

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church / A Reconciling in Christ Community



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Pastor Nancy Truscott, Vice/Supply Pastor

J. Scott Jones, Cantor

Council Members:

Emily Thomsen (President) / Sally Bayhi (Vice President)

Ken Geiselmann (Secretary) / Terry Graney (Treasurer)

Marcia Hayes / Karen Lewis / Doris Schulz

Newsletter / Advent & Christmas 2020

A note from the Council President

Dear siblings in Christ,

What a year this has been! I don't think any of us will soon forget the whirlwind of a year 2020 has turned out to be. From the excitement of adopting our new congregational identity statement and core values at the annual meeting to weathering a global pandemic and learning to worship virtually via Zoom, this year has been full of ups and, unfortunately, downs.

However, even amid the fear, frustration, and sadness, I find myself looking forward with hope for our future as a church community. The season of Advent is the beginning of the church year and allows us a chance to prayerfully consider what God is calling us to in the new year. Even amid all the changes the new year will bring, we can use the Advent themes we hear throughout the season - wait, watch, prepare, trust, hope, rejoice, and proclaim - to reflect on the past year and begin to dream about what we want for our future.

Whatever the new year may bring, we can take comfort in knowing God is walking with us and has a plan for us. Throughout this Advent season, I hope you will find comfort and peace in God's presence.

"Dear God,

You remind us over and over in your Word that you are always with us. You tell us not to fear and you draw us close into your presence. You're the only place we find refuge in the storms that surround us right now, Lord. You're the only place we can find peace and strength. So we ask you for your words of truth and power to strengthen us in our inner being and lift our hearts to you. Thank you for your goodness; thank you that you know the way we take and you have a plan. We look to you today our Lord and Savior; it's your face we seek.

We praise you God, for you go before us and cover us from behind. You walk beside us and make our footsteps firm. You are our protector and defense. We never have to fear that we're alone. Thank you for your powerful presence surrounding us. We renew our focus on you this day, and thank you in advance for all that you will do.

We love you, we need you, we choose to look to you today and every day.

In Jesus' Name, Amen."

Prayer written by Debbie McDaniel

Emily Thomsen, Council President

From Pastor Kathryn Irwin

As many of you know, Pastor Kathryn Irwin resigned as pastor at Holy Trinity. Her last day of ministry was November 21.

From her resignation letter:

“In my leaving the congregation, our relationship will come to an end; I will disconnect from congregation members on social media platforms, and I will no longer respond to communication from congregation members via phone or email. Please know that this is standard protocol and nothing more. It allows us both the space and distance to prepare ourselves for what new relationships are to come.

For me, my ministry is heading toward honing my skills as an Intentional Interim, a specialized pastoral ministry I have long felt called to practice. Specifically, I have been engaged to serve our Siblings in Christ at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in South Plainfield.

For you, God will continue to be active in your midst. With the discernment the community has done in developing your identity statement and core values, there is much fertile soil in which your gifts may continue to grow!”

May God’s peace be with you in this time of change and transition, *Pastor Irwin*

Vice/Supply Pastor

Once again *Pastor Nancy Truscott*, who is the chaplain at Crane’s Mill, will be our Vice Pastor. She will also serve as our Stated Supply starting in December. Pastor Truscott served for us during Pastor Irwin’s maternity leave in 2018.

If you have a pastoral emergency, contact the office at (973) 667-0256 (please leave a voicemail if no one answers; messages are checked regularly every day) OR reach out to Pastor Truscott directly. Her contact information is:

Pastor Nancy Truscott

Cell: (856) 745-0080

Email: ntruscott@comcast.net

A note from Pastor Nancy Truscott

Greetings to the people of Holy Trinity!

I am happy to be serving as your Vice-Pastor! Details of these responsibilities will follow in the January newsletter.

For now, let us be grateful for the Christmas season that is directly upon us. We need a reminder that God is fully present with us, especially now. The Joy of this season is the gift of God's unfailing love for us. We believe in a living and loving God who has always been with us. God is with us in the creation of the world. God is with us in our challenges and victories. God is with us in our sufferings and joys. God is with us in the infant Jesus who became our Savior Jesus. In all of this let us rejoice and give thanks!

Each one of us has been challenged with the heart-felt concerns of deciding what to do about cherished Christmas traditions during this time of Covid. I know this is not easy. I also know that the birth of Jesus also took place in challenging circumstances. The Good News is that no matter the circumstances, we can still ponder the miracle that God stands with us, prays with us, and embraces us Christmas day and every day. Whether rejoicing or simply pondering, may you have a truly blessed Christmas! ~ *Pastor Nancy*

From Scott Jones, Cantor

To follow is a letter from Scott to Council:

“Dear Emily and members of the Church Council:

This letter is to inform you that I will resign my position and retire effective December 31, 2020.

I will be 66 in June and have served Holy Trinity for 34 years. Rev. Gerry Rickel recognized my work as a call to Music Ministry, and I was installed on Holy Cross Day, September 15, 1986. I have been thinking about retiring and, to be honest, a new pastoral vacancy during the pandemic did serve as one impetus in making this decision. I have worked with nine pastors and survived five vacancies over the years, during which I had many additional responsibilities. Two contemporaries and fellow singers in *Harmonium Choral Society* have passed away suddenly this fall. These losses also have caused me to evaluate and think about life.

Holy Trinity has been our family’s spiritual home for 40 years, and this has not been an easy decision. Our worship has brought me much joy and I am so appreciative of the congregation’s support. A special note of thanks to everyone who ever sang in the choir or played an instrument in worship. Your dedication means so much to me.”

Yours in Christ,

J. Scott Jones, Cantor

WORSHIP

Worship Via Zoom

We will continue our Sunday morning worship via Zoom (see link and call-in information below).

For those that are comfortable using Zoom, help is needed to host/cohost our weekly worship services. This includes starting the worship service using the church Zoom account and managing the meeting throughout the service (letting people in, muting as needed). Please let Emily Thomsen know if you are willing to assist with this.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82552194898>
Meeting ID: 825 5219 4898

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 825 5219 4898



Worship Assistants Needed

Even during Zoom worship, we need help. If you'd like to serve as Assisting Minister and/or a Lector, please let Tina know via phone or email. Lectors will read the first and second readings as well as the psalm; the psalm may also be sung if you'd like, but is not necessary. If you choose to sing the psalm and have questions, please contact Scott.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Even though we are worshipping from home, each week in advent we light another candle on the advent wreath as we anticipate the coming of Christ, our Savior.



The Advent wreath is Lutheran in origin and is a beautiful symbol of the season. Here we see a circle of life, the circle of eternity, the circle of return, and the hope of renewal. The evergreen boughs in the ring proclaim life, even in winter's cold and dearth of light. You may also like to have an Advent Wreath prepared at home to light during worship.

Christmas Worship Service



For our Christmas worship service this year, we will be offering a pre-recorded service and two options to view it. The service will be uploaded to our church's YouTube page Christmas Eve morning. The link for the video will be emailed out that day as well. For those that do not have access to YouTube, a live Zoom session will be held at 7:30 pm on 12/24 at which the pre-recorded service will be played.

Christmas Eve Zoom 12/24 at 7:30 pm (pre-recorded service)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82552194898>
Meeting ID: 825 5219 4898

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 825 5219 4898

STEWARDSHIP GOD'S RESOURCES

2021 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2021 will be ready by the end of December. We are offering contactless pickup, or they can delivered to you (local only). If you choose to pick up your envelopes, please notify the office; the envelopes will be left outside the front entrance (in an envelope with your name on them) on the day of your choosing.



Thank you to Tina for coordinating pickup times and to Terry Graney and Elfrieda Fenton for delivering the envelopes!

If you do not typically receive envelopes and would like to have them for 2021, please contact the church office.

STEWARDSHIP

Pledge Cards

Thank you to those that have returned your intent cards indicating your generous giving for 2021. We realize that with the mail delays, some of you may have just received your stewardship information. Once you have had a chance to prayerfully consider your generosity, we look forward to receiving your response either by mail or using the Google Form: <https://tinyurl.com/HTLCNutley>.

Through our communal generosity, we will be able to continue and grow our ministry. Keeping our ministry strong will enable us to dream about an ever-growing ministry into the future. Take time to reflect on the ways in which connection to our ministry has impacted you and those you know and love in the past year and start dreaming about what God may be up to here at HTLC moving forward.

Decide to Give Sacrificially

Little has ever been accomplished without sacrifice. This is true in our homes, our work, our church, our country. Sacrifice is a necessary component of successful living.

And so it is with the Christian life and faith. Our salvation cost God the cross. Bonhoeffer rightly said there is no cheap grace.

Much of church giving is only token giving, averaging about two percent of income. No wonder there is so little joy or satisfaction in it! It requires no sacrifice! We have given only what we could easily afford, what we would not really miss.

Experience has shown that giving, to be meaningful and joyful, has to be sacrificial! Each will have to determine what amount or percentage is sacrificial for his or her circumstances. But experience again suggests that for most people sacrificial giving begins at five percent of income with proportions under five percent falling into the token giving category.

Church interest is often low, studies have shown, because investment is low. There is no sacrifice. It doesn't really cost anything. Jesus said, "Where

your treasure is, there will be your heart also." (Luke 12:34) Where is your treasure? That is where you will find your heart.

Stewardship for Advent & Christmas

Our congregation has a standing tradition of generosity during the holiday season, giving from our abundance to help those in need. This year, we encourage you to give locally to those in need of basic necessities. In lieu of the ELCA Good Gifts, we encourage you to contribute to the ministry of St. Vincent's food pantry or Nutley Family Service Bureau.

If in addition you would like to continue a tradition of donating to the ELCA Good Gifts program, the catalog can be found here:

<https://goodgifts.elca.org/christmas>

Support HTLC with Amazon Smile!



Do you often shop on Amazon? Be sure to sign up for Amazon Smile to support our ministry at Holy Trinity! Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of the cost of eligible purchases to Holy Trinity. To sign up, visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2205690>, sign in with your regular Amazon username and password, and start helping Holy Trinity as you shop! (Donations earned through Amazon Smile will not be sent to HTLC in lump sums, and we will not know who has earned them. They will therefore not be able to be recognized in any formal way, but we give thanks for all of you who participate in this program!)

NutleyPRIDE Collection

For: Essex County LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

Needed: New/Gently worn winter coats. New: hats, scarves, gloves, socks, underwear and unexpired hygienic items.

Drop off: A collection box is located at the Nutley Public Library (2nd floor)



LivingLutheran

Holy Trinity has a congregational subscription to *Living Lutheran Magazine* that provides for every member to get it. The cost per household is about \$8.95 for the year. If you'd like to help defray our costs, please put your offering in an envelope (or send in your donation) marked "Living Lutheran" in the offering plate.

Also, if you no longer require a subscription, please let the office know. Thanks.

CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS

Call for Nominations

At our 2021 annual meeting in January, we will have elections for Congregation Council and for Voting Members of the NJ Synod Assembly. If you are interested in nominating someone or being nominated to serve in either of these capacities, please contact Emily Thomsen, congregation president.

Council Members commit to attending monthly council meetings and being active and present in the life of the congregation. Current council members whose first term is expiring are eligible for re-election. Two will be elected.

Synod Assembly Voting Members commit to attending the 2021 New Jersey Synod Assembly, and representing our congregation in the decision-making processes of the business of the synod (regional organization of Lutheran congregations in New Jersey). Costs of attendance are covered by the congregation. Two, preferably one man and one woman, will be elected.

Annual Reports & Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the congregation will be held virtually on **Sunday, January 31, 2020**, after worship; everyone is encouraged to participate. The Annual Meeting is the time when we tell the story of how God has been at work in this congregation during the past year and look forward to how our hands will engage in God's



mission in 2021. We'll vote on our 2021 Spending Plan and elect new church council members and Synod Assembly Voting Members.

If you are the leader of a ministry area at Holy Trinity, please submit (preferably via email) your Annual Report to the church office no later than Sunday, January 10th; the reports have to be put together, copied and mailed by Sunday, January 17 to ensure everyone has received one prior to the meeting on the 31st. *If not submitted in time, you will be responsible for printing & distributing your report. Thank you.*

THE SEASON IN OUR COMMUNITY

Thank You!

Once again, we thank **Nancy Duhm** who donated the wreaths that hang on our front door in memory of her husband, Chris Duhm.



doorjam Virtual Concert



Sounds of the Season

doorjam, the house band of Franklin Reformed Church, will be offering a **Virtual Advent & Christmas concert on Sunday, December 20,**

at 4 pm. Please see the information below from Franklin Reformed's website:

Join us virtually to enjoy some Christmas and advent music! Look for the doorjam Christmas Concert tab on Franklin Reformed Church's website (<https://www.frcnutley.org/>) on Sunday, December 20th at 4:00pm to watch our videos. As always the concert is free to view, but there will be a (Paypal) donate button to accept donations should you feel moved to contribute. All proceeds will go to the Franklin Reformed Church General Fund.

Looking Ahead

We will be partnering with Franklin Reformed Church for a Lenten Bible study. More information to follow.



