outreach focused church and to learn ideas for possible ministry in the community. For 2015, weekend worship attendance averaged 100, and the baptized membership was 357.

At the beginning of 2016, Pastor Temme reported, “The past year was my first full year serving at my home congregation of Trinity Darmstadt, and it has been a joy! I have enjoyed bringing you the Word of God in the Divine Service, Bible class, and devotions. I have enjoyed giving you the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. But I have also enjoyed this first year in visiting you. As you have enjoyed coming to the Lord’s house to listen to his Word and receive his gifts in the fellowship of the saints, so I have enjoyed coming to your house to listen to you and receive your gift of fellowship. By listening to your personal life stories, I have learned much that will help me in my preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. By listening to your concerns and desires for our congregation, I have learned much about what challenges we need to overcome and the direction we would like to head in the future as God’s people.”

One of the questions which Pastor Temme asked during his home visits was “What concerns do you have for our congregation?” The primary answer was the loss and absence of young families and children. The second questions asked, “What would you pray for God do in our congregation?” Again, the primary answer was a desire for the congregation to grow, particularly with families and children, possibly through the restart of an education ministry which would make use of the empty school. The secondary answer was to make use of the SGSE monies to finally complete a building project.

To that end, the board of outreach contracted with Transforming Churches Network (TCN), a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS, to engage in a revitalization program called *The 19:10 Project*. The title was based on Luke 19:10, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” After a congregational self-study, surveys, focus groups, and interviews, TCN recommended 5 prescriptions to help transform the congregation to a more outward focused church. The voters approved the following prescriptions on May 22:

1. Host a visioning day and develop a new outreach vision for the congregation.
2. Investigate starting an early childhood ministry for outreach to young families.
3. Conduct six community outreach events annually.
4. Ensure the building master plan considers outreach opportunities.
5. Address the congregational organization structure to ensure members are empowered for ministry.

To address the first and third prescriptions, the board of outreach and the board of social ministry combined to form a group called *People of Passion* who prayed, surveyed the community, and hosted a visioning day. Congregation participants developed and approved a new vision statement with two mission targets, that of families with young children and those working towards retirement. The *People of Passion* continued to study new ways of community outreach through service projects, interest groups, and outreach events.

To address the second prescription, the Lutheran Education Exploratory Committee, chaired by Alan Letterman, reconvened and began the *Genesis Project* of the synod. The committee worked with former Lutheran school principal and consultant Stu Tietz of the synod department of education to determine the congregation's capability, readiness, and the community's need for beginning an early childhood ministry. 95% of surveys returned from members of the congregation were in favor of such a ministry. After an on-site visit with interviews of leaders and focus groups with members, Mr. Tietz recommended the congregation appoint a task force to study and gather more information in order to proceed with the ministry.

To address the fourth prescription, the building committee, chaired by Steve Kahre, worked with architect Tom Blythe of Hafer and Associates to develop a master plan and surveying drawings for an addition on the north side of the church. The new parish hall would include a fellowship hall, offices, classrooms, kitchen, handicap accessible restrooms, and a drive through canopy. The congregation received a \$15,000 grant from the Center for Congregations of Indiana toward the master plan and survey drawings. A sketch of the campus with the new parish hall is shown on the right.



The congregation appointed a Legacy Fund Committee, chaired by Jeff Sensmeier, to develop a plan for the use of the bequest from Tad Wollerman and future bequests. Working with Rev. Phil Krupski of the Lutheran Foundation, the committee developed a Legacy Fund and by-laws for bequests, memorials, and other special donations for needed projects outside the scope of the yearly budget. The five categories of the fund are Mission, Ministry, Master Plan, Maintenance, and Music-Education-Formation. The congregation voted to use \$120,000 of the Wollerman bequest to pay off the remaining school debt with the remaining \$280,000 going into the Legacy Fund.

Loyalty Sunday featured preacher and speaker Rev. Phil Krupski, gifts planning counselor for the Lutheran Foundation, who helps congregations establish and strengthen endowment funds. The board of stewardship also kicked off *The 3 R's Campaign*. The goal of the capital campaign was to increase the value of the Legacy Fund to \$500,000. Over a three-year period, the congregation donated \$185,000 to *Restore – Renew – Reach* at Trinity Darmstadt.

The 3 R's Campaign



The congregation also received a special bequest from the Hartman and Bittner families to replace the leaning cemetery wall. Using his backhoe, Steve Kahre took down the old wall, and Quinton, Bradly, and Andrew Hartman removed the debris. Dan and Brent Hoffherr built the new cemetery wall and added landscaping. The new cemetery wall, gate, and landscaping (shown above) were dedicated after the worship service on October 23.



As a new service project, the congregation became the regional collection point in southwest Indiana for Operation Christmas Child, held each November. Local congregations, businesses, and individuals pack shoe boxes with school supplies, toys, hygiene items, and clothing for shipment to children in impoverished nations. Under the direction of Pastor and Sara Knea, the congregation filled 3 trailers with 17,112 shoe boxes.



The congregation also continued its works of mercy by collecting buckets with cleaning supplies for Orphan Grain Train for flood victims in Louisiana. The board of social ministry hosted a benefit brunch to assist with medical expenses for a family of the congregation.



The year of 2017 began by adding pastoral staff. The congregation called Pastor Keith Knea to serve as an assistant pastor for part time ministry, and he was installed on January 14 by District President Rev. Daniel May. While continuing his full-time engineering job, Pastor Knea serves the congregation by assisting Pastor Temme with preaching, leading worship services, teaching youth, visiting shut-ins, and working with church boards. Shown on the left are Pastor Keith Knea, his wife Sara, and children Elizabeth, Joshua, and Joseph.

In February, the voters approved the Master Plan for the campus and authorized the building committee to spend a portion of the SGSE monies to complete detail drawings and obtain bids. The congregation received another \$15,000 grant from the Center for Congregations toward the detail drawings.

On March 3 the congregation gathered in the gym for a “Night to Remember.” Church retreaters reminisced about the many church retreats which were organized by Ken Temme. Over 29 years, Ken planned and orchestrated 58 weekend retreats to 22 different state and national parks and 17 different towns and cities. The spring retreats were usually held at a state park with a focus on Bible study through a Christian film series. The fall retreats were usually near cities for sightseeing of historic sites, museums, and local color. Over 200 different retreaters enjoyed matins and vespers worship, fine dining, local entertainment, and the antics of the Darmstadt Players performing humorous skits from Carol Burnett or the creative mind of Chet Behrman. Shown on the right are Ken and his wife Nadine.



The Genesis Project Task Force finished its study and completed a Ministry and Business Plan for an early childhood ministry for outreach to young families. Startup costs would be covered through \$72,000 in grants from the Indiana District, LWML, LMAC, and 4 C's of Southern Indiana plus the redesignation of \$25,000 from the foster child tuition fund and \$53,000 from the Ministry category of the Legacy Fund. The voters approved the plan and authorized the board of education, chaired by Sue Laughbaum, to proceed with the search for a synodically trained administrator and teacher.

The boards of outreach and social ministry added a new outreach event on the first Saturday in June by reinitiating the old tradition of “Darmstadt Day.” The congregation hosted a community festival of a free lunch served from the fall festival booth, games, prizes, and bounce houses for children, goods from our country store, an antique car show, and the Rhein Valley Brass German polka band under a tent. The festival has become an annual event which has served as many as 400 people, identified prospects, and promoted the church's ministries. Community donations of roughly \$1,000 are matched from the Mission category of the church's Legacy Fund for a different local charity each year. Shown below right are Keith Kahre, chairman of elders, and his wife Kris Kahre, chairman of social ministry.



The mission committee hosted a Mission Festival on July 16 with Pastor Michael Paul who was on furlough from Taiwan. Pastor Paul serves as a theological educator to the Lutheran church in Taiwan, translates and edits Lutheran books into Mandarin, and preaches at congregations. He and his wife Irene do outreach to their neighborhood by teaching English as a second language, organizing children's ministries, and showing hospitality to families. The congregation supports the Paul's with \$5,000 from the church mission budget each year as well as individual offerings. They return bi-annually to report in person to their supportive congregations.

Shown on the right are Rev. Michael Paul and his wife Irene (center), mission committee members Jeff Sensmeier and Crystal Kahre (not shown – Cleoramae Stunkel, Jim and Dottie Kahre), and pastors Knea and Temme.

Over the last 25 years, Trinity has hosted Mission Festivals which supported the following missions and missionaries of the LCMS.



- 1997 – Rev. Larry Merino, New Life Lutheran in Ft. Wayne, Mission to the Gypsies in Slovakia
- 1999 – Dr. Detlev Schultz, Concordia Seminary Ft. Wayne, Missionary in Africa
- 2000 – Dr. Dan Gard, Concordia Seminary Ft. Wayne, seminarian Paul Touloute, native of Haiti
- 2001 – Rev. John Fehrmann of Lutheran Heritage Foundation, LHF's work in Africa
- 2003 – Rev. John Loum, Pastor at St. Augustine Lutheran Church and former Muslim from sub-Saharan Africa, "Reaching African Immigrants in the Ft. Wayne area"
- 2004 – Rev. Jesus Astorga, Hispanic Ministry Coordinator for the District, native of Mexico
- 2005 – Pastor Otto Brillinger, Mission work in Kazakhstan
- 2012 – Rev. Mark Eisold, Missionary to Peru
- 2013 – Rev. Jeff Horn, Missionary to Papua New Guinea
- 2017 – Rev. Michael and Irene Paul, Missionaries to Taiwan
- 2019 – Rev. Michael and Irene Paul, Missionaries to Taiwan
- 2021 – Rev. Michael and Irene Paul, Missionaries to Taiwan

In 2017 the congregation celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation as it remembered Martin Luther's 95 Thesis tacked to the castle door in Wittenburg. The LMAC invited the circuit Lutheran congregations to the theatre to view the movie *A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy*. The program for the Loyalty Banquet was *Singing with the Reformers*, written by Cleoramae Stunkel (shown right).



Congregation members dressed in Reformation garb and portrayed eight famous Lutheran hymnwriters.

The worship committee also added an outreach event by inviting the community to a free Advent Dinner and Christmas Music Concert. The congregation served a banquet in the gym, followed by a hymn sing in the sanctuary. Thirteen choir members directed by Jeff Sensmeier, ten handbell ringers directed by Paula Reininga, and fourteen instrumentalists conducted by Dana Meyer and accompanied by Kevin Ellerbusch treated 140 guests and members to an evening of sacred music and praise to the Lord.

In 2017, the congregation began using its facility as a community center for such groups as Scouts, Academy of Arts drama camp, Silver Sneakers exercise class, Pearls of Purity classes for parents and their middle school daughters, homeschool basketball teams, Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS), firemen training, and a dulcimer group. The congregation also continued its annual service projects and outreach events of Trunk or Treat (150 people), Pancake Breakfast (200 people), Manger Scene Extravaganza (400 nativities),

and Operation Christmas Child (17,661 boxes collected). Pastor Temme encouraged, “Through these net-fishing events we hope to develop relationships with the people in our community and lead them into God’s kingdom. In the coming year, God still has much to accomplish among us to turn our plans into action. Please continue to pray that our plans be the Lord’s plans and that He work through our members in our witness, mercy, and life together to bring others into his kingdom of grace.”

In 2018 Trinity saw the Lord put His plans into action as He continued to build His Church. In February the congregation called Breenna Smith to serve as director of the early childhood ministry. Breenna has a degree in early childhood education from Concordia Chicago and experience teaching kindergarten in Lutheran schools. She accepted the congregation’s call and was installed on September 2. In her first year at Trinity, she worked diligently with the board of education in visiting local ministries and establishing a support group; beginning the registration process with the state; developing policies, parent handbooks, staff manuals, and tuition schedules; marketing the ministry through a website, social media, and flyers; and working with the board of properties, chaired by Alan Letterman, in renovations of the school in order to open the ministry the following year in August of 2019.



At a special voters meeting in March, the organ committee presented plans and costs for replacing the 60-year-old pipe organ which was in great need of repair. 35 years of extensive practice hours by Janet Doehermann had taken its toll. The estimated cost of a new pipe organ of similar caliber was \$500,000, and the estimated cost of refurbishing the old pipes and console was \$250,000. After many field trips to hear different brands of digital organs, the organ committee, chaired by Jeff Sensmeier, recommended a new Rodgers Infinity digital organ at a cost of \$100,000. The congregation received a \$25,000 donation from David and Louise Rohy, an LCMS couple in California, and the balance of funds came from the Music-

Education-Formation category of the Legacy Fund. After receiving voter approval, the old pipe organ was decommissioned on Pentecost Sunday, May 20. Kevin Ellerbusch played the organ’s final postlude “Song of Celebration.” During the renovation phase over the summer, Kevin played the piano for worship services.



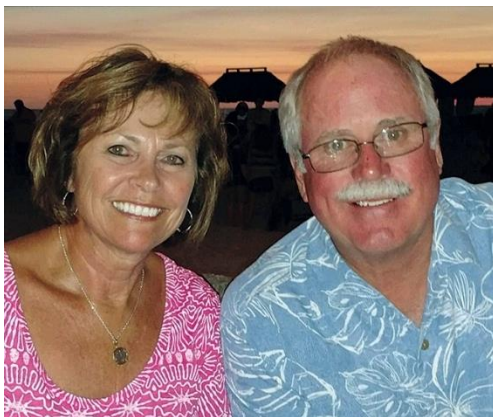
Volunteers from the congregation (shown above) handled all the demolition of the old organ, and many members took home some of the pipes as souvenirs. Brighter lighting was installed in the loft, the flooring was raised to eliminate the dangerous “organ pit,” and the new organ was installed by Mr. Tom Magee of Classic Organs of Indiana. Jeff Sensmeier fabricated the shelves and covers for the organ speakers. The new organ was dedicated at the Sunday service on October 7, and the congregation once again enjoyed the organ’s beautiful music in leading the worship services.

Shown on the right are organist Kevin Ellerbusch and his wife Mary beside the new organ console.

Also in March, the building committee presented the detailed drawings and bids to build the new parish hall and repave the parking lot. Funds would come from the remaining SGSE monies (\$800,000), the Master Plan and Maintenance Categories of the Legacy Fund (\$200,000), and a building loan from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (\$200,000). The voters approved the plans, and the congregation celebrated a groundbreaking ceremony on April 29 as shown below.



The Scout Township Fire Department used the former teacherage (shown below) for fire training exercises before it was demolished to make room for the new addition.



As head of the building committee, Steve Kahre (shown on the left with his wife Karen) volunteered all his time to serve as the general contractor, and Jeff Sensmeier served as “boots on the ground” when Steve was out of town. The parish hall and renovations to the



church were dedicated in the worship service on December 16. On that same day, the worship committee also hosted its second annual Advent Music Concert and Dinner. Members and guests from the committee enjoyed the music from the new organ and a banquet in the new fellowship hall.



The boards of outreach and social ministry initiated another service project by hosting the recognition dinner for the Scott Township Fire Department with over 100 adults and children (shown right).

Loyalty Sunday featured preacher and speaker Rev. Michael Salemink, executive director of Lutherans for Life. Shown below are stewardship board members Cleoramae Stunkel and Valerie Eberhart, and pastors Salemink and Temme with the donations for infants and mothers.



Also that year, Tom and Doris Turpin retired from 15 years of service as custodians, and Kenny and Wilma Fehd shown below, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. They both made many visits as volunteers for Project Compassion and Wilma formerly served as kindergarten teacher in the school.



The board of fellowship, chaired by Trisha Letterman, hosted the community for another pancake breakfast of fellowship and music (shown below).



Shown below left are pancake cooks John and Linda Brock and Alan and Jacob Letterman and shown below right are choir and instrumentalists, directed by Jeff Sensmeier.



Pastor Temme reflected on the year of 2018, “During the last several years, the Lord has been making plans for His ministry at Trinity Darmstadt. ‘For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.’ (Jeremiah 29:11) But in this past year, we have seen the Lord begin to accomplish His plans. ‘I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it.’ (Ezekiel 36:36)”

The theme for the year of 2019 was “Jesus as Servant Leader.” Pastor Temme wrote, “Putting together these two words, servant and leader, appear to form an oxymoron like ‘jumbo shrimp.’ How can one be a leader and yet still be a lowly servant? Jesus Christ, who is the God-man (another oxymoron), tells us, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, but not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. I am among you as the one who serves.’ (Luke 22:25-27) How did Jesus serve us? ‘The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’ (Matthew 20:28) How does Jesus lead us to serve? ‘If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.’ (John 13:14-15) Servant leadership is first about being and then about doing. After becoming baptized children of God with a new and right spirit, we then go about the work of serving in God’s kingdom.”

To help the church members develop as servant leaders, the congregation received a grant from the Center for Congregations for chairman Bob Eberhart to coach church leaders and servants in leadership development. Through a self-assessment and two workshops, Bob helped servants of the congregation understand different personalities and communication styles so that they might work better together in boards and committees.

One of the ways which Trinity benefitted from servant-leadership was through several scouts of the congregation who completed their Eagle Scout projects for the service of the church and its ministries. Jacob Letterman led his troop to beautify the center circle of the cemetery with a flagpole, benches, and landscaping (shown right). With the help of the board of properties, Samuel Otto led his troop to renovate the playground for the preschool children. Elizabeth Knea led her troop to build a return walkway for the Slip n’ Slide at Lakeview Ministries. Jackson Otto and his troop took pictures of all the gravestones in the cemetery, and he uploaded the information to a website and electronic data base for easy access of the church’s cemetery records.



The new parish hall offered many opportunities and benefits for the congregation and community. On Epiphany Sunday, the congregation began worshipping at an earlier time of 9:30 a.m. with a time of fellowship and Bible class after the service. The purpose of the new arrangement was to encourage more participation in fellowship and Sunday school with the opportunity to invite guests to participate after worship. Trinity began a MOPs group using the conference room for the mothers while members served as babysitter for their young children in a classroom nursery. Outreach events and service projects such as the Firemen's Recognition Dinner, Darmstadt Day country store, Trunk or Treat, Operation Christmas Child, Pancake Breakfast, and Advent Dinner were moved from the gym to the new fellowship hall. Shown right, Jerry Korff displays one of his classic cars for Darmstadt Day while below Chuck Fellwock, director of outreach, and Rex Nicholson register participants under the drive through canopy and Linda Sue Korff, Linda Fellwock, and Hazel English serve at the country store.



Shown right, Theresa Hoffherr and Bob and Valerie Eberhart greet families for Trunk or Treat and register them for door prizes while Trinity members serve food and provide treats.



Below, Elljean Nichols, Kathy Ramsey, Linda Brock, Hazel English, Trisha Letterman, Jonathan Temme, Alan Letterman, Nancy Korff, Jacob Letterman, and Jerry Nichols serve at the pancake breakfast from the new kitchen.

The new offices in the parish hall made the office manager and pastor more visible and accessible. The former pastor's office became a music room for the director of music and music files for the choir and handbells. The altar guild renovated the



former "choir room" into a sacristy with storage for all the sanctuary decorations, and Steve and Jim Kahre built a designated closet for the worship banners. In place of the weathered wreaths on the front of the church, John Terry crafted two LCMS crosses (shown right) in addition to a Byzantine cross for the fellowship hall. New Chrismons were also seen among the angels on the Christmas tree.

After many years of service, Hazel English retired from leading the *Friends in Christ Circle* and passed the torch to Paula Reininga who now organizes the bereavement meals from the new kitchen. The congregation



also enjoyed banquets in the parish hall for the Mission Festival with Rev. Michael Paul and the Loyalty Banquet with the Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dog ministry, shown left.



The worship committee hosted three major music events which made use of the new organ for the community. The first was a hymn festival entitled *Guided by a Glorious Light* on January 27 with 150 people in attendance. Cantor Randall Sensmeier, son of the congregation, played Epiphany hymns and sacred chorales, some of which he composed himself. A reception followed in the fellowship hall. Trinity hosted the Joint Reformation Service on October 27. The congregation, joint choir, handbells, and instrumentalists glorified God using Luther's Divine

Service and hymns from Lutheran composers. 240 Lutherans from the Evansville circuits united in worship, and 160 stayed for a fellowship meal.

Shown below are the Handbell ringers for Reformation – Dottie Kahre, Jonathan Temme, Liz Krietemeyer, Linda Sue Korff, Sara Knea, Valerie Eberhart, Paula Reininga, Trisha Letterman, and Chanda Ramsey.

The Thanksgiving Day service was moved to a Thanksgiving Eve service followed by pie fellowship so that more members could participate before leaving town to spend time with family.

Holy Light – A Candlelight Service of Carols was the title of the Advent Concert on December 15. It was

attended by over 100 music lovers who also enjoyed a catered Christmas banquet in the fellowship hall. Shown below are organist Kevin Ellerbusch, director of music Jeff Sensmeier, and conductor Dana Meyer.



The boards of properties and education organized many workdays to renovate the school with new flooring, lighting, and wall décor. Director Breenna Smith completed the state registration requirements for the early childhood ministry and marketed it through open houses, social media, radio ads, and television publicity. The Preschool/Pre-K opened on August 26 with ten students. On December 18 the preschool gave witness to Christ's birth in a Christmas program in the sanctuary. 70 of their family members attended the service and stayed for a cake reception in the fellowship hall.

At the end of 2019, the congregation received another generous donation from David and Louise Rohy in California which paid for half of the sound system for the fellowship hall, half of a video system for the sanctuary, and preschool education materials.

With all the ministry opportunities, Pastor Temme requested the congregation's prayers. "Please pray that God would continue to raise up servant-leaders in our congregation to serve in Christ's kingdom. 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.' (Luke 10:2)"

Pestilence and Deliverance

“If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemies besiege them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house, then hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways, for you, you only, know the hearts of the children of mankind, that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers.” (2 Chronicles 6:28-31)

The year of 2020 was unlike any year that members of Trinity could remember. The pestilence of COVID-19 struck the world and made its way to Evansville and Darmstadt. Reports of a very contagious disease which brought respiratory distress and sometimes death brought fear, uncertainty, and isolation into the lives of households everywhere. Handshaking was replaced with hand sanitizer, face masks of all designs became the norm, and the word “Zoom” took on a new meaning. But through all the chaos, the Lord was still working His ways, particularly for the deliverance of His Church.

Pastor Temme wrote in his year-end report, “‘Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.’ (James 1:2-3) This past year of 2020 has certainly been a year of trials which have tested our faith in our Lord’s deliverance and His body, the Church. The year began much as many other years. At our All Boards meeting in January, we continued our leadership training under our chairman Bob Eberhart’s direction, and we made goals and plans for the coming year for worship, education, ministry, and outreach to the community. Our preschool invited prospective families to an open house, we hosted the Firemen’s Recognition Dinner, and we began our midweek Lent services. But then suddenly in March, the worldwide pandemic of the COVID-19 virus struck our land. Under government orders, businesses and schools closed for two weeks. Our worship attendance was limited to 10 people per service. What was thought to be a brief shut down turned into a yearlong trial of sheltering, quarantines, and precautionary measures for workplaces, schools, and churches. Many of our plans for ministry, outreach, and fellowship events were crossed off our calendar. Many board meetings, choir, and bell practices were canceled. Like all the schools across the nation, our preschool closed its doors for the rest of the spring semester as teachers and students went online. For their health protection, our elderly members in care centers were isolated from residents, family, and pastoral care. These trials along with uncertainty of the future tested our faith in the Lord.

But God is good. The trials of this past year have served to bring us to repentance, confess our total reliance upon Him, and motivate our prayers for our daily bread, forgiveness, and deliverance from evil. God did not tempt us into sin to drive us away from Him, but He tested our faith to draw us closer to Him. During a time of upheaval, the Lord worked through His Word and Sacraments and the saints of His Church to make us steadfast in the faith.

On Easter Sunday we celebrated the Lord’s resurrection in our first parking lot service. Over sixty members arrived in their cars to hear the Service of the Word across the P.A. system and FM radio. They received the Sacrament on a paper plate which the pastors handed through their window. We passed the peace with a toot of our horns.





After a month in the parking lot, we were able to return to the sanctuary, but we sat in alternating pews, maintained social distancing for Communion, and gave our offering at the door. For those who were not ready to return indoors, we continued a Saturday morning parking lot service through October. An outdoor service is not without its distractions though. Competition from roosters crowing, our neighbor walking his llama, and sweltering heat in the summer and chill in the fall tested our attention. When it rained, our cars formed a line under the canopy for drive by Communion. Thanks to the work of Pastor and Sara Knea, the tech committee, and Alan Letterman who built the audio/visual console in the sanctuary, we began online videos of the service for those who were sheltering at home. For those not online, our officer manager Trisha Letterman was diligent in mailing the full-service bulletin, sermon, and announcements to 50 families each week.

Through these means our members were faithful in worship, maintaining 3/4 of our normal worship attendance, while many others worshipped from home and received private Communion in the sanctuary or through home and patio visits from the pastor.

After working through the summer to establish sanitary protocols, our early childhood ministry director Breenna Smith and her staff reopened the doors of our preschool in the fall. Although enrollment was down in most preschools, our preschool has now grown to 12 students. On Halloween our board of education and church members sponsored a trunk-or-treat in our parking lot and served 400 parents and children. Under the direction of Pastor and Sara Knea, our church served as the regional collection point for Operation Christmas Child and collected over 10,000 boxes for impoverished children.

Our board of elders, chaired by Keith Kahre, sponsored a security workshop for the churches in our community and began making plans for a committee of deacons to welcome our visitors and protect our congregation during worship. Though the Lord has taken ten of our saints to His kingdom of glory this year, He has brought new members to our congregation by transfer, baptism, and adult confirmation. The Lord has also been merciful in that 13 of our members who tested positive for COVID-19 have all recovered well.

Yes, the saints at Trinity Darmstadt have faced many trials in this past year, but we count it all joy that the testing of our faith has produced steadfastness in the Lord. We continue to pray the He would heal our land on earth as we wait for His eternal deliverance to His promised land of heaven. The Lord be with you all.”

The Lord was with Trinty Darmstadt and continued to provide for the needs of the church through His gifts in Word and Sacrament but also through the loyal stewardship of His people. Members continued to faithfully bring their offerings or mail them to the church office. While the congregation continued to gather in the parking lot for worship, the board of properties, chaired by Alan Letterman, took the



opportunity to replace the 35-year-old heating and cooling system in the sanctuary with a new system. Congregation members again handled the demolition and removal, and new units were installed by Dennis Morgan and Tommy David of Midwest Mechanical. The congregation approved the allocation of funds from the Maintenance category of the Legacy Fund by tooting their horns in agreement at a voters meeting in the parking lot after worship. Shown below is the parking lot worship service where members even social distanced in their cars, parking every other space.



The congregation received another grant from the Center for Congregations to purchase a computer for the sanctuary video system, microphones, and a video system for the fellowship hall. The congregation also received two large bequests from the sainted Gil Kahre and Paul Schnute. As an advocate of Lutheran education, Gil's bequest of \$50,000 was given to the school and helped the early childhood ministry continue during COVID. As a former member of St. Paul's and a former treasurer of the congregation, 10% of Paul's bequest of \$50,000 was designated to support the LMAC food pantry with the balance going to shore up the congregation's cash reserves during the uncertain times of COVID.

Despite the bareness of the church calendar during 2020, God's faithful stewards learned to continue worship, work, and fellowship in many creative ways. Boards "zoomed" online or social distanced in the fellowship hall. Bible class continued in the parish hall and online. The youth group met for outdoor devotions and a bonfire and scavenger hunt, wore masks as they built holiday gingerbread houses, and sang to shut-ins through a video recording of their carols in a social-distanced Christmas tree formation in the sanctuary. Manger scenes lined the hallway in Advent, and the preschool Christmas program was attended in person by only the staff and children while family members watched a livestream of the service. Pastor Temme provided *YouTube* video devotions on the Lord's Prayer. He closed the devotion on the Fourth Petition with the following prayer.



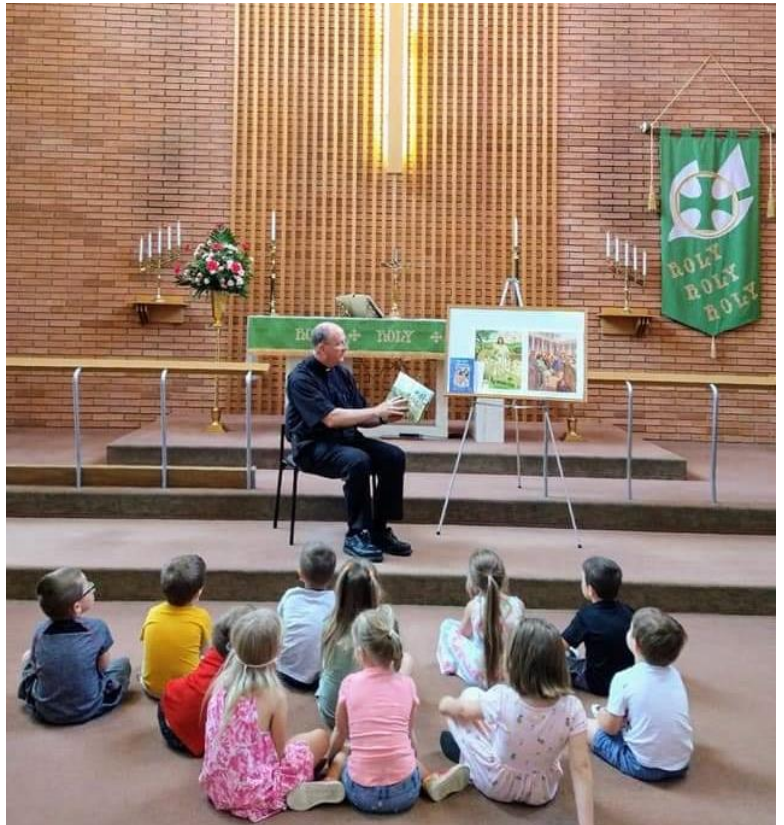
"Lord God, Heavenly Father, you indeed provide our daily bread, everything we need to support this body and life, each and every day. We give you thanks, especially in this time of national crisis, for providing us with food and shelter, electrical power and light, devout family and faithful neighbors, caring

employers and honest workers. Grant our national and local governments wisdom and discernment to guard our welfare and provide relief for those who have lost jobs and income. Guard and protect our first responders, doctors and nurses, and all health care professionals as they serve to keep us safe and well in health. Bring our nation to repentance for all our sins and turn us again to faith in you. Grant our petitions and receive our thanks for every blessing you provide through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

In 2021 the pastors and board of elders continued worship precautions by masking, wearing gloves, and distributing Communion in the pew on a paper plate passed to the parishioners. Worshippers placed their contributions in an offering plate in the narthex, picked up their bulletin from a table with hand sanitizer, and sat in every other pew, marked with blue tape. Masks were optional for the Sunday morning service and mandated for the Saturday morning service. To promote personal and family Bible study while isolated, Pastor Temme provided a *Daily Meditation on the Old Testament* in the weekly bulletin and on the website. Some called it “the new normal.”

However, the number of COVID cases and fatalities peaked in January of 2021 and continued to decline as vaccines became available. Bible class and church attendance increased as members came back to gather in person. The youth group played volleyball (with masks), enjoyed a socially distanced Superbowl party, and hunted glow-in-the-dark eggs outside. Safety protocols remained strict for the Easter sunrise service, but members again gathered in the fellowship hall for the LLL breakfast, and worshippers in the late service spaced themselves by household at the Communion rail. As cautious members felt confident to leave the tight requirements of the Saturday morning service and return to worship on Sunday morning, the Saturday service returned to its “normal” 6:30 p.m. evening time.

Due to the Lord’s protection and the diligence of the preschool staff and board of education, the preschool continued uninterrupted throughout the school year without any known cases of COVID. The preschool end-of-year program and graduation on May 19 was attended in person by all the families who enjoyed a cake reception in the fellowship hall. The board of education made plans to expand the preschool by offering care for two-year-olds in a junior preschool program. With this additional service, the early childhood ministry opened in August with 25 children.



Shown right are the preschool staff for 2021: Katie Jo Wilson, Director Breenna Smith, Trisha Letterman, and Linda Temme.

Communities continued to open up in the summer as evidenced by an attendance of 300 adults and 80 children at Darmstadt Day on June 5 where almost no masks were visible. Contributions of \$1,000 matched by the Mission category of the Legacy Fund went to *Youth First of Southwest Indiana*.



On the weekend of July 17th and 18th, worship services returned to normal as the blue tape was pulled off the pews, the offering plates were passed, and parishioners gathered side by side at the altar rail. The following Sunday, 70 unmasked members and guests gathered in the fellowship hall for a mission festival meal and presentation of missionaries Pastor Michael and Irene Paul from Taiwan.



The annual church picnic resumed in August with a potluck, ice cream floats, bingo, clabber, cornhole, and prizes (shown right).

After 32 years of service, the Fun Fundraisers retired the food booth from the annual Fall Festival. Over those years, many congregation members enjoyed working side by side in conversation, fellowship, and service as they prepared food and worked shifts in the booth. Proceeds from the festival booth were used to fund many special projects for the church, including office furniture and equipment, school desks and chairs, sports equipment, vacation Bible school, sermon



tape duplicator, gifts for staff and moving expenses, kitchen equipment, roof, gym sound system, scholarship fund, and music instruments.

Shown on the right are some of the Trinity members who had volunteered to prepare food for the Fall Festival.

Shown below working the food booth at the Fall Festival in 2019 are Alan and Paula Reininga, Gary Gann, Sue Laughbaum, and Silas Temme.



On October 30, Trinity celebrated the 504th anniversary of the Reformation. The congregation, choir, and instrumentalists praised the Lord for preserving the truth of His Word using Martin Luther's Divine Service V with many hymns of the Lutheran Reformers. The Lord built and preserved the Lutheran Church for over 500 years, and He has built and preserved Trinity Lutheran Church in Darmstadt for 175 of those years.



On a blustery day on October 31, the congregation hosted a Trunk or Treat, organized by Sue Laughbaum (shown below). 150 children and adults enjoyed donning their costumes, receiving treats from trunk to trunk, eating hot dogs and polish sausage, and viewing the Scott Township fire trucks.



In November Pastor and Sara Knea directed another successful Operation Christmas Child collection. At its location, the congregation collected 305 shoeboxes with gifts for impoverished children and loaded 16,695 boxes onto trucks as the regional collection point for southwest Indiana.



The altar guild, directed by Linda Rae Korff, decorated the church for the Christmas season with trees and angels, bows and greenery, and poinsettias donated by congregation members. The altar guild and some of their men help are shown on the left.

On December 15, the preschool sang of Jesus' birth at their Christmas program directed by Breenna Smith. 130 parents, children, and congregation members gathered for the worship service in the sanctuary and a reception in the parish hall.



Over many decades, Trinity has been served especially by three faithful ushers. Shown right are Dean Wathen, Alan Letterman, and Mark Pries, who has also served as congregation treasurer for 14 years.

The congregation received a generous bequest from the sainted Lois Kahre. The voters approved her family's suggestion to use the funds to install a projector and screen in the sanctuary. The projection of the liturgy and hymns helps guests, parents holding children, and the congregation sing with heads lifted up. The screen was first used in worship on December 19. Shown on the right are three members of the rotating tech committee: Alan Letterman, who built the sound and video cabinet and directed the installation of the screen and projector, Linda Sue Korff, and Diana Dunkelbarger. That same day, the congregation and community enjoyed the Advent Music Concert in the sanctuary. The program, entitled *God's Messengers Foretell and Proclaim Christ's Birth*, featured the choir, handbell players, organ and piano, a string quintet, and percussionists.



Shown below is the church lighted for the Christmas season. The wise men and manger scene are courtesy of Jim Kahre and the Lutheran Laymen's League.



On Christmas Eve the congregation rejoiced at the traditional candle-light service, singing *Silent Night*. On Christmas morning the congregation celebrated God's grace and deliverance in the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ for its 174th Christmas.

The Feast of Tabernacles

And they found it written in the Law that the LORD had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month . . . So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. . . And there was very great rejoicing. And day by day, from the first day to the last day, [Ezra] read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule. (Nehemiah 8:14, 16-18)

The LORD commanded through Moses that every year in the seventh month the Israelites were to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Every year for one week they were to leave the comfort of their home and dwell in booths, temporary shelters, or tents. It was a yearly reminder to them of God's deliverance of their forefathers when they journeyed through the wilderness and lived in tents. For forty years God preserved them in the desert. Their sandals, clothing, and tents did not wear out. God miraculously fed them their daily bread with manna and quenched their thirst with water from a rock to drink. Every year at the Feast of Tabernacles the Israelites read the Word of God, looked back, and remembered how the LORD delivered them in times of affliction, uncertainty, and trial. Every year they celebrated how the LORD brought them into the Promised Land. And every year they looked forward with hope to God's promised Messiah who would save them forever. It was 1400 years later at the Feast of Tabernacles when Jesus stood up in the Temple and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" (John 7:37-38) The Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us. (John 1:14) In Christ, that tabernacle was destroyed and raised again in three days for the salvation of the world. (John 2:19-21)

The year of Trinity Darmstadt's 175th anniversary in 2022 will be a sort of Feast of Tabernacles for our congregation. Throughout the year of 2022, we will look back and remember the Lord's creation, deliverance, and preservation of our church over the last 175 years. By rereading Chet Behrmann's *150 Christmases* and reading this 25-year history, *Built on Christ, Crucified and Risen, Trinity Lutheran Church Shall Stand*, we remember the Lord's work among us and give glory to Him. By reading the Word of God every day this year through the *Daily Meditation on the New Testament*, we will remember how Christ builds His universal Church to stand for all time in the priesthood of all believers. Finally, we will also remember and celebrate with many feasts and festivities throughout the year. With the help of our church leadership and boards, the anniversary committee has planned many events, old and new, to help us reminisce, remember, and praise God for all His blessings. Through feast and famine, through tempest and calm, through trial and perseverance, through razing the old and raising the new, Christ builds His Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. Built on Christ, crucified and risen, Trinity Lutheran Church shall stand.



Rev. Dr. Stan Temme
The Epiphany of Our Lord, 2022

175th Anniversary Offering Renovation of Sanctuary

King Joash Repairs the Temple

⁴ After this Joash decided to restore the house of the LORD. ⁵ And he gathered the priests and the Levites and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you act quickly."

*⁸ So the king commanded, and they made a chest and set it outside the gate of the house of the LORD. ⁹ And proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring in for the LORD the tax that Moses the servant of God laid on Israel in the wilderness. ¹⁰ And all the princes and all the people rejoiced and brought their offering and dropped it into the chest until they had finished. ¹¹ And whenever the chest was brought to the king's officers by the Levites, when they saw that there was much money in it, the king's secretary and the officer of the chief priest would come and empty the chest and take it and return it to its place. Thus they did day after day, and collected money in abundance. ¹² And the king and Jehoiada gave it to those who had charge of the work of the house of the LORD, and they hired masons and carpenters to restore the house of the LORD, and also workers in iron and bronze to repair the house of the LORD. ¹³ So those who were engaged in the work labored, and the repairing went forward in their hands, and they restored the house of God to its proper condition and strengthened it.
(2 Chronicles 24:4-5, 8-13)*

When King Joash and the priests noticed that the Temple was in disrepair, the leadership organized a special offering to restore the house of the Lord. The people rejoiced and brought their offering with willing hearts because they remembered what the Lord had done for them.

In this anniversary year, we also remember what the Lord has done for us. Through the offerings of His saints at Trinity Darmstadt, through the bequests of His saints now in heaven, and through special gifts and grants from His Church in Indiana and beyond, the Lord has blessed us with the resources for ministry to our members and community, mission to those in need, and expansion and maintenance of our campus. In these last 25 years we supported the education of youth through the Lutheran day school and now carry on that ministry tradition with the startup of an early childhood ministry. Our mission offerings support the LMAC and LCOC, families in need, and our District and Synod which includes our seminaries, support staff, and world relief. Through their generosity, our members have replaced the roofs on our church and school, renovated the school and playground, rebuilt the wall and beautified the cemetery, repaved the parking lot, built a parish hall with a kitchen, offices, restrooms, and meeting rooms, renovated the narthex, choir loft, sacristy, and music room, replaced the HVAC system, and installed a new organ.

There is one area of our campus, however, that we have not touched, and yet it is also in need of restoration: the church sanctuary where we weekly receive our Lord's most precious gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation in His Word and Sacrament. For our church's centennial celebration, a special offering was given to renovate the old church which had stood for 66 years. For our 175th anniversary, we take up a special offering for the renovation of our current church which has now stood for 63 years. The renovations will restore our sanctuary and make needed repairs. Our two-year goal of \$175,000 will give our congregation an opportunity to celebrate what the Lord has done for us and respond to His many blessings as His joyful and thankful stewards.

The Anniversary Committee

Charlie Jackson (Chairman)	Crystal Kahre	Trisha Letterman	Jeff Sensmeier
Chuck Fellwock	Ron Korff	Cherokee Meadows	Rev. Stan Temme
Kandi Jackson	Sue Laughbaum	Julia Meadows	

Officers, Boards, and Committee Members for 2022

Chairman

Charlie Jackson

Assistant Chairman

Jarrold Sights

Treasurer

Mark Pries

Recording Secretary

Kandi Jackson

Financial Secretary

Dean Kahre

Board of Elders

Keith Kahre – Director

Gary Gann

Ray Laughbaum

Alan Letterman

Jeff Sensmeier

Board of Properties

Alan Letterman – Director

Ray Laughbaum

Alan Reininga

Board of Stewardship

Valerie Eberhart – Director

Kathy Bumb

Diana Dunkelbarger

Dean Kahre

Board of Youth Fellowship

Kandi Jackson

Josh Korff

Linda Temme

Board of Social Ministry

Crystal Kahre – Director

Linda Brock

Kathy Bumb

Shae Otto

Kailyn Sights

Board of Finance

Jeff Sensmeier – Director

John Brock

Gary Gann

Jarrold Sights

Board of Outreach

Cherokee Meadows – Dir.

Chuck Fellwock

Theresa Hoffherr

Julia Meadows

Jarrold Sights

Board of Parish Fellowship

Trisha Letterman – Director

Linda Brock

Hazel English

Nancy Korff

Elljean Nichols

Kathy Ramsey

Board of Education

Sue Laughbaum – Director

Sara Knea

Dana Meyer

Shae Otto

Cemetery Board

Ron Korff – Sexton

Dean Kahre

Jerry Nichols

Synodical Representative

Jim Kahre – Alternate

LMAC Representative

Jim Kahre

Altar Circle

Linda Rae Korff – Director

Linda Brock

Kathy Bumb

Diana Dunkelbarger

Valerie Eberhart

Hazel English

Anitra Gann

Kathy Gilkey

Linda Sue Korff

Nancy Korff

Liz Krietemeyer

Glenna Reininga

Karol Robbins

Staff for 2022

Senior Pastor

Rev. Stan Temme

Assistant Pastor

Rev. Keith Knea

Office Manager

Trisha Letterman

Organist

Kevin Ellerbusch

Director of Music

Jeff Sensmeier

Handbell Director

Paula Reininga

Preschool Director

Breenna Smith

Teacher Aids

Trisha Letterman

Linda Temme

Katie Jo Wilson

2022 Calendar of Events

January 16 – Sanctity of Life Sunday

January 23 – Anniversary kickoff with refreshments after worship
(Members view commemorative items and receive an updated pictorial directory and the 25-year history with calendar of events and information on the anniversary offering.)

February 6 – Organ Recital and Hymn Festival at 3pm with reception following

March 2 – Ash Wednesday at 7pm begins Lent season (Christ in the Festivals of the Old Testament)

April 16 – Easter Eve Prayer Vigil (Congregation gathers for prayer, readings, and hymns.)

April 17 – LLL Easter Breakfast at 8am followed by Easter worship service at 9:30am

May 22 – Confirmation Sunday and Confirmation Reunion

May 18 – Preschool End of Year Program at 6:30pm with cake and punch reception

June 4 – Darmstadt Day and 175th Birthday Party Celebration with community

June 5 – Pentecost

June 12 – Trinity Sunday with guest preacher Pastor Keller and dinner following worship
(Viewing of the video “Stories from the Past” with display of pictures and archives)

July 17 – Festival of Cars in a Parking Lot Worship Service
(Final hymn in the sanctuary followed by refreshments and social gathering in the parish hall)

August 28 – Church Picnic after worship

September 18 – Heritage Sunday with President Lawrence Rast of Ft. Wayne Seminary
(Dr. Rast preaches at 9:30am service, gives first presentation at 11am, noon lunch, second presentation at 1:00pm, followed by Vespers service at 2:00pm)

October 16 – Loyalty Sunday with banquet, speaker, and recognition of faithful servants

October 30 – Hosting of Joint Reformation Service at 3pm followed by dinner in the parish hall

October 31 – Trunk or Treat

November 14-21 – Operation Christmas Child collection

November 23 – Thanksgiving Eve Service at 7pm followed by Pie Fellowship

December 3 – Pancake Breakfast with Manger Scene Extravaganza

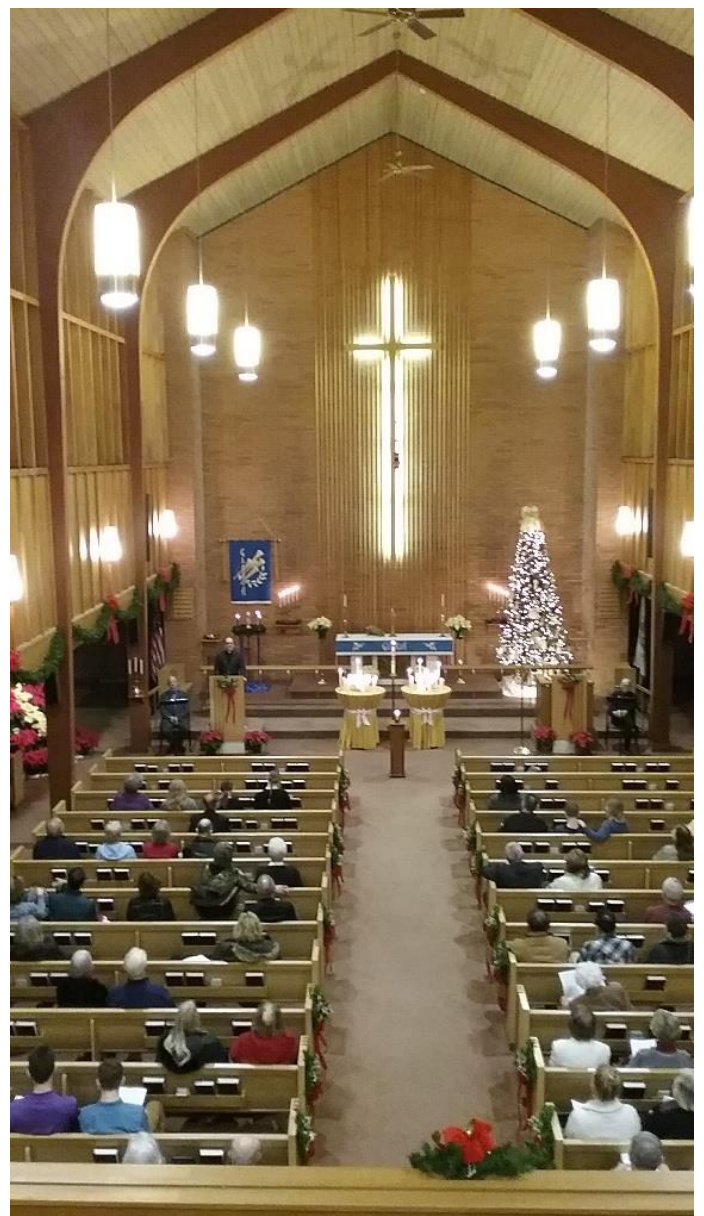
December 18 – Advent Concert and Dinner

December 24/25 – Christmas Eve Service at 7pm and Christmas Day Service at 9am



Shown on the left is the stained-glass window in the rear of the sanctuary depicting Jesus Christ, symbols of the Trinity, symbols of the Beatitudes, the four evangelists, and an angel of prayer.

Shown below is the Advent Concert,
Holy Light – A Candlelight Service of Carols,
December 15, 2019



Jesus Christ, the Son of God, welcomes His Church,
built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles
and raised with the living stones of His saints, with
Himself as the chief cornerstone.

