



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



100th Anniversary—November 2020 Issue

## Trinity's Music Over the Years

Music has always been important in worship. David sang psalms. The angels sang at Jesus' birth. Jesus gave his disciples the Lord's Supper and they sang a hymn together before making their way to the Mount of Olives. Martin Luther wrote *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, affirming that our sins are forgiven by God's Grace. We sing hymns handed down through the ages and new hymns as well. We praise God and receive spiritual strength from the words and tunes. Trinity has been blessed over the years with talented organists, pianists, soloists, musicians, choir members, a pipe organ, a bell choir, pastoral chanting and beautiful hymns - all enhancing our worship. Here are some of those people:

### John Wunnenberg

In its very early days Trinity was blessed with having members of the congregation who were organists - John Wunnenberg being the first. Back then Trinity held a church service/church picnic in the summertime at the YMCA Beach Club. The small push-pedal organ used in Sunday School was carried down to the beach by Trinity's organist, Mr. Wunnenberg, and the boys from "Trinity's band". The boys also played large horns which they carried down to the beach as well. It was a memorable time for all.

### Minerva Wilson

Minerva Wilson was the first organist to play Trinity's new electronic organ which was installed at Trinity in 1947. Mrs. Wilson drove to Trinity from her home in Newport News. She directed the choir and accompanied soloists for 13 years.



Notice the organist and choir members wore robes. In those early days the choir loft and organ were located to the right of the altar. When that area was expanded into the North Transept for more seating, the church balcony was enlarged to accommodate the organ and choir.



### Elizabeth Edler

Elizabeth Edler formed a girls choir in addition to the adult choir at Trinity. Girls couldn't acolyte in the "old days" so the Girls Choir was very popular. The girls gathered after choir practice to socialize and enjoy dinner together.

### Larry Palmer

Larry Palmer was a music professor at Norfolk State University when he became organist at Trinity - about the time the new pipe organ was installed at Trinity. The organ was built by Mr. Wetzel of Charlottesville, VA, and was installed in 1966. It had been a dream of Pastor Plawin's, he got to see and hear the organ before he went to his heavenly home later that year. Palmer wrote Trinity's 50th Anniversary hymn, *All Glorious God*, which has been sung ever since. He left the area in the early 70s and has presented concerts and recitals in more than forty states and six European countries.





## Charles Ford

Charles Ford was a student of Dr. Palmer's at Norfolk State College and became the next organist at Trinity after Palmer left. He had a beautiful voice and sang solos when Palmer was organist. He went on to a 40 year career as Minister of Music for Main Street Baptist Church. He was a musical icon in Hampton Roads.

## Lee Hendricks

Lee Hendricks was Director of Music at Trinity for 25 years. He was hired right after graduating from East Carolina University School of Music where he majored in both organ and sacred music. The old Red Hymnal was in use when he arrived but a new hymnal was introduced during his tenure in 1982. It had new settings for the liturgy and some hymns that were unfamiliar to LCMS congregations. (Another new hymnal followed in 2006 - the one in use today.) Lee and Pastor O'Connor worked to create the Bach Festival to celebrate the Reformation and invite the community in. Soloists and musicians were drawn from Trinity's own people and from local colleges. It was a memorable event.



## Kai Lin

Kai Lin is from China. He graduated from Shanghai Conservatory of Music and did graduate work at Ohio University School of Music and the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati when he moved to the United States. He served Trinity as Director of Music for 15 years and enhanced the Bach Festival with his music contacts at Old Dominion University. He used Trinity's own musicians as well. Kai wrote music and the congregation heard some of those pieces as the worship service opening preludes.



## Stephen Pruitt

Stephen grew up in the Tidewater area of Virginia in Newport News and Williamsburg. He received a Bachelor of Music degree in organ performance and choral conducting from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. He also graduated from Concordia University Wisconsin with a Master of Church Music degree with concentrations in organ, choral, and handbells. Stephen has served a number of congregations before coming to Trinity as Director of Music. He encourages people to join in and has helped to enhance Trinity's services with special music from Trinity's bell choir (Joyful Ringers) and vocal choir (Trinity Chorale).

The Congregation came out to welcome Stephen and Diane to Trinity at a reception on July 22, 2018. The LWML sponsored the reception in their honor including music notes on the tables.





## Trinity Bell Choirs

Trinity has had bell choirs for years. The current bells were a generous donation from Herb and Marion Wittersheim. Not only were they played in worship services but also played by the students at Trinity Lutheran School. It's amazing how many people - most of whom had no experience with playing an instrument - succeeded in learning to play the bells. These bell choirs have had many directors over the years, including Karen O'Connor, Cathy George and currently Stephen Pruitt.



## Trinity Vocal Choirs and Soloists

Trinity has been blessed with those who love to praise the Lord with music. Our choirs sometimes consisted of just soprano and alto voices and others times were joined by tenors and basses. Trinity has also been blessed with church members who shared an occasional solo. Among the longest serving were Trafton Robertson, Jane Miller and Lynn Hubert. Trinity has also had many talented members who have shared their instrumental solos with us. In most recent years they have included David Chadwick (saxophone and clarinet), Mary Anne Medlin (piano), Diane Pruitt (flute), Pastor Meraz (guitar), Bud Hubert (harmonica). Music is such a large part of our worship experience. For all of those who are listed and for all of those we may have missed, God bless you for being a part of Trinity's 100 year history.



## Pastor Meraz - Chanting

Pastor Meraz introduced chanting to Trinity. He is a trained tenor and chanting the liturgy has enhanced the worship services.



## Singing to Trinity's Shut-ins

Trinity is a family and keeps up with its members even when they're confined to home. The caroling at Christmas was so popular that a summer sing-along was added as well.





## LCMS College Choirs Visit Trinity



On a number of occasions Trinity sponsored LCMS college choirs. They were treated to dinner in Belvedere Hall and bunked down in homes of people in the congregation. What a powerful experience it was meeting these young people and hearing them sing.

## Trinity Soloist a TV Personality

WTAR's Trafton Robertson and his favorite off-the-air activity - relaxing with the family - including his son, Richard, who continues to stay in touch with his home church - Trinity.



## Trinity's carved angels remind us of God's protection during Hurricane Isabel in 2003

Two huge 72-foot 60-year-old hackberry trees on Trinity's front lawn fell towards the front of the church during Hurricane Isabel in September 2003. The trees missed damaging the church by mere inches. Trinity's neighboring church, Norfolk Church of Christ, brought a crew of manpower to assist Trinity members in cutting up and bundling the fallen trees. The tree trunks were later carved into angel sculptures playing musical instruments and mounted on the front of the church balcony to remind us to be thankful for our blessing: *"And all the trees of the field will clap their hands."*

Here's the news story written by Steven G. Vegh in *The Virginian-Pilot* newspaper in Norfolk:

NORFOLK - Even in their death throes, the twin 72-foot trees in front of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church toppled reverentially during Isabel's rage.

The 60-year-old trunks fell straight toward the house of worship at 6001 Granby St. - but the treetops merely brushed the brick facade, while the roots heaved up without ripping the carpet like turf. The walk leading to the church door remained unobstructed.

The quiet carnage, dominated by the undisturbed cross atop the steeple, had a surreal quality that has drawn a constant trickle of spectators for days.

Congregants staggered by the sight gave thanks at Sunday worship and almost involuntarily sought meaning in the trees' disposition.

"They were immediately turned into symbols - first, the idea of bowing down, secondly the idea of pointing in to the church, said the Rev. James P. O'Connor. "They kind of landed in a way that allows the doors and steeple to become the focal point. It does suggest a protective hand."