



Trinity Today

Vol. 23, No. 5

May 1, 2021

Changes in COVID Safety Protocols

As you know, we are constantly reviewing our COVID-related safety protocols and we'll continue to make appropriate revisions as the vaccination levels in our community increase. **We are making some significant changes in these protocols starting with the worship services on May 1-2. Specifically, starting on May 1-2:**

- You will no longer need to RSVP to attend a worship service. We will introduce an electronic system to allow worshipers to register their attendance when they enter the Sanctuary (the Traditional service) or the MPR (for the Satellite service);
- We will allow "open seating" on the Lectern side of the Sanctuary, while continuing to provide the option for social-distanced seating on the Pulpit side;
- The nursery will open to care for children 2 years old and younger; and
- We will begin passing the offering plate during the Traditional service.

**CHANGES
ARE
COMING
TO
WORSHIP**

Looking forward, we are continuing to plan for the restart of in-person Adult Bible studies and Sunday School on August 22nd. This is contingent upon successfully recruiting and equipping volunteers and assumes that the COVID pandemic will continue to wane. For the time being, wearing a mask while on Trinity's campus will continue to be an important safety precaution.

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

In Person, Live Streamed or On Demand

Satellite Service (Contemporary) – Saturdays at 5:00 p.m.

Traditional Service – Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Does Prayer REALLY Make Any Difference?

In April, Trinity's Stephen Ministry concluded their study of Philip Yancey's classic study entitled "Prayer". At our twice-monthly meetings, our discussion was led by Jean Minsch as we dug deeply into topics such as:

- Is the purpose of prayer to change God's mind?
- If God already knows everything, what's the point of praying?
- How is prayer supposed to change us?

In late April, our discussion focused on "Does prayer really make any difference?" We discovered:

- The power of "accumulated" prayer—how God calls us to *continue* to "ask, seek and knock" as we lay our requests before Him;
- Prayer is a balance between making requests and taking action—sometimes God uses US to answer our own prayers and the prayers of others; and
- We tend to think of God's actions in the world (in response to our prayers) as separate from the "normal course of events"—the Bible tends to draw them together. God works in all creation and all history to bring about His ultimate goals.

Stephen Ministers are laypeople in our congregation trained to provide one-to-one, Christ-centered care to individuals facing difficult times in life—grief, cancer, divorce, financial difficulties, hospitalization, chronic illness, job loss, disability, loneliness, a spiritual crisis, or other life struggles. They have a compassionate heart for those who are hurting, and they're equipped with caring ministry skills by their congregation's Stephen Leaders. They listen, care, pray, encourage, and offer emotional and spiritual support. They often work in cooperation with licensed counselors, psychiatrists and other professional caregivers to help those suffering from depression.

With the ongoing pandemic and its associated economic pressures, it's no wonder that recently released research indicates that a great many adults are suffering from an increased level of anxiety.

Do you have an issue that you need to bring to the feet of our Lord in prayer? If you'd like to learn more about how our Stephen Ministry could provide a listening ear and caring heart for yourself, a loved one, friend, neighbor or co-worker (inside or outside our congregation) please speak with one of our pastors or reach out to Ron Lacy at rlacy@trinitydt.org or 713.229.2970.



Everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

LUKE 11:10, ESV

Spanish Worship at Trinity

Did you know that Spanish speaking, singing, and worshiping is occurring right in downtown Houston? We are blessed to partner in ministry with Casa de Oracion (House of Prayer) themselves a sponsored ministry of LINC Houston. Pastor Jose Flores and his dear bride Celina lead worship and fellowship each Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. in the Multi-purpose Room of the Early Childhood Center. The music is contemporary in nature and the worship invites Spanish speakers to encounter the loving grace of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit each and every week.

As you join Jesus on His mission, please be praying for your Spanish speaking family and friends and consider inviting them to Casa de Oracion.

As ministry begins to "reopen," look for outreach events and projects to be added beyond just Sunday morning worship. Please don't hesitate to reach out to Matt Meier (mmeier@trinitydt.org, 832.301.3105) if you would like to know more about this exciting ministry in downtown Houston.



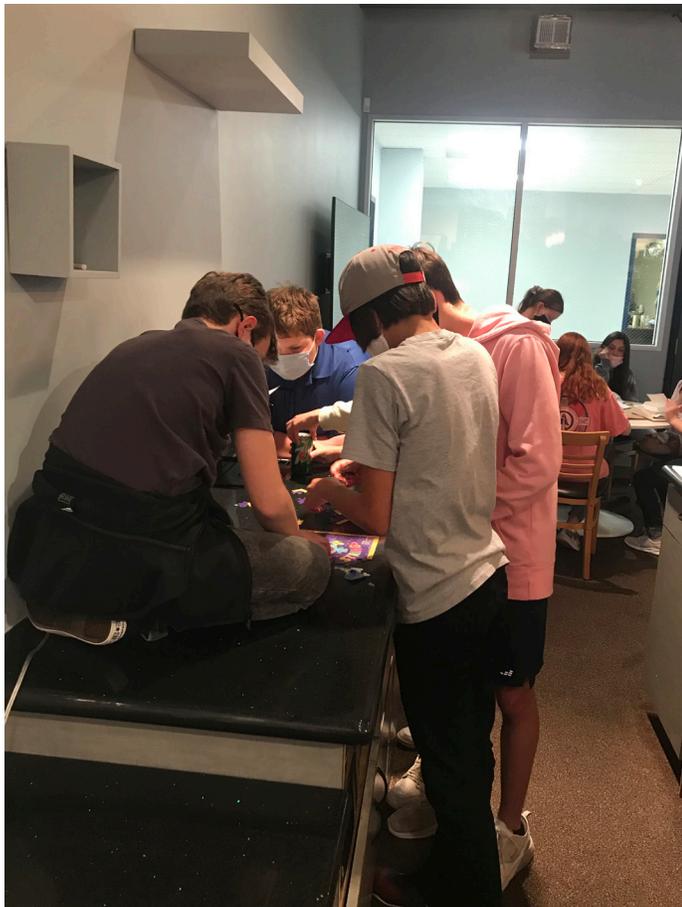
Pastor Jose Flores and his wife, Celina



Hey, Trinity!!!

April was a blast with Children's Ministry Movie Night and the youth room debut during our escape game! It was so much fun seeing our teens work together like that! May looks forward to a pancakes and Pjs event for our kiddos and a water games event for the teens! I am so excited for what's coming! We will be opening our nursery in its new location the first weekend in May! It's so exciting to begin the walk towards normal again!

Blessings!
Haley Davison,
Director of Youth and
Children's Ministries



\$18k Rebate from Texas Church Extension Fund

The Texas District's Church Extension Fund ("CEF") provides funds to LCMS congregations throughout Texas to build or expand churches and schools. These funds are provided through investments that may be made by both individuals and congregations.

The CEF sends an annual rebate to Trinity that is based on the total amount of investments our church and our members have on deposit with them. The percentage rebate goes up as the total amount of investments increase. For 2020, CEF gave rebates to over 100 Texas congregations that totaled more than \$620,000.

In March, Trinity received an annual rebate from the Texas District's Church Extension Fund ("CEF") which totaled over \$18,500! We are so grateful to CEF for their generosity, and appreciative of the good work they are doing to build God's Kingdom in Texas.

You can help increase next year's rebate to our church by:

- Investing in TX-CEF through a variety of savings programs that earn interest from 0.75% to 1.95%. You can even open an Individual Retirement Account!
- If you already have an account with CEF, please be sure that CEF is aware that you are a member of Trinity Downtown.

You can get all the details by going to <http://texascef.org/invest/>



Hey, Trinity Families!

Check out our new nursery space! We moved upstairs to get closer to the sanctuary, and provide several easy access points for parents to get to their kids but still provide security! Our children's ministry theme is based around the idea of God's kingdom and a lot of our decorations will have a castle/kingdom theme to them. As we pondered about the decorations for the nursery, the idea of a courtyard, or garden came up. Most castles have an inner courtyard with beautiful flowers and trees, and some even have a secret garden! Our new theme, Secret Garden, fosters wonder in children about God's creation and also plays off what Psalm 51 says, "You taught me wisdom in that secret place!" While its location is not secret, the nursery is a place that lays the foundation of the love of God! The room also has lots of fun colors and textures for kids to explore! I'm so excited that our little ones will have a fun space to grow in together!



Blessings,
Haley Davisson, Director of Youth and Children's Ministries

Finance Corner - May 1, 2021

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 ESV

Dear Members and Supporters of Trinity's ministries:

I am thrilled to announce that in late March **the Governing Board authorized the total repayment of our outstanding operational debt of ~\$70k. The repayment was completed in April, which means that the only indebtedness we retain is the mortgage on the Education Building. Thanks be to God for His blessings and the generosity of His people!**

Our financial picture through March 31st was mixed:

- Tithes and offerings in the month of March were **8% higher** than our monthly budget, while total revenue on a YTD basis was **5% lower** than budget and 15% lower than this same period last year; and
- Operational expenses in March were right on-budget, while YTD expenses were 4% higher than budget. When compared with the same time period in 2020, expenses in 2021 were 5% lower than what we spent in 2020. In March, we incurred some unexpected HVAC repair costs in the Education Building and for the repair of some damage done to the cooling tower by the February freeze.

Average worship attendance in March was **433**. Holy Week and Easter in-person and online attendance totaled **1,442**, compared with 1,614 in 2020 (when we met totally online), 1,119 in 2019, and 1,417 in 2018. "Drive up" communion services on Wednesday and Saturday continued and will continue for the foreseeable future.

Of course, challenges remain ahead, and there is MUCH to accomplish as (we pray) the COVID pandemic wanes and life returns to the "new normal." Your stewardship will be even more important as we look forward to increased ministry needs in the coming months and years.

Joining Jesus alongside you,

Ron Lacy
CFO



amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

How to increase your giving to Trinity without spending any additional money.

Please remember that you can expand your stewardship by using a program that Trinity has qualified for at Amazon. Amazon will give Trinity a 0.5% rebate for all purchases made by our supporters when making their normal purchases at Amazon. It's very easy—whenever you are shopping on Amazon, go to this web address (instead of www.amazon.com): <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-1238451>

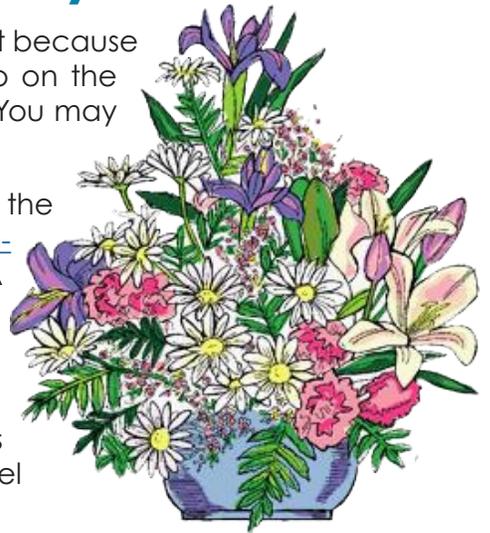
Using this service from Amazon won't change the cost of the products you buy, and all of your account settings and preferences will be retained. The only thing that will change is that Trinity will receive a rebate!

It is Truly a Blessing to See Beautiful Flowers at Our Altar Every Sunday!

If you are wanting to dedicate flowers for a special occasion or just because you love to see the beautiful flowers at the altar, please sign up on the Flower Chart that is hanging in the foyer by the reception desk. You may also call our hostess (713.224.0684) to sign up as well.

You may use your own florist or you can make a donation to the "Flowers for Sanctuary" fund at <https://www.trinitydt.org/online-giving/> or send in a check with the memo "Flowers" for \$75. A florist in our congregation (Sue Clark) will make the arrangements for you with the flowers of your choice or you can elect to have her decide. You may take your flowers with you after the service.

We are so very grateful for the beautiful arrangements Sue has made in the last few weeks! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Trinity Garrett at 713.229.2937.



A Huge Thank You to the Billiard Factory

As we have updated our youth room, we got a hugely generous donation of a brand new pool table by the CFO of Billiard Factory, Mike Rodgers! Billiard Factory is an amazing company that meets a variety of table game needs! Thanks so much for contributing to our new space!



Youth and Adult Virtual Bible Studies

Please consider joining one or more of our weekly virtual Bible studies. It's a wonderful way to begin a new spiritual discipline. Virtual login information is available on Trinity's website www.trinitydt.org.

SUNDAYS - YOUTH

Foundations 56 (5th-6th grades) - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Led by Jane Suchma & Karen Maynard

Online Kids Interactive Experience. (Note: To join this class go to <https://www.trinitydt.org/youth-ministries/>.)

High School Class (7th-12th grades)

Led by Elizabeth Oliver - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Study of the book of Psalms.

SUNDAYS - ADULT

Acts

Led by Pastor Paul Dorn - 7:00-8:00 p.m.

As we journey through the book of Acts, we will read how the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ grew and the number of those who believed the Word increased mightily. It is in that Word that Christ will confront us also—strengthening our faith in Him and encouraging us to be His witnesses in Houston, in Texas, and to the end of the earth.

James: Life on the Ground

Led by Jim Cleary - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

We all can use very practical help living out our faith. Join us as we sit at the feet of James, soaking up what he has to say about how life really works and even more importantly, how it should work. Discussion-oriented.

Nineveh Tails: It's Not Just About a Big Fish

Led by Thomas DeVries - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Parables and Proverbs

Led by Bill Fischer's Team - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

"Parables and Proverbs" - examples of Jesus using the wisdom of Proverbs to emphasize the points of His Parables.

WEDNESDAYS - ADULTS

Bless These Lips (Women's Study)

Led by Jan Case - 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Make over your words to influence the world! *Bless These Lips: 40 Days of Spiritual Renewal* examines things we say that get in the way of our relationships with God and with others. Each chapter draws on lip product analogies and uses humor, anecdotes, and observations to introduce Scripture passages that address common behaviors and attitudes.



A Longer Look at the Lessons of Easter (Women's Study)

Led by Mary Oliver - 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

The Wednesday Evening Women's Bible Study is currently on Zoom studying "A Longer Look at the Lessons of Easter." These are stand alone lessons so feel free to pop in and out as you are able.

Virtual Midweek Spiritual Check-in

Led by Jim Cleary - 7:00-8:00 p.m.

THURSDAYS - ADULTS

Sonrise Bible Study

Led by Pastor Donald Black - 7:30-8:30 a.m.

The class discusses the Scripture readings assigned for the following Sunday. The class is open to men and women. For more information, contact Bill Fischer at 713.827.8664 or bfisch@aol.com.



Explore God's Word With Us!

Life Thoughts in the Church Year

May 9 – Sixth Sunday of Easter -- Mother's Day – "My body, my choice," says a sinful world. "You did not choose Me, but I chose you" (John 15:16), answers a loving God. Motherhood comes about by His gift, not because of our will. Choice forces us to look out only for number one, but grace invites us to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Praise the Lord for mother's love!

(From the Spring 2021 issue of LifeDate, a quarterly journal of news and commentary from Lutherans For Life - www.lutheransforlife.org.)



"Love each other as I have loved you."
JOHN 15:12, NIV



2021 GOVERNING BOARD

- Jim Baccus (Elder)
- Kim Davis (Chair)
- Cindy Deere
- Delvin Dennis (Elder)
- Thomas DeVries
- Pastor Michael Dorn
- Tim Grady (Elder)
- Cassandra McGarvey
- Dan Krueger (Vice-Chair/ Elder)
- Janet Mueller (Secretary)
- Cynthia Roney

Minutes of the Governing Board are available to our members at the Welcome Center.

BOARD OF ELDERS - CONTACT INFORMATION

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Tim Grady	timlgrady@aol.com	281.639.0036
Dan Krueger	dwkrueger5@yahoo.com	901.258.4029

Greetings from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis!

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! And we made it back safely to Texas and then to Missouri, to boot! Alleluia, indeed! As I reflected with Stephanie prior to our departure from England, I can learn to be content in just about any location and situation, but the transitions are always the toughest part. But we're mostly settled in now and trying to refocus on our work. As I write this, we are only four weeks away from the due date of our extended essays. That may sound like a long time, but with the reading that remains and the supervisions we expect to have with teachers to review and revise this work, those weeks will be gone before we know it. That doesn't include any additional work necessary for our dissertations.

The good thing about this is that we will be done sooner than later. We have enjoyed the learning experience, but I think we are starting to feel the weariness of much study that Solomon speaks of in Ecclesiastes 12:12. The academic realm with little outside interaction can be a bit disorienting, and despite providing additional work, I was thankful for opportunities to teach and preach at Resurrection Lutheran Church (the local congregation connected to Westfield House). These instances helped bring me back to reality and refocus me on the purpose for the studying. This is a regular part of the program at CSL, but the program at Cambridge is very different, let alone COVID conditions. I am looking forward to reintegrating into the seminary community and the work that continues here.



**Chuck Ridley,
Seminary Student**



Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Speaking of community, I ask that you keep the seminary community in prayer as COVID restrictions slowly ease up and people figure out how life should look. I've heard from friends that community life has suffered tremendously over the past year due to classes largely being held online and students are either unable or discouraged from gathering as we normally would. There has already been some effort to discuss what a communal 'reset' might require. I think most students, staff, and faculty recognize that there is a real loss being experienced by the students, especially the concluding students this year (mostly my classmates from the last few years). Yet, nothing seems to be on offer to help process this loss, probably due to the enormity of the challenge, short timelines, and an inability for anyone to grasp the long-term impact of this pandemic. Perhaps I'm making it sound more dire than it is (I hope so!). We know that Jesus is Lord, and we commend our lives into His hands. But we are not fatalists, and we are invited to pray to our heavenly Father as His dear children. So, I humbly request your prayers for the seminary and our faculty, staff, and students as we approach Commencement this year and the new academic year in August.

On a more upbeat note, Stephanie had another ultrasound, and we can confirm that we have a little boy! We are excited, but we still have almost five months left till the due date. Back to the time issue again...it sounds like a long time, but we know it will pass quickly between studies, moving, preparing for my last year at the seminary, and possibly even some trips to visit friends and family in the summer. The immensity of the task ahead is slowly setting in, especially as I read about catechesis in the Reformation. The responsibility of being a parent is perhaps greater than most of us ever think about. Luther emphasized that parents are God's agents to teach and care for the children He gives. That is a huge responsibility that we never truly fulfill. Thanks be to God that Christ has paid the price for our failures! This doesn't get us off the hook for the duties associated with the vocation of parent, though!

Responsibility may be daunting – and often demonized by our hedonistic society – but it is a gift of God that is part of our vocations. As you enjoy your freedoms, I encourage you to also consider your responsibilities to those around you. As you do, rejoice that God has given you the relationships that call forth that responsibility and pray that His Holy Spirit would strengthen and guide you to live faithfully according to the Lord's will in each of those roles into which you've been called.

"The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:11–13, ESV)

In Christ,
Chuck Ridley



She is more
precious
than rubies...

Proverbs 3:15

Happy Mother's Day

Drive-Up Holy Communion



Wednesdays
11:00 am - 1 pm

Saturdays
9:30 am - 11:00 am

Call the Church Office
at 713-224-0684
8:30 am - 2:15 pm
Monday - Friday
to RSVP

STAFF DIRECTORY

713.224.0684

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Visitation Pastor
Donald G. Black . . .713.229.2917

Chief Financial Officer
Ron Lacy713.229.2970

Dir. of Administration
and Human Resources
Trinity Garrett713.229.2937

Director of Music and Worship
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Children's Ministries
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Roseann Gamez . .713.229.2962

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Pam Schroeder . . .713.229.2944

Contributions Manager
Angela Avant713.229.2963

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Stefanie Bowman . .713.229.2950

Hostess (Fridays)
Sarahai Flores713.229.2950



*Joyfully Sharing Christ's Saving
Love With All People Now!*

Prayer Chain



For urgent prayer requests, please call:
Lil Hohle - 346.207.7442 or Alice Scherer - 713.984.0803

*You,
LORD,
are my lamp;
the LORD
turns my darkness
into light.*

2 SAMUEL 22:29, NIV



Trinity Downtown

www.trinitydt.org

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713-224-0684



Article submission deadline is **May 14** for articles to be published June 1, 2021.
Submit articles to pschroeder@trinitydt.org.

Contact Pam Schroeder at 713.229.2944 with any questions about this publication.