

# Church Council

## 2014 Annual Report

Celebrating our Ministry & Mission - Time, Talents, AND Treasure

### TOGETHER WE CAN!

**Mission Statement:** “Living out our faith in Jesus Christ through joyous service to others”

### “Trinity Feeds Hungry People”

**Council Members:** Pastor Jeffrey Gaustad (Senior Pastor), Phil Edlund (President), Tom Leitch (Vice President), Julie Storaasli (Secretary), Alice Alexander, Carol Fossum, Bob Judge, Lowell Kiesow, Ed Kreamer, Donna Lederman, Chi-Chi Lee, Roy Massengale, Joanne Schwartz, Juanita Stalwick, Steve Ufer, and Douglas Wright.

Susan Wise (Treasurer)

**Regular Meetings:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the Fireside Room

### State of Trinity

There are many reasons to give thanks and celebrate the last 12 months! Trinity’s Feeding Ministry added a third day of service at the Food Pantry. The Mission Endowment distributed \$20,000 to ministries and missions beyond the annual Ministry & Mission budget (*the largest distribution ever made!*). Cooking classes were held with Trinity Food Pantry clients in partnership with the WSU Extensions Center. Trinity hosted the 2014 SW Washington Synod Assembly with over 300 people from all across Southwestern Washington. 22 people attended the county-wide luncheon event co-hosted by the Trinity Trust Committee and the Lutheran Community Foundation to educate and encourage members to leave a legacy to their congregation and organizations they care about. (*Even with the snow, everyone who RSVP’d still attended!*) We launched a refreshed website. The reason all of these great ministries and missions exist today is because those who came before us established Trinity as a congregation AND, together, provided financial resources to provide a space for ministry and staffing and supplies to carry out our mission. Together, it is our calling to ensure that Trinity is here, not just as a building, but with ministry for the next generation!

While to the average person in the congregation everything appears to be going well, one area of particular concern is our Ministry & Mission finances. As of the end of September, we are carrying an accumulated deficit of over \$100,000 (\$38,000 from 2014 alone). While over the last few years we have managed to float this deficit, it is only because large balances existed in designated funds that still allowed us to have funds money in the bank to pay the bills and salaries. We have now reached the point where we have borrowed against ALL the designated funds (not including the endowments) and cannot continue to borrow from ourselves. A prime example of the impact is that although the Capital Improvement Fund contained a sufficient amount to replace the entire roof on the sanctuary, the bank account barely

allowed us to replace 25% of the roof. **Therefore, it is imperative that we close 2014 without a current year deficit to enable us to carryout ministry next year!**

One of the reasons I am most proud of our council is their courage to acknowledge and address the critically important issues concerning our congregation. When the kindergarten teacher retired at the end of last school year and it was apparent that we were woefully underpaying the teacher, our council had the courage to make the difficult decision to discontinue the program. Our council has also deliberated over the current financial situation and has drafted a roadmap for the next five years to enable us not only to overcome our current financial crisis, but move us beyond to reach out even further in ministry!

Our council firmly believes that the cornerstone to addressing our financial situation is to inspire generous giving by all members of the congregation by restoring outside benevolence in our annual Ministry & Mission budget that we do together as a congregation. During budget cuts over the last two decades, all of Trinity's outside benevolence dollars were eliminated from the annual Ministry & Mission budget. The only item that remained was the amount contributed to the Southwestern Washington Synod. The only other benevolence amount remaining was an amount for the Trinity Food Pantry. ***It should be noted that 20 years ago the Trinity Food Pantry existed at a minimal level (less than \$10,000 in annual expenses).*** As a direct result, many members have diverted their financial support of the Ministry & Mission budget, and began donating directly to the mission agencies and Lutheran organizations that they care about. This has had a detrimental impact on our ability to carry out ministry and to address critical needs.

One step was made in the 2014 budget, by directly allocating 100% of the funds needed to run our feeding ministry (\$25,000), rather than asking for designated donations to off-set the cost of operating the Food Pantry. **In 2015, we will continue this process by completely eliminating designated giving opportunities and encourage members to direct all of their giving to support the Ministry & Mission budget.** This means that we will now include funding for capital improvements and major building maintenance in our integrated Ministry & Mission budget. We are confident that, together, WE can do this! We can look to recent examples that convince our council that the financial resources exist AND generosity can be inspired when we align our ministry and mission spending with the hearts and passions of our members! Four recent examples are:

- 1) We raised over \$50,000 during our last interim to install the digital sign on C Street
- 2) We matched the challenge grant with over \$20,000 to purchase the walk-in cooler and freezer for Trinity's Feeding and hospitality ministries
- 3) We sent 9 youth and 2 chaperones to the National Lutheran Youth Gathering in 2012.
- 4) We provided over \$60,000 (plus donated equipment & furnishings) to refurbish the apartment above the Fireside Room to leverage our facility to provide resources for a Youth Director

Together, we will also provide permanent support for the Director of Youth Ministries position AND provide funding to help offset the cost of the youth attending the 2015 Summer Youth Gathering.

Together, we will also become better stewards of our paid staff by addressing the substantial compensation inequality that exists for our paid staff. While we have a very dedicated staff, Trinity has a long history of providing market pay for our called clergy and music director, and undercompensated the other staff (some significantly below local church wages). Providing market compensation is crucial to attract and retain quality staff and maintain programs. Because we were woefully undercompensating our kindergarten teacher, when we went to interview a new teacher, we could not afford to hire a teacher, since market wages would have been \$8,000 to \$15,000 more than the previous teacher. Continuing the program would have added significant pressure on our already strained bank account.

**All of this is only possible if we, together, step up and make Trinity a priority in our individual financial giving. We ask that you and your family prayerfully consider how you can financially support the Ministry & Mission that we share for the remainder of 2014 and into 2015.**

### **2014 Achievements:**

- Professional Outside Financial Review of 2012 and 2013 Financials
- Establishing a distinct worship format for the 9am service
- Revision of Constitution and Bylaws to bring in line with ELCA Model Constitution
- Evaluation of the feasibility of continuing the Kindergarten Program
- Drafting of a 5-year Plan to restore benevolence giving

### **2015 Goals**

- Implementing the 5-year plan
  - Providing \$10,000 in new outside Benevolence support.
  - Providing permanent funding for the Director of Youth position
  - Providing financial support for the youth to attend the 2015 Summer Youth Gathering
  - Begin the process of providing competitive compensation for all paid staff
  - Begin the process of repaying the \$65,000 accumulated Ministry & Mission Fund deficit, and close 2014 with a balanced budget