

# Trinity Lutheran Church History: 2016

## Secular and Ecumenical Context

Internationally, the World Health Association announced an outbreak of the mosquito born Zika virus in January of 2016. The outbreak spread from Africa and Asia to the Americas. In February, North Korea launched a rocket into space. In March, President Barak Obama visited Cuba, the first sitting president to visit since 1928. In April, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hits Ecuador killing at least 350 people and injuring thousands. In June, the UK voted to leave the European Union this is also known as Brexit [British exit]. In July, a terrorist drove through a crowd at a Bastille Day Celebration in Nice and killed at least 84 people and wounded 200 others. In August, the summer Olympics were held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, however due to concerns of the Zika virus some athletes chose not to participate. In October, Hurricane Matthew hit the Eastern Caribbean and Haiti before hitting the East Coast of the United States. In November, Fidel Castro, Cuba's controversial revolutionary leader, died at the age of 90.

In US news, the Presidential Election dominated the news throughout 2016. Hillary Clinton became the Democratic nominee and Donald Trump became the Republican nominee. In June, a shooter at a night club in Orlando killed at least 50 people. In July, many people began playing "Pokémon Go" with a smart phone app. The game became very popular though it was also the cause of some controversy and accidents. On Nov. 2nd, the Chicago Cubs won the World Series, their first World Series win since 1908. On November 8, 2016, Republican nominee Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in the general election.

## **2016 Events at Trinity are summarized here by Beth Confrancisco in the letter she submitted for the annual report:**

*"Psalm 133:1 How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! 2016 turned out to be a year full of surprises, blessings, and most of all, transitions!

In February, at the same Church Council meeting, Jeffrey Estabrook, Treasurer for 21 years, announced his retirement from that position, effective at the end of March; then Pastor David Rinas, Pastor for 14 years, announced his retirement to be effective the following June. Although a bit stunned, the Church Council accepted both resignations. Scott Morrison, Ed Jonson, and Kate Conran very adeptly led the church council, as well as Trinity, to begin both transition processes.

Bette Sponholtz very graciously set aside her recent retirement to act as Treasurer until a full-time Treasurer can be identified. Bette has done an outstanding job continuing Jeff's work while updating the technology and processes to streamline the systems until the next Treasurer fills the position.

The New England Synod was notified of Pastor Dave's retirement and immediately the "Transition Process" began with Trinity leaders meeting with our Synod contact, Tim Roser, to prepare for our next pastor. Preparations began to give Pastor Dave a retirement dinner/barbeque and program to celebrate his years at Trinity. In June, Pastor Dave, and his wife, Doreen, were gifted 2 rocking chairs and an entire farm was donated to the World Hunger Appeal in their names. Many thanks to Helen Blaschke, with the help of Forrest Badmington, for coordinating the catering, the rented tent, chairs, tables, the World Hunger Gift, ticket selling, and all the aspects of this event that no one even knows about.

The Synod office assigned Pastor Dennis Walker as Trinity's contact pastor during the transition process. Members of the congregation came forward to lead the three transition committees: Jon Soule/ Transition Committee; Jim Ray/Call Committee; and Pauline Ray/Start-Up Committee. The congregation participated in the CAT (Congregational Assessment Tool) Survey and came to learn that Trinity is a vibrant congregation that feels settled and content. As a result, the congregation is using the shortest transition process available. As of this writing, Trinity is deep into the "Call" part of the

transition process. All are asked to continue to pray for our congregation, as well as the candidate God is calling to lead us.

Further transition activity arrived in October when Daniel Endow, our beloved and very talented church musician, was accepted to graduate school in Los Angeles. His last participation at Trinity worship happened on Christmas Day whereupon he got in his car and started to drive west. His successor, René Rivers, begins in early 2017.

In the meantime, together, our congregation moves forward. Our Christian Education program continues to thrive under the supervision of Dina Morrison. First Communion and Confirmation continue, as well as Family Fun Nights (including the building of The Luther Rose made entirely of Legos!). Our youth have wonderful mentors! Our Youth Ministry program needs your help to continue to serve and grow our youth into the remarkable people they have the potential to become.

Our other committees have performed wonderful work over the calendar year! Worship & Music has filled the pulpit every week, continuing with the Narrative Lectionary, and overseeing the beautiful work of the Altar Guild. The Fellowship Committee has continued to oversee funeral luncheons, Advent suppers, our triennial observance of the Sankta Lucia Festival, TrinityFest VI and other events. Social Ministry continues working with the St. Paul's Soup Kitchen, the Lowell Open Pantry, Habitat for Humanity, RIM, and the Seafarer's Mission. Also, the Alternative Giving Fair was very successfully held again this year with proceeds going to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. The Evangelism Committee continues to send cards to members, arranges trips and events, and oversees communion calls to our homebound members.

Trinity also saw substantial changes to the church property. In June, renovations began to restore/revive the brick apron around the sanctuary. This turned out to be a huge job, following the redesign and installation of a new drainage system the previous autumn. With the new roof, drainage system, and new walls/stone beds, the sanctuary outside has been given new life and is much more appealing. Work was also done to improve our Lounge. There's now a beautiful kitchenette with new cabinets, lighting, refrigerator, sink, and microwave to help out with the needs of the groups that meet in that room. The apartment is in the midst of update with new windows, appliances, kitchen cabinets and paint. Kudos to Jim Ray and the Property Committee on these jobs well done! Planning also continues on the Ramp/Bathrooms Project, as contractor bids are being evaluated currently.

We're thankful for the reliability and perseverance of our parish administrator, Beth Confrancisco, and our sexton, Bob Donnelly, who see to it that our building and our ministries are cared for, equipped, organized, and in good order.

2016 has been a turbulent year in the larger world: the number of celebrity deaths that have tugged at the public's heartstrings; the serious anxiety surrounding the oddest presidential election season in memory, the increase of violent crimes in our country, as well as change and revolution all around the planet. However, with the unrest in the greater world, and all the surprises at Trinity, together our congregation continues to persevere and move forward. Gifted and committed lay leadership have seen to all the needs of the congregation, much like the early church as recorded in the book of Acts.

*Acts 2:43-47* <sup>43</sup>*Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

As long as we continue to look for God, He will show up. Clearly, He is seeing that the events happening at Trinity will turn out for the good in the future. 2017 has the possibility to be an eventful and very exciting year for our Trinity. Doing life together accomplishes more than working alone.

In His service,

Beth Confrancisco

**Parish Administrator"**

## 2016 TLC Statistical Data

### AVERAGE ATTENDANCE

September through May | 163

June through August | 105

### MEMBERSHIP

Baptized membership | 710

### New Members – 8

1/24 Pam Goloski

1/24 Lois & Stanley Reible

5/8 Phillip Stahmer

5/8 Jennifer, Rob, Jack, & Chloe St. Peter

### Baptisms – 3

4/10 Michael Pierce O'Connor

5/29 Rebekah Austin Thatcher

5/29 Zachary Lawrence Thatcher

### Confirmations – 6

5/15 Eric Carlos Blankenship

5/15 Olivia Augusta L'Italien

5/15 Britta Bay Geraghty

5/15 Hannah Grace Polce

5/15 Christian Frederic Hatke

5/15 Benjamin Lee Soule

### Funerals – 6

2/3 Jeffrey Nelson Lane

9/17 Ronald Steriti

N/A Barbara A. Kadlec

10/8 Linda Mallinson

4/8 Morgan K. Mateer

11/12 Isabel L. Zinser

### Marriages – 1

10/15 Shelby Anne Miller & Jonathan Serge Marokhovsky

### Church Leadership

Pastor through June | The Reverend David Rinas

Contact pastor during transition throughout the remainder of the year | The Reverend Dennis Walker

Congregational President | Scott Morrison