

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONGREGATION

for 2024 – 2025

Prepared May 30, 2025



Trinity Lutheran Church
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A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

2025 Annual Report of Trinity Lutheran Church

The Vestry 2024-25

Vestry Officers

President: Amy Litvinov

Vice President: Steve Welz

Secretary: Donna Osborne

Member-at-Large: Martha Good

Treasurer: Erica Hofmann

Vestry Members

Albert Pohl

Eric Rosenbaum

Maggie Shelly

Jennifer Smith

Kate Speece - Youth Representative

Trinity Staff 2024-25

The Rev. Hans E. Becklin, Senior Pastor

Deaconess Deborah Graf, Deacon for Formation and Service

Karen S. Eddinger, Minister of Music (retired December 2024)

Dr. Cameron Lee Wentz, Cantor (hired November 2024)

Matthew Mellen, Director of Communication and Technology

Rachel Gambone, Congregational Life Coordinator

Peter Graf, Financial Administrator

Pamela Wasmuth, Bookkeeper

Dave Troche, Sexton

John McKeon, Property Manager (hired December 2024)

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Vestry President

May 2025

As I reach the completion of my term on Vestry and the conclusion of my second year as vestry president, I am thankful to each of you, the Congregation of Trinity, for the opportunity to have served in a role that well-matched my skills and character. It is with humble heart that I send out appreciation to the 2024-2025 lay members of vestry: Martha Good, Erica Hofmann, Donna Osborne, Albert Pohl, Eric Rosenbaum, Maggie Shelley, Jenn Smith, Steve Welz, and Kate Speece. Each member brings their individual perspectives, talents and experiences that are utilized to assist Trinity to continue to flourish.

My recollection of the first time I worshipped at Trinity has faded over the years, but what I do know is that I heard the Word of God preached from the pulpit, harmonious voices from the choir loft and a welcoming spirit that invited me to return. Over the last year, those elements of our church continue to thrive at Trinity. The auditorium project has been completed. We have celebrated the use of the All Saints Room and new Welcome Center. Our garden continues to be a spot of respite in the middle of the City of Reading and a place for fellowship with our neighbors for Courtyard Café. The Word of God is heard not only from the pulpit every Sunday but also streamed online through live video feed, reels and podcasts. The voice and music of Trinity continues to be central to our congregational identity, keeping the tradition of Trinity at the heart of our worship as we move through an ever-changing world. It is with a grateful heart that I conclude my time on vestry and lift up in prayer and encouragement the continuing vestry and the new members that will embark on their term of service.

The following summaries are highlights of the work that vestry has conducted over the past year.

June 2024: Vestry welcomed new members, Maggie Shelly and Albert Pohl. Vestry approved distribution of three bequests to be made in accordance with TLC's gift policy or according to the restrictions contained within the bequest. Vestry adopted an updated Reconciling in Christ Welcome Statement:

As the people of God, we at Trinity Lutheran Church of the City of Reading seek to become what we receive in the Holy Eucharist: the true Body of Christ. We believe that this body of our Lord Jesus includes all people who seek Him, without exceptions. We welcome people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; we welcome people of every ethnicity, ability, and socio-economic background, we welcome people of every race, citizenship, and immigration status. Manifesting the diversity of God's creation together, we work to proclaim Jesus' reign in our city and community through worship, prayer, teaching, feeding the hungry, advocating for racial equity, speaking out against injustice, and caring for God's creation.

August 2024: This was Vestry's annual reorganizational meeting. Officers were elected: President, Amy Litvinov; Vice President, Steve Welz; Secretary, Donna Osborne; and Member at large, Martha Good. Kate Speece was appointed as the youth representative for a one-year term.

September 2024: Committee liaisons were established for the upcoming program year. Vestry approved the forwarding of an offer of employment for the position of Cantor.

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October 2024: Received employee reviews conducted by the Personnel Committee. Vestry adopted the following recommendations of the committee: 1) changing the title of Parish Secretary to Congregational Life Coordinator with restructured responsibilities and hours, 2) creating separate positions for Sexton and Property Manager, 3) changing the title of Media Director to Director of Technology and Communication with restructured responsibilities.

November 2024: Newly separated/ created property manager position was posted for applications. Cottage meetings were scheduled and held with vestry members hosting at various locations. TLC was awarded a grant of \$14,500 from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to be used for security system and services. Vestry approved the opening of a higher bearing savings account in addition to the account held with Tompkins.

December 2024: Vestry approved a resolution bestowing the title of Minister of Music Emerita upon Karen Eddinger upon her retirement. John McKeon was hired as Property Manager. Cottage meetings continued in the month of December. The regular Congregational meeting was held and the budget as presented was passed by the Congregation of Trinity.

January 2025: Vestry scheduled a workshop for March 8 to discuss information received at the cottage meetings and draft a vision/ mission statement.

February 2025: Request For Proposal letters were sent out with a 30-day deadline for return from the financial institutions. Vestry approved the creation of a working committee to review proposals after received. Vestry authorized application to the National Fund for Sacred Places Grant for funds to make repairs to the ceiling in the sanctuary and restoration of the Tiffany windows. Celebrated the installment of Dr. Cameron Wentz as Cantor.

March 2025: Vestry held a workshop which culminated in a draft Identity, Mission and Vision statement. Pastor Han's leave of absence was approved by vestry. Vestry Nominating Committee was formed. Vestry approved the use of the charitable gift reserves to be utilized to purchase a small dump truck for Habitat for Humanity.

April 2025: Vestry voted to move forward to the congregation the nomination of new vestry members for the 2025-2028 term.

Amy Litvinov
Vestry President

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Senior Pastor

The Holy Trinity

June 15th, 2025

In the name the Triune God, our patron, whose deep love enfolds us on this festival day. Amen.

The year that has passed since our last Annual Meeting has been an eventful one here at Trinity. In perfect honesty, I did not expect my first full year of leading this congregation to be so eventful and for the measurable results of our common work to be evident so soon. While our leaders deserve commendation, our success cannot be attributed to human effort alone. The Holy Spirit is very visibly active in our midst—in my daily devotions, I ask God to uphold, sustain, and grow this congregation, and I know that these prayers are being answered.

On All Saints Sunday, we dedicated the renovated Auditorium and officially renamed it the All Saints Room. So many thousands of volunteer hours led to the successful completion of this space, and it has proven itself necessary time and time again for our growing congregational fellowship and outreach activities. From post-concert receptions and fellowship meals to Synod meetings and Common Ground's worship, this larger and renewed space has given visitors a warm welcome and a positive impression of our congregation. While a few tasks remain from the renovation, including the final furnishing and decoration of this space and the Welcome Center, these should soon be completed.

In Trinity's music ministries, the past year marked a significant transition. Using a structured process, our Cantor search committee reviewed three dozen resumes, interviewed numerous candidates, and invited the three finalists to Reading for an in-person interview. As a result, Dr. Cameron Wentz began his work at Trinity in late November, allowing for an extended time of learning from Karen Eddinger. I want to thank Ralph Unruh, who chaired the search committee, along with all the members: Tom Hofmann, Hannah Long, Jessica Manning, Donna Osborne, Rob Speece, and Beth Welz. In this period of transition, we were also able to thank and celebrate Karen for her many gifts shared with Trinity—not just in her most recent role as Minister of Music, but also throughout her long tenure as a member and musician here.

Our congregational work has been invigorated by our excellent committees. It is especially worthwhile to note those committees which have been resurrected in the past year: Personnel, Fellowship, Learning Ministries, Outreach & Service, and Evangelism & Media.

Thanks to the revitalized Personnel Committee, Trinity's staff now has new job descriptions and some shifted responsibilities, which were the basis for the annual staff reviews completed in the fall (which had not taken place in over a decade). Our staff is grateful for the additional assistance and input that this review process creates, along with more active engagement from myself, the committees, and the Vestry.

Since taking office at Trinity, becoming a visible part of the Berks County community has been very important to me. Marissa and I moved to Wyomissing last May, and this has enabled us to be present in a different way as community members and leaders. I have gotten to know many other nonprofit and governmental leaders during the past year, meeting regularly to discuss opportunities, and I believe that Trinity will continue to be

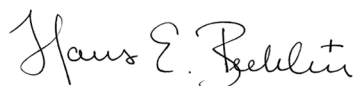
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known as a creative, generous, and community-minded cornerstone for our whole county.

The strategic planning process initiated at the beginning of my tenure continues. Today, we will have the opportunity to approve the Identity, Vision, and Mission statements that were created through a detailed process of listening and collaboration with the entire congregation. While there should be no surprises in this document, since it is a synthesis of the input of our members, I do believe that it helps us focus our minds and efforts on those things that God is calling Trinity to do with its unique gifts as one small part of the Church universal. This summer, we will use these documents as the centerpiece of our strategic planning—crafting an achievable plan that will advance Trinity’s mission in concrete ways over the next five years.

Trinity is thriving. Since my last report, a dozen members have joined our congregation. Pledges in our annual stewardship campaign were up by 28%. Our ambitious budget, with resources to support a growing portfolio of ministries, has been met by the investment of our people through their tithes and offerings. Most importantly, our attendance in worship has been consistently high—allowing more people to receive God’s word and Holy Sacraments, the source of life that we gather around.

As I look forward to the coming year, I know that this momentum will continue. Led by the new strategic plan, more people will come into contact with Trinity and its existing ministries. New ministries will develop—and, although these may not all succeed, they will show us the Holy Spirit’s direction. One year from now, we will begin the celebration of Trinity’s 275th anniversary, a time to ponder this congregation’s storied history. Yet we cannot forget that history is being made among us now.



The Rev. Hans E. Becklin
Senior Pastor

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Deacon for Formation and Service

As I reflect upon this past year, there are SO many wonderful works of ministry that have happened and continue to happen at Trinity. The Holy Spirit is certainly on the move. Some days I forget how much transition we have experienced; our Pastor has served with us for 18 months, our Minister of Music retired, and we have a new Cantor to lead us in worship and music. Volunteers gave up many late nights and weekends to renovate our first floor in the Annex. Our congregation is strong and resilient, and I am honored to be called here to serve among you.

June, 2024 began with an intentional sabbatical time: Curiosity, Creativity, Connection, and Renewal. I am grateful for the gift of this time to renew my spirit and spark creativity for our future ministry together. I was able to visit Biblical sites in Turkey and Greece, making the scriptures come alive which informs my teaching and preaching. I was able to spend some time with my extended family as well as travel with my husband, Peter. Thank you, Trinity, for granting me this sabbatical time.

The ministry areas to which I am called include Faith Formation and Youth Ministry, Fellowship, Outreach and Service, Congregational Care, and Worship Leadership. As my call is $\frac{3}{4}$ time (32 hours per week) the ministry could not be done without strong lay leadership. I am grateful for the Vestry Liaisons and Committee Chairs who faithfully organize and plan and communicate with our congregation.

Emerging areas of ministry over this past year include:

- Connecting with the community ESL Initiative to host English Language dinners. This is an area where we might be able to grow.
- Reviving service/mission trips. This summer to New Haven, CT and hopefully more opportunities to come.
- A vibrant card connection ministry giving support and care to staff and members
- Refresh Berks mobile shower trailer. While this is a separate non-profit organization, the seeds began at Trinity through our discerning of how to serve the community
- Reviving Lay Eucharistic Ministers and visitation ministry

As we embark on renewed vision and mission, I am excited to see how God will bless our ministries.

Sharing Christ's Service,
Deaconess Deborah Matern Graf
Deacon for Formation and Service

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Cantor

I started at Trinity on November 25th, 2024, and worked with Karen Eddinger, Minister of Music Emerita, through Dec. 29th to transition the music department and congregation as she concluded her ministry. I took on more responsibility during the two Christmas Eve services, leading larger portions of the service, directing the Trinity Ringers Quartet, and accompanying several choral anthems. David Himes again directed brass and orchestra for the 5pm service. The 10pm service saw an influx of musicians to celebrate Karen's last Christmas Eve, a tribute to her accomplishments as Minister of Music. On Karen's final Sunday, the combined choirs premiered "We Come to Your Table", commissioned from Anne Krentz Organ in celebration of Karen's ministry. I took full control of the music department at the beginning of 2025, leading my first solo service on Jan. 5th. I was officially installed on Feb 2.

ENSEMBLES

Trinity Choir continued to lead worship a majority of Sundays and rehearse on Wednesday night in the Hintz room. A bass section leader, Jonathan Mortensen, was hired and began in February. Maria Yost and Ben Hoover remained as soprano and tenor section leaders. In March, new member, Don Bechtel, joined the tenor section. In April, Trinity Choir presented Victoria's setting of the St. John Passion as part of Palm Sunday worship. The Special Music Fund was used to purchase a bound volume of music: The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers.

The Mixed Ensemble continued to lead worship once per month and rehearse on Sundays after worship in the Bard House. They joined Trinity Choir on Easter Sunday, singing an anthem by themselves as well as a combined anthem.

Trinity Ringers continued to play in worship once per month and rehearse on Wednesday evening. Ron Eddinger and Karen Campbell are no longer ringing; however, Peter Graf has returned to the group. David Himes graciously fills in when asked. A new set of tables and foam were purchased with the Special Music Fund in order to facilitate easier set-up in the sanctuary and limit the stress on the highly aged tables used for rehearsal.

Trinity Brass/Trinity Orchestra continue to be organized by David Himes and perform at Christmas and Easter.

Music Ministry Sunday was held on May 11th and returned to Mother's Day. We reoriented the service to find a balance between celebrating music and maintaining the lectionary. Pastor Hans gave a sermon about the gift of music, and I thanked the various ensembles for their commitment and support during the transition. A cake was presented during the coffee and conversation.

Program year 25-26 we intend to brainstorm what more youth-specific things the music department can offer supplementally to The Mixed Ensemble. We will also discuss the feasibility of a choir tour to Germany. Trinity choir will hopefully move back to the Bard House for Wednesday evening rehearsals.

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CONCERT SERIES

In December, Ron Bellamy gave a solo handbell recital with his wife, Linda Lorgus on piano, as part of the Wolfe Series, and around \$400 was collected for Family Promise. In February I recorded a short Lenten recital for Music from Trinity which was circulated in March. Charlie Randazzo's Let's Dance Big Band gave a concert as part of the Wolfe Series on March 4th (Mardi Gras); The fellowship committee put together a fantastic spread for the reception, and \$1,053 was collected for Refresh Berks. The Susquehanna Choir gave a concert on March 23rd as part of the Wolfe series which was very well attended and ended with a work featuring Rob Speece as the soloist; a reception was held after to provide dinner to the students and allow them to engage with the attendees, and \$500 was collected for the Susquehanna Choir. Trinity hosted the Reading Musical Foundation runners-up recitals on May 17th & 18th.

Program year 25-26 will see a restructure of the concert series. The broad name will be Music from Trinity, and within will be 3 different series: The Wolfe remaining in its normal form, Noonday, which will return to in-person monthly events, and a new Steeple series which will be comprised of in-house ensemble events (an evening vespers service, an organ recital I would give, recitals by members, possibly a hymn festival). We have also applied for funding from RMF to enhance the various recital series with the possibility of offering pre-concert talks for the Wolfe series, and a masterclass or lecture as part of the noonday recitals.

INSTRUMENTS

The organ and piano are maintained regularly. The organ was tuned in December right before Christmas Eve, but it did not hold. The April tuning before Easter seems to have been more of a success and the instrument has held.

The harpsichords were both tuned and repaired using The Special Music Fund. The instrument in the choir loft was used for worship, however it is in need of significant further repair, and we are awaiting an estimate. The other instrument currently in the columbarium will hopefully be moved into the Hintz room once further decisions are made about use of that space.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Cameron Lee Wentz,
Cantor

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Director of Technology and Communication

The past year has been a whirlwind of activity at Trinity! We've enthusiastically embraced vertical video, capturing the progress of our first-floor renovations and sharing impactful sermon snippets as Reels. All of this has led to a surge in followers on our social media accounts with the most notable accomplishment coming from YouTube where we reached 1000 subscribers this Spring!

Speaking of social media accounts, we have added two more to our list – TikTok and LinkedIn. Both offer unique opportunities based on how content is distributed to reach those who want to learn more about Trinity. If you are a user of TikTok or LinkedIn, we encourage you to give us a follow. Our social media presence continues to grow with the support of our members sharing the wonderful content we produce at Trinity.

Another piece of our outreach is our website and this year we launched a new trinityreading.org to better reflect our identity and mission. The new site is built to meet our visitors wherever they find us – be that on a PC or Mac, tablets, or mobile phones. It is no secret that cell phones are a big part of most people's lives, which is why we designed our new website to respond to that growing need – ensuring that visitors both new and old can feel connected to Trinity, no matter what device they are using.

An important part of the new site is our Worship Online page which includes a YouTube viewer for joining our livestream on Sunday mornings and boasts a new flipbook PDF viewer for following along with our worship bulletin. I have received a lot of positive feedback from members who have used the new flipbook features which are also utilized on the Steeple Notes page and in the weekly emails to the congregation. Recently, I added controls to the viewer that allow you to print or download the worship bulletin which will offer more opportunities for being a part of Trinity when you are not able to be in-person.

You may have noticed that the weekly emails, which provide the most up-to-date news and information, have taken on a new look and feel more like an extension of our new website. This is deliberate and soon I will be creating a new web page that also presents the same up to date news and information as the email. This is part of the vision to provide effective communication that can be accessed across screens and in print.

Print production has become a new part of my normal workflow, and I started off 2025 with a newly designed worship bulletin. A lot of work went into creating a document that was more than just a Sunday bulletin for our members. Pastor Hans saw the need to provide a deeper connection to our Lutheran worship, so we created a space for that content to live in. We reintroduced color to the bulletin and celebrated that choice with selected artwork on the cover. Along with a cleaner design and layout we also introduced a newly designed Welcome Page and Communion Instructions Page. Both pages offer valuable information to members and visitors alike.

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Finally, I want to talk about technological improvements that have been made at Trinity. The most visible of course is the recently added door access readers. These new readers are a huge step forward in connecting door access with staff and volunteers using the phones at their desks. Upgrading our door access system gave us the opportunity to rethink access to our building in general and it was decided that unique code access for all individuals and vendors would provide the best level of security at Trinity. Many members have already signed up for access outside of normal business hours – the process is as simple as choosing your own 4–8-digit code and emailing mmellen@trinityreading.org

There were several other improvements in the past year that are not as flashy as those new readers, such as the addition of security cameras to the parking lot, and network upgrades that helped correct the issues we were having with streaming worship on Sunday mornings.

One last thing I haven't talked about yet is my new title, Director of Technology and Communication. When I joined Trinity's staff back in 1992, video was recorded on magnetic tape and the office PC was mostly a word processor (though we did have an Amiga computer with a fascinating piece of technology called the Video Toaster). Over the years technology has improved, video standards improved, and fast forward to now where the PC handles most everything from recording to editing and of course sharing content to social media and beyond. My title is new to me in 2025, and find it represents all that I do for Trinity – enhancing our visibility and community engagement.

Matthew Mellen
Director of Technology and Communication

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Congregational Care & Concern Committee

This committee met three times this past year. Our mission is to offer emotional and spiritual support for members who are grieving, ill, undergoing treatment, or suffering a loss of any type. Our members include Deaconess Deborah Graf, Linda Grim, Marian Jameson, Donna Osborne, and Beth Welz.

Our ministries include a vibrant card ministry with 12 senders and 42 recipients organized by Donna Osborne. Linda Grim continues to coordinate the bread ministry to spouses or family members who have experienced the death of a loved one. Although delivering food to ill or injured members is not a routine practice, we check in with people to access their needs and encourage any Trinity member to let us know if a need arises.

A vision of our committee is to establish a team of volunteers who would be willing to visit in-home or hospitalized members. This team would assist Pastor Hans and Deaconess Deborah in between pastoral visits.

Submitted by Beth Welz

Educational Assistance Committee

The Educational Assistance Committee granted awards to eight applicants in June of 2024. The Kindermusik program also received a grant. The combined grants totaled \$58,834.00 and were allocated based on the prescribed parameters of each fund included in the Educational Assistance Funds.

The Committee is pleased to report that the applicants were well-qualified and succeeding in their educational pursuits with grades exceeding the requirements set forth in our guidelines. The students were well-spoken and made very positive impressions on the committee during the interview process.

This year the newly adopted online application format will again be used and is accessible on Trinity's website. The application process will close on June 4, 2025, and interviews will take place during the second week of June. All applicants will be notified of grant allocations by June 16, 2025, so that the students may adequately plan for the upcoming academic school year.

Martha Good,
Educational Assistance Committee Chair

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Finance Committee for Calendar Year 2024

Finance Committee Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the Finance Committee include:

- Developing the annual operating budget for the congregation, in cooperation with the staff and standing committees.
- Overseeing the expenditures of all operating funds and generation of revenues.
- Working with the Stewardship Committee to obtain annual pledges from congregational members.
- Working with the Property Committee to identify present and future capital needs for the repair and maintenance of all church properties.
- Review of the insurance needs of the church and establish contracts to protect the property, the public, and the employees.
- Manage the receipt and investment or use of legacy gifts.
- Select and review criteria for the management of the Trinity Investment Funds.
- Oversee that appropriate systems and procedures for the administration of all financial transactions for Trinity are in place with qualified staff and appropriate technology.

The Finance Committee meets quarterly, with additional meetings as needed during the development of the annual budget. Committee members on the current roster are Allison Kalbach (Chair), Erica Hofmann (Treasurer), Jeff Wasmuth, Franki Aitken, Pam Wasmuth (Bookkeeper) and Peter Graf (Financial Administrator and staff liaison).

Endowment Funds

The fair market value of our endowment funds on December 31, 2024, were as follows:

General endowment \$ 5,796,315

Property endowment \$ 698,327

Educational assistance endowment \$ 2,602,914 (includes \$23,309 in educational assistance checking account)

The annual draw from the general endowment for 2024 was \$317,587 (5.75%) from the average of the trailing twelve quarter market value) and the property endowment draw was \$31,085 (5.00%) at the time the budget was approved. As of 12/31/2024, this represented an overall 5.72% (5.29% and 4.95% respectively) draw from the average of the trailing twelve quarter market value.

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The annual investment return for the year ended December 31, 2024, for Trinity's endowment portfolios was as follows:

	Net Return 2024	Average Net Return
General Endowment	13.55%	6.43% (5 year)
Property Endowment	14.52%	2.33% (3 year)
Educational Assistance Endowment	12.80%	6.64% (5 year)

Line of Credit

Trinity has a \$250,000 line of credit available primarily to assist in funding short-term needs relating to capital improvement projects. The current balance as of 05/10/2025 on the line of credit is \$0.00.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Kalbach
Finance Committee Chair

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Learning Ministries/Faith Formation

Ministry with and for youth and children

Youth and Children are a vital part of our Trinity Community. You can see them serving in so many ways: assisting the altar guild, running a camera during worship, assisting as crucifer, acolyte, torchbearer, or usher. At the beginning of each new school year, we bless our students attending college for the first time (with a prayer scarf knitted in their school's colors) and offer a Backpack and School Blessing for kids and educators.

ChAOS (Catechism and Other Stuff) met a couple of times in the year to prepare 5 youth for their Affirmation of Baptism on June 8, 2025.

Youth gathered for service by helping with the first floor renovation project, harvesting potatoes in September, walking in the CROP hunger walk, participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring, and learning about hunger and its causes while fasting at the West Berks Mission District's Lenten Retreat, held this year at Trinity. (Ask about watching someone eat a cheeseburger while we were fasting.)

For the first time since 2019, youth and adults from Trinity will be participating in a Summer Service/Mission Trip. We will be traveling to New Haven, CT June 22-29 for a week of service and learning.

Sunday Time for children was held regularly each Sunday during the education hour. We use the Whirl Curriculum from Augsburg Fortress Publishers. Kids made several caring cards for homebound members and caring bags for the Common Ground Recovery Community.

This year we hosted our second Intergenerational Easter Egg Hunt. As we celebrated the surprise of the resurrection, there were surprises for kids, youth, and adults!

Ministry with and for adults

Sunday Forum is led and organized by Pastor Hans. He put together a program of informative and inspiring forums for all ages including a mix of Bible Study, current events, churchwide and local issues. Pastor Hans also led a Lenten book study group discussing *Seculosity* and closing with Compline.

A semi-monthly Bible Study for Women of TLC was held at the highlands from September-May.

Learning Ministries is one of our ministry areas that has room for more ideas and passion. Our current committee members are Brooke Rosenbaum and Christine Motley, and we are excited for future ministry! If you have a passion for faith formation, whether with kids, youth, or adults, please speak to Deaconess Deborah about how you can join us.

Respectfully submitted,
Dcs. Deborah Graf (on behalf of the committee)

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Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee presents three candidates for election to Trinity's vestry for three-year terms: Franki Aitken, Amy Heins, and Joseph Speece III. Biographies of the three candidates follow.

Franki Aitken to serve a three-year term (2025 – 2028)

Franki was introduced to Trinity in 2001 by the late Sidney D. Kline, Jr. Franki works at Berks County Community Foundation and was asked by Sid, who was a board member at the Community Foundation, to speak to Trinity's Education Committee about the administration of their educational loans. After meeting with the committee, Pastor Glenn Miller asked where she was worshipping. Having been raised Episcopalian, she was in the process of visiting the Episcopalian churches in town to see where she fit in. Pastor Miller suggested she try out Trinity. She visited one Sunday and was so warmly welcomed that she made the decision right then and there to join Trinity as a new-found Lutheran.

Franki served as Trinity's Treasurer from 2018 to 2020. She has also served for many years on the Finance Committee as well as the Property Committee. Franki is the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer at Berks County Community Foundation. She has been there since 1997. She is a certified public accountant.

Franki was born and raised in North Jersey and moved to Berks County in 1992. She spends most summer weekends at her beach house at the Jersey shore where she gets to spend time with her sister and four nieces.

Amy Heins to serve a three-year term (2025-2028)

Amy first came to Reading in 1969 to attend school at Albright. After a transfer to Widener University in Chester she graduated with a B.S. in Nursing. After graduation, Amy and her husband relocated to the Reading area permanently. Her career included serving as a telemetry-trained nurse, an office nurse, manager of Convenient Care, product support at Arrow International, and being an Infection Control Practitioner, her primary focus for 20+ years. In 2010 her family moved to Greenfields where she met her neighbor, Nancy Everson. Amy asked if she could accompany Nancy to church and was hooked by the history, music and worship at Trinity. After attending for a few years, Amy joined Trinity in 2024. During her time at Trinity she has participated in Courtyard Cafes, gardening, soup lunches, and is currently serving on the Outreach and Service Committee with upcoming assignments. Being retired gives ample opportunities to spend time with family, reading, knitting, needlework, crafting, and enjoying music. Now Amy is looking forward to participating as a Vestry member.

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Joseph R. Speece, III to serve a three-year term (2025-

Joseph R. Speece, III

Educational background

University of Pittsburgh, School of Law, J.D. in 2000

Susquehanna University, B.A. in 1997, cum laude, Political Science departmental honors

Washington Semester at American University in Washington D.C. 1996

Reading High School, class of 1993

Professional background

Berks County District Attorney's Office since 2002, Senior Attorney and Lead DUI Attorney

Major case assignments including Homicides and other significant felony matters

Responsible for coordinating criminal cases with significant Mental Health issues and Animal Abuse cases

Liaison with Berks County MH/DD and overseeing State Hospital Commitments

Voelker and Associates, Pittsburgh, 2000, Associate Attorney

Real Estate transactions, Civil Litigation involving commercial and real estate cases, bankruptcy matters, debtor, and creditors

Meyer Darragh Buckler Bebenek & Eck, P.L.L.C. (Vogrin & Reister, LLC) Pittsburgh, 1999-2000

Legal Clerk

Legal Research, legal writing – Memorandum and Briefs, Municipal law, DUI, and criminal defense appeals

Bar Admissions

Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, 2000

United States District Court, Western District of Pennsylvania, 2001

Supreme Court of the United States, 2005

Professional Associations

Berks County Bar Association, Co-chair of the Gov. Affairs Com.,

Co-chair of the Wellness Com., Endlich Law Club member

Pennsylvania Bar Association, Criminal Justice Section Council

Pennsylvania District Attorney's Association

William R. Strong Inns of Court

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Personal – Family background

I grew up here in Berks County, a City of Reading native, living in Northeast Reading, and graduating from Reading High School, after attending NE Junior High, and 12th and Marion Elementary.

I was the first in my family to graduate from college.

In 2002, after law school and a brief period in private practice in Pittsburgh, I returned to Reading to work in the District Attorney's office and now live in West Wyomissing Spring Township with my wife Lisa who is a Spanish teacher in the Exeter School District and our three children, Joey, Rob, and Kate. (And a rescued cat, Gretchen.)

- Joey is 22 and attending the Crosswalk adult day program (Dayspring), after graduating from Wilson High in 2021;
- Rob is 20 and a graduate of Wilson in 2022, now attending Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove taking after his parents and is studying Music and Music Education;
- Kate is 18 and attending Wilson High School and will be attending the Univ. of Pennsylvania in the fall.

Our family attends Trinity Lutheran Church in Reading where the family takes an active role in participating in the music of the church for worship and special events. (I do not have a music background but believe that I am at least responsible for half of my children's musical talents.)

I have always had an interest in the law, politics and government which has been demonstrated through a lifetime of public service. This interest in government and law has only increased over my years at the District Attorney's office and contributed to my success as an Assistant District Attorney.

In fact, my interest in the law was fostered by the Berks County Bar Association as a junior high student at Northeast when I was able to take part in a student enrichment/outreach event sponsored by the Bar Association, and I fondly recall the impact that experience had on me all those years ago which kindled my interest in the law and gave me the utmost respect for the legal community here in Berks County.

As for personal interests, I have always had a special interest in the history of Reading and Berks County, particularly the founding of city and county and its major institutions. This interest of has led to a common family joke about having to visit another cemetery in pursuing family or local history. (Teenagers do not generally find this a fun activity as he has learned).

Christian - Lutheran faith background

Lastly, I would describe the development of my personal Christian faith belief as one which is still continuing to be formed by all my experiences in life, through the personal relationships I've made, and the study of church history and practice. My life has been shaped by the influence of our Lutheran heritage starting with my baptism at Holy Spirit in Reading, to my first day of Sunday School, first communion, and confirmation, continuing with my studies at Susquehanna University with the more "open" college worship at the vast Weber Chapel. The experiences of high liturgical worship services at First Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, including weekday eucharistic services, gave me a new perspective on my Christian faith through the mystery and majesty of a traditional worship setting combined with the foundational Lutheran teachings and sermons by Senior Pastor David Gleason and Associate "junior" Pastor Philip Pfatteicher. There was no doubt that Lisa and I would be married at First Church. And now at Trinity, which has played such a large part in my understanding of Jesus, his teachings, and what it

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means to be a Christian that I cannot separate my Christian identity from the last 20 plus years as a member of our congregation. No doubt that this is because our family has benefitted from wonderful, insightful, and caring Pastors who have lead this congregation over that time, and from the larger community of faith that this church encompasses.

I would like to contribute more of myself, my time, and talents, to this Church which, in my view, is a cornerstone of the Christian faith here in Reading and Berks County, and must continue to be such an institution far into the future. She connects us, our community, which is broader than just Lutherans, to the history of this place, where it began in 1751, and will be vital to understanding of where we should be headed into the future. That is why I have volunteered in earnest over the last year, so I may be an active participant, to truly be a part of this living church, and to grow in understanding of being a Christian. I have enjoyed the connections I've made with people who in the past I have mostly encountered in passing to making lasting bonds with this congregation and to become one with the living Christian witness we express here at Trinity in our Lutheran heritage.

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Outreach & Service Committee

Committee members: Russ Diesinger, Nancy Everson, Michael Faust, Amy Heins, Carolyn Holleran, Marian Jameson, Joe Speece, Ralph Unruh, Sue Shellong, Maggie Shelly (Vestry rep), Deaconess Deborah (staff rep), Vickie Unruh (chair)

Meetings are held 3 times per year at 11:30 am on the 4th Sunday of January, April, and September.

New members are always welcome. Come join us at one of our meetings, or talk to any member for more information. Give us a try.

In October, 2024, this committee was re-launched with a new chair. Our mission, however, has not changed. We are still committed to supporting Trinity's devotion to experiencing and sharing God's love outside our walls, keeping service and striving for justice and peace in the forefront.

As we spent time reorganizing, it was apparent that, as a committee, we had a very large job, with many varied responsibilities. We decided each responsibility needed a "champion", someone to coordinate the project. Of course, Deaconess Deborah was also available to help with each item.

A new ministry added this year is our partnering with the Harwood Initiative in Reading which offers ESL (English as a second language) training. An ESL class is held twice a week in the All Saints Room. In addition, Trinity will host two dinners this year on February 11, 2025 and November 11, 2025. The purpose of these dinners is to provide a meal for ESL students along with conversation in English. Trinity provides the food and members serve as table hosts to facilitate the conversation. There were approximately 50 students and 15 volunteers at the first dinner (Feb 11). Trinity provided chicken and rice with members bringing side dishes and dessert. All who attended felt it was a huge success.

Refresh Berks (mobile shower trailer) is another new mission for Trinity which is coming to fruition this year. Amy Stewart-Himes is the coordinator for this responsibility. For lots of information regarding this project, go to www.RefreshBerks.org. The Kickoff Splash was held on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at West Lawn United Methodist Church from noon to 3 pm. Trinity and 6 other organizations have been involved in fund raising in addition to a grant secured by Senator Judith Schwank.

This year's Lenten Appeal was again dedicated to our \$25,000 commitment to the Lighthouse Women and Children's Center. Trinity made a commitment 2 years ago to have a room at the center named for us. This year's appeal collected approximately \$6,228 towards the project bringing the total to date \$14,645.00. We have one more year to collect the remaining funds.

We are currently preparing for our Courtyard Cafés which will be held on June 25, July 23, and August 27. We look forward to again providing a meal for our neighbors as we work with the Common Ground community on this project.

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In December, 2024, our Angel Tree held gift tags for the Lighthouse Women and Children's Center and Dayspring Homes. It was a huge success with all gift tags taken by week 2.

We again provided dinner to Opportunity House 6 times this year, feeding approximately 70 persons each time. A special thank you to all the team leaders who make this happen. Please speak with Deaconess Deborah or Vickie Unruh if this is a ministry you would like to be part of.

In July, 2024, we hosted a table at the Berks Pride Event held in Jim Dietrich Park. Pastor Hans handled the set up, and we had a number of Trinity members staffing the table. Many persons stopped by for information about Trinity, stickers, and just to chat. We will again be having a table at this year's event on July 20, 2025.

Other items on our responsibilities list include, Souper Bowl of Caring; the Crop Walk; God's Work, Our Hands Sunday; the Potato Project; New Journey support; Family Promise; and working with Common Ground to provide clothes, etc.

As you can see, this is a busy, highly effective committee with committed members. We look forward to next year's opportunities to continue to serve Trinity.

Respectfully submitted,
Vickie Unruh

Outreach and Service Committee		
Current list of responsibilities		
Updated on 05/7/2025		
When	What	Champion
ongoing	Common Ground clothes	Maggie Shelley
ongoing	Refresh Berks - shower trailer	Amy Stewart-Himes
Feb, Nov	ESL dinners	Mike Faust/Maggie Shelley
Lent	Lenten Appeal	Carolyn Holleran
Lent	Lighthouse Room Commitment	Carolyn Holleran
Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct, Dec	Opportunity House dinner	Open
April, July	Family Promise	Deaconess Deborah
June, July, August	Courtyard Café	Nancy Everson
Donation only	New Journey	Deaconess Deborah
Feb	Souper Bowl of Caring	Trinity youth
July	Berks Pride Event	Open
Oct	Crop Walk	Trinity youth
Sept	God's Work, Our Hands	Amy Heins
Sept	Potato project - WBMD	Trinity youth
Nov, Dec	Angel Tree - Lighthouse, Dayspring	Carolyn Holleran

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Personnel Committee

Committee Members:

- Brooke Rosenbaum (Chair)
- Steve Welz (Vestry Liaison)
- Travis Shick
- Allison McCanney
- Pastor Hans Becklin

The Personnel Committee continues to be dedicated to supporting the staff and operational functions of Trinity Lutheran Church. Building on the foundational work completed in 2024, this past year marked continued progress toward strengthening communication, clarifying responsibilities, and aligning staff and committee functions for greater cohesion and effectiveness.

Key Activities and Accomplishments Over the Last 12-Months:

Job Description Reviews and Staff Role Realignment

The committee completed a comprehensive review and realignment of job descriptions to better reflect current responsibilities and leverage the strengths of individual team members. This process resulted in the creation of a new part-time Property Manager position, now responsible for managing facility systems, maintenance, and contracted service providers. This adjustment has helped clarify oversight of physical operations and ensured more efficient support for building-related needs.

Annual Staff Evaluations Implemented

Staff evaluations were reinstated and successfully conducted at the end of 2024 with a member of the Personnel Committee present with Pr. Hans at each review. These formal, annual reviews—along with ongoing weekly 1:1 check-ins with Pastor Hans—now serve as essential tools for providing feedback, fostering two-way communication, and aligning individual efforts with Trinity’s mission. The return of structured evaluations was widely welcomed by staff.

Staff Focus Group and Covenant Development

A staff focus group was held in Q4 2024. Discussions focused on two main themes:

- Communication flow
- Decision-making and the relationships between staff and committees

The focus group revealed a desire for clearer processes, more effective prioritization, and improved coordination across and between Trinity’s leadership bodies and staff. Based on these findings, a Staff–Committee Covenant Document is in development and will establish useful guidance around the following:

- Clarify communication norms and expectations
- Define committee roles and responsibilities
- Align and clearly communicate timelines and deliverables with staff schedules and the church’s mission
- Appoint committee staff liaisons to enhance staff–committee communication

The Covenant document is anticipated to be finalized and reviewed with the Vestry at the start of the next governance cycle (July 2025).

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke Rosenbaum

Chair, Personnel Committee

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Property Committee

The Property Committee is tasked with directing the maintenance and upkeep of Trinity Lutheran's property and buildings, working within the budget provided by Vestry. The Committee meets monthly and submits a monthly report to Vestry. The Committee works with the Senior Pastor and the Property Manager to oversee the church grounds, buildings, parking lot, and the cemetery located on South Street. The current Property Committee consists of: Franki Aitken, Steven Hofmann, Carol Miller, Charlie Moody, Bill Norton, and Eric Rosenbaum. Although not official members of the Property Committee, Anita Dolak and Mae Sunderland regularly attend our meetings on behalf of the Garden Committee, and Pastor Hans and our Property Manager John McKeon are also active participants.

2024 – 2025 program year was very active for the Property Committee. Much of our effort this past year has been related to the building renovation project, which has made us change some of our practices and adjust our use of facilities. The Committee has also taken a more active approach to managing the Cemetery property, hosting two (2) work days at the Cemetery in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. The Cemetery continues to be a financial burden, and we now are dealing with safety issues related to trespassers on the property. In 2025 we will be addressing some of those issues and are awaiting quotes on plans to secure sections of the property.

The committee continues to deal with the challenges of maintaining a historical building, and a significant amount of time and money has been spent to upgrade the sewer line, address equipment issues in the kitchen, and upgrade control systems on the HVAC and Boiler unit(s). In 2025, we will begin a long overdue paint/repair to the wooden section of the steeple, due in large part to a bequest for that purpose from the Reimer Estate. The Committee has also begun to lay the groundwork for major work that will be required soon for the restoration of the Sanctuary Ceiling. We have solicited quotes from contractors for scaffolding, painting, plastering, as well as repair work required for a number of the Tiffany windows in the sanctuary.

The Committee wishes to thank and acknowledge all those who participated and/or financially supported the Auditorium Renovation Project. We also want to highlight special thanks to Bill Norton for his devotion over the past many years to maintain the property. We would be remiss as well if we did not recognize the hard and constant work of the Garden Committee who make our grounds a showplace and oasis in downtown Reading. Finally, we'd like to welcome John McKeon who joined Trinity as Property Manager in late 2024. John has done an excellent job keeping up to date with maintenance and property improvements.

-Steve Hofmann and Eric Rosenbaum, co-chairs

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Stewardship Committee

Stewardship Committee

No chair in 2024

Amy Litvinov, Vestry Representative

After many years of dormancy, Trinity's Stewardship Committee re-formed in 2024. The primary focus was on the fall stewardship campaign.

To begin, we prepared and distributed a letter, time and talent survey, response envelope, and a pledge card. The congregation was given a month to pray about the ways that they could support Trinity's ministries.

Amy Litvinov, Steve Hofmann, and Fred Opalinski shared Temple Talks during this monthlong campaign.

Incredibly, we received 58 pledges in 2024, surpassing our goal of 55 pledges as well as 2024's number (44 pledges). Additionally, the dollar amount of pledges increased by over 20%! The committee wants to thank all the members who shared their pledge for the year, especially those who did so for the first time or after a break in pledging.

Our strong results from the fall campaign allowed Trinity to pass an ambitious budget for 2025, with increased ministry areas and a more sustainable draw from the endowment.

We hope to grow the committee and conduct a similar campaign in the fall of 2025. Those interested in joining the committee can contact any member or Pastor Hans.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Hans E. Becklin

On behalf of the committee

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Worship & Music Committee and Fall Festival of the Arts

We started the year with a successful Saturday training session for folks interested in learning about the many volunteer jobs required for our Sunday worship service. Thanks to our staff for organizing this and for all who turned out for the training. We have new faces working as Greeters, Ushers, Lectors, Assisting Ministers, Communion Assistants and Altar Guild. Thank you to everyone who volunteers. We hope to have a January training event every year.

We welcome Dr. Cameron Wentz as he leads us in worship. Please speak to him if you are interested in “trying your hand” at ringing bells or are considering joining any of the singing choirs.

Thank you to everyone for your co-operation as we adjust to new procedures for sponsoring flowers and broadcasts. Thanks also to Allison and Charlene for supervising and arranging special, seasonal decorations.

Sandra Sittler, Chair

Committee members: Darry Jeffries, Linda Motley, Charlene Norton, Allison Kalbach, Russ Grim, Donna Osborne

Fall Festival of the Arts

Our 2024 festival included a beautiful farewell organ recital presented by Karen Eddinger, an afternoon of tap dance presented by Danny Gardner, the art works of Nancy Wissinger, a puppet show and “Broadway Goes to Church”. We are working on the 2025 festival which is the 40th anniversary of the festival. It will include an art show featuring two local artists; an organ recital by John Painter, organist and choir director at CEC; Baryna-a presentation of Ukrainian and eastern European dance; a play reading (“Our Class”), a full production of “Faith Healer” (a play for three actors) and a puppet show which will be presented at Trinity. Matt has designed a new, easy-to-navigate website that is full of information and will allow you to purchase tickets and make contributions online.

Sandra Sittler

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Worship & Music Committee- Altar Guild

It is a joy and privilege to help prepare God's House for worship. If that is something you feel called to do, the Altar Guild would welcome you to join us in that sacred duty. Contact me or any of the persons who are listed below.

Several members of the Guild have retired this year. We thank Raye Watson and Michael Faust for their many years of faithful and diligent service!! We are grateful for all the people who choose to commit to honoring God in this way. We welcome Cheryl Moody to Altar Guild and hope she will enjoy many years serving with us.

We have continuous communion distribution, with the grape juice in prepared cups on the cabinets in front of the pews. We have recently changed from offering rose wine to port, which the communion assistants pour. I again wish to thank all the members of Altar Guild for their committed and loyal service.

Team A: Bernadette Ilgen, Jacinda Motley, Joshua Motley, Linda Motley, *Charlene Norton, Robin Oberholtzer, Beth Welz

Team B: *Anita Dolak, David Himes, Amy Stewart Himes, Amy Reinsel, Donna Osborne

Team C: Linda Grim, *Erica Hofmann, Darryl Jeffries, Amy Litvinov, Cheryl Moody, Doris Strobel

* denotes team captian

Respectfully submitted,
Linda C Motley

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Trinity Lutheran Church Minutes of the Congregational Meeting - December 8, 2024

The congregational meeting was called to order by Vestry President, Amy Litvinov at 11:11 AM following the 10:00 AM worship service on Sunday, December 8, 2024.

A quorum was present in order to proceed with the meeting of items on the meeting agenda.

** The purpose of this meeting was announced two consecutive weeks prior to the December 2024 meeting in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws. Four items were on the docket for this meeting:

- 1) Approval of the minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church held in April of 2024.
- 2) Approval of the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church held in June of 2024
- 3) The approval of the proposal for maintenance, repair, and painting of the steeple of Trinity Lutheran Church.
- 4) The proposal of Trinity Lutheran Church's budget for the year 2025.

Documents were handed out prior to the meeting with information on all four items.

Prayer was led by President, Amy Litvinov to open the meeting.

Meeting Minutes

- 1) A motion was made by Eric Rosenbaum to approve the minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church held in April of 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to approve an increase in the capital campaign for the auditorium renovation to \$300,000. Steve Hofmann seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- 2) A motion was made by Bill Norton to approve the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church held in June of 2024. Steve Welz seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Steeple Proposal

- 3) Proposal for maintenance, repair and painting to be done on Trinity Lutheran Church's steeple by CJ Diirner & Sons Roofing.
 - Steve Hofmann presented information to the congregation regarding painting and repair of Trinity Lutheran Church's steeple with the approximate cost of the project in the amount of \$59,400. The dollar amount may be amended depending on repairs needed.
 - An endowment from the Robert Reimer estate will also be used to finance the steeple work, as noted in the estate documents.

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No discussion or questions were presented. A motion was brought forward by Jim Barrett to approve the proposal. The motion was seconded by Bobbie Lykens. The proposal for the steeple maintenance was approved unanimously.

Budget 2025

4) Erica Hofmann, Treasurer, presented highlights of the proposed 2025 budget:

- **Income** – Pledges and offerings received by mid-November increased by approximately \$38,000.
- **Trust Income** – Numbers presented are actual numbers from 2024.
- **Property Income** - Increase of \$23,000 due to parking lot space rent income and a grant from PCCD (Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency in the amount of \$14,500. \$10,000 of the grant will be used to offset the cost for KRE, Trinity Lutheran Church's security company. The additional \$4,500 was not included in the budget and will be used to upgrade Trinity Lutheran Church's security cameras and door access security.

The increase in Income in the budget is \$32,700.

- **Expenses** – Increase in media costs including Wi-Fi expenses and an increase was made to Congregational Life, which includes a line item for fellowship.
- **Property Expenses** – There is an increase of \$20,300, which includes a line item for improvement and a line item for general repairs.

The increase in Expenses in the budget is \$28,675.

Trinity Lutheran Church does have a balanced budget of income vs. expenses for 2025. This budget will allow Trinity Lutheran Church to reduce its draw from the endowment funds from 5.75% down to 5.25 %. Draws for property will remain at 5.00%.

No discussion or questions were presented regarding the budget. Budget was approved unanimously.

A motion was brought forward by Megan Souders-Zobian to adjourn the Congregational Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church. Beth Welz seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Amy Litvinov, President, adjourned the meeting at 11:23.

Respectfully submitted:
Donna Osborne, Secretary

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Pastoral Acts and Statistics

for the calendar year 2024

Deaths

Hermann Sonon	January 12, 2024
Robert N. Reimer	March 6, 2024
Blake R. Dautrich	March 27, 2024
Sarah F. Rothermel	May 20, 2024
Jane K. Rehr	May 24, 2024
Daniel R. Smith	August 6, 2024
Joan Goncher	November 1, 2024
Richard Horst	November 13, 2024

Average Attendance

2013: 169	2016: 103	2019: 100 (est.)	2022: in person 66; online (streaming) 93
2014: 152	2017: 124	2020: N/A	2023: in person 75; online (streaming) 42
2015: 126	2018: 112	2021: 121	2024: in person 85; online (streaming) 42

Baptisms: 0

New members: 0

Trinity Membership

328 baptized members