



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Norfolk, Virginia
Praising the Lord for 100 years of Grace
1920-2020



100th Anniversary—April 2020 Issue

Trinity Expands Over the Years—New Church Dedicated in 1945



Trinity expanded quickly during the WWII years and by the early 40's it became clear that a larger church was needed. So plans were drawn up for a new church and social/educational hall in the newly developing area across the Granby Street Bridge, close to DePaul Hospital... not far from Trinity's first church on 34th St. The plan included an additional ministry - Kindergarten!

Fred Remstedt, Milton Johnson, Herb Tamm, Pastor Plawin, and George Nolde break ground for the new church in 1944; construction begins and within a year the church is completed. Notice on sign - George Nolde, the businessman from Richmond, was chairman of the building committee. Fred Remstedt and his three sons were long-time members of Trinity; the others were business men who came to the area during the war.

Trinity went from the small church on 34th and Omohundro Ave. to its present Granby Street location in 1945... and that was followed by a number of rapid expansions over a 20-year period to the sanctuary, Sunday School space and educational wing for Trinity Lutheran School during the fifties and sixties under Pastor Plawin's leadership.



The Dedication Service for the new church was held on Sept. 9, 1945, 3:30 p.m. Notice there were no extensions to the church on either side at that time, the altar from the old church was used and the choir sat up front to the right of the chancel. ...the balcony was all seating. Also notice chairs in the aisle...a Naval officer on one... and no stained glass window or eternal light at this point... and notice the ladies in their hats

The new church on Granby Street had a sanctuary, a Sunday School/social hall, pastor's office, kitchen and restrooms. Kindergarten began that first year. Notice there was a cross but no steeple initially... that was added later, as well as a new hall, School wing, enlargements to both sides of the church and a parking lot.



The choir sat next to the chancel. Minerva Wilson was organist and choir director. Trafton Robertson (far right in the men's row) graced Trinity with his solos for many years.... including "Were You There" on Good Friday. He was a Lutheran as well as a radio personality in the area.

Trinity Opens Its First Kindergarten in 1945..in a New Granby Hall



Pastor Plawin opened Trinity's first kindergarten in 1945 in the new Granby Hall. Kindergarten was not offered in Norfolk public schools at that time, and he knew that children's early education could be combined with sharing the Gospel. Pastor Plawin offered religious instruction every morning using flannel graph boards to tell the Bible stories. Women of the church served as teachers and others, including Pastor Plawin, served as drivers to pick up children in their station wagons. Trinity's kindergarten grew and sowed seeds for developing Trinity Lutheran School with grades 1 – 5. TLS became a pivotal force in keeping Trinity alive... many families were brought into Trinity through the school.

A stage and classroom space were behind the closed wooden doors and the kitchen was to the right in this photo

Belvedere Hall, North Transept, 2 Classrooms and 3 Offices Added in 1952

Trinity grew quickly at its new location and expansion was needed. The additions in 1952 included Belvedere Hall, North transept for additional church seating, two classrooms, pastor's office, meeting room and work room (now church office). The old Granby Hall became an overflow seating area for the church...behind where the Bell Choir is located today.



Groundbreaking for
Belvedere Hall

Additions to North
side of church -
offices, transept and
classrooms



Granby Hall (1940-1952) Sunday School

This photo of Granby Hall was taken from the stage, the door in the back led to the church, people are facing Belvedere Road. The kitchen was to the left and the pastor's study was next to that. Children sat on little red benches (today they are gray). When Belvedere Hall was constructed this hall became an extra seating area for church overflow (today it's the Bell Choir, library and classroom on Belvedere Road side)



Belvedere Hall (1952-Today) Sunday School

This Photo was taken from the stage as well but the people are facing the parking lot. Partitions, which you see in the back (right) were used to section off the hall into S.S. classes. The doorway led to restrooms and Belvedere Road entrance. The kitchen remained in the same area. At this time the north transept of the church, classrooms and office space were added.

South Transept for additional church seating added in 1954

Trinity continued to grow and additional seating was needed in the church so the south transept of the sanctuary on the Belvedere Road side of the building was added in 1954. Parking was also needed so in 1956 the property next to the church on South Ridgely Road was purchased for a parking lot. Air Conditioning for the church was installed in 1956.



Educational wing added in 1963



Trinity Lutheran School continued to grow as well and the decision was made to take the school up to the 5th grade. In 1963 the education wing with 2 floors of classrooms was added to the Belvedere Road side of the church. The front portico was eventually enclosed to allow for better access to the classrooms.

At this time the eternal light was added to the sanctuary as well as two 7-branch candelabras. The cross and brick wall marquee on the front lawn were added as well.

Renovation of Sanctuary for Trinity's 75th Anniversary in 1995

In thanksgiving to God's blessings, Trinity's people renovated the sanctuary and made other improvements in 1995 - the 75th anniversary of Trinity. That included asbestos tile removal, new ceramic tile floor, new carpeting, refinishing of church pews, painting, free standing altar, new pulpit and lectern base, replacement windows throughout building, new church sign & exterior lighting. During renovations, services were held in Belvedere Hall.



Moving out the old altar



Ready for painting, new tile and carpet



Kitchen Renovation in 2000

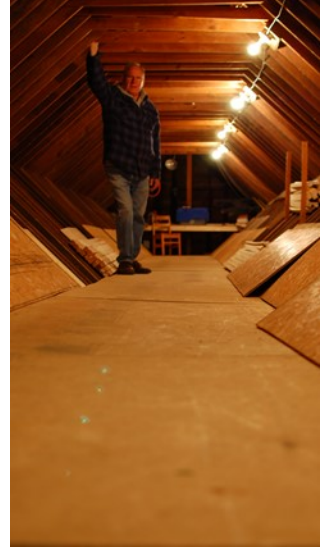
Trinity's kitchen has always been in the same location and has always been a center of activity, hard work, camaraderie and joy! In the early days women of the LWML held turkey dinners to raise funds for their ministry. Back then most families couldn't afford to eat out... it was something really special. By 2000 it was evident the kitchen needed updating. Pastor O'Connor led the effort. Much work and ministry is done in the kitchen preparing food for Lenten suppers, Easter breakfasts, funeral receptions and feeding the hungry. Whether in the "old" kitchen or "new", there was always joy in serving others.



Old timers Bertha Hart, Sybil Clayburn and Margaret Conrad enjoy the space and decor of the new kitchen as they clean Communion ware. They now enjoy their heavenly home.

Garden, Picnic Tables, Storage Shed and Toy Shed Added Outside

A “teaching” vegetable garden for Trinity Lutheran School students and picnic tables were added on Belvedere Road side of the church. A storage shed was constructed by men of the church in 2012 as well as a toy shed in 2013. Renovation to Belvedere Hall Attic made it a much needed storage space.



Trinity Expands Through Neighborhood Evangelism

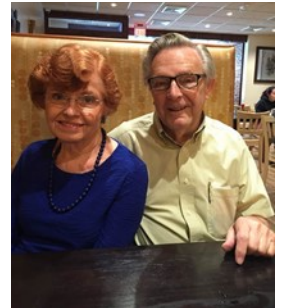
Evangelism was taking hold in the LCMS and at Trinity, bringing into the faith those who had never heard of Martin Luther or of this Lutheran denomination among liturgical churches. As soon as the church moved to Granby Street, Pastor Plawin organized women of the church to canvass the neighborhood and invite children to Sunday School. It was successful and new faces began to show up.

Trinity's outreach also included people living in the new church's neighborhood. One of those was Margaret Bering, the mother of Jean Boyette and grandmother of Janice Gwin, both of whom sit in Trinity's pews today. Pastor Plawin visited Margaret and Gilbert Bering who lived on Granby Street adjacent to the new church, he ministered to them and eventually most of the family became dedicated members of Trinity. That included Jean who was active in LWML and Jean's husband, Johnny, who served as a deacon; and their daughter Janice who heads the Worship Board and is active in LWML.



Others in the neighborhood were Lutherans who made Trinity their home. Ruth Kaufman, who came to America from Latvia after WWII as a bride of an American soldier, was already a Lutheran. The family settled in Belvedere and she's been an active lifelong member of Trinity ever since. She was a Sunday School teacher for years and active in LWML. Ruth and Jean became close friends and active in Trinity's ministry.

Martha and Ray Johnson are another couple who made their way to Trinity from a neighborhood close to the church. Martha was the Lutheran. Her parents were Lutherans from Minnesota. She moved to Norfolk when she married Ray. Martha visited Trinity and it wasn't long before she had a stream of Trinity visitors to welcome her - Helen Everett, Jean Boyette and Margaret Hecht Conrad and of course Pastor Plawin. Martha and Ray and their children became part of Trinity. The three oldest children attended Trinity kindergarten and Martha taught the Kindergarten Sunday School class for 30 years. She's a well remembered teacher!



The parents of Jackie Czipinski, James and Betty Vaughan, lived in the Belvedere neighborhood and connected with Trinity in the 50's. When Jackie and her husband lost their first child, baby daughter Heidi, her parents sent Pastor Plawin to visit them. His message was comforting, he spoke of Job. By the time another daughter, Becky, was born they had started attending Trinity and soon became members. Jackie is an artist and painted a portrait of Pastor Plawin. She is also an avid supporter of Trinity's music and the pipe organ. And an interesting side note: Baby Heidi's grave stone is just feet away from Pastor Plawin's.

The senior Vaughans were active members of Trinity for many years. James (JD) served as a Trustee and used his talent as an electrician to keep the church furnace going. Both he and his wife, Betty, were lovers of music and supporters of Trinity getting a pipe organ in 1966. They became good friends of Larry Palmer, the new organist and music professor at Norfolk State College. Their son, Jim, joined Trinity as well and became an active member and supporter of the church.