

# Trinity **SONRISE** News



*Trinity Lutheran Church*

*on the Sunrise Side of Michigan*

*2020*

## **A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR AZZAM**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Visitors of the Michigan District's 44 circuits were instructed by our District President to ask the following question early in the month of May: "If the coronavirus pandemic extends into the Month of September, and services remain cancelled or limited until then, how would you congregation survive financially. It was a multiple-choice question and each congregation was to answer. 1. We will do just fine, with the help of God. 2. Things will be tight, but, God willing, we will get through. or 3. We may have to close our doors for good. Trinity Congregation indicated, at that time, a concern that things might get tough, requiring I report choice number 2.

It is now September. As of this writing it was reported to the voter's assembly that your tithes and offerings have not only paid all salaries, all the bills, and every district obligation during the first 10 months of the fiscal year (October 2019-July 2020,) but additionally, the bills have exceeded your gifts by approximately 1100 dollars! Not only did we do just fine, but the Lord abundantly blessed Trinity congregation through your generosity and your faithful stewardship during this difficult time.

In addition to this, the Lord provided for us through your tax dollars as Trinity qualified for the federal Payroll Protection Plan. Application was made through the Northland Credit Union and the Small Business Association for payroll protection. Using the criterion for this forgivable loan, Trinity qualified for \$22,555. This month the timeframe for spending that money has been completed and if it has not been already, application for loan forgiveness will be submitted. As a result of your faithfulness that covered all expenses anyway and this PPP loan/grant, Trinity will have an additional asset of \$22,555 for future use which is now already on deposit in our Savings account. Sometimes God uses those he has placed in authority for the good of his kingdom. We thank and praise him for this.

Attached is the Pastor's annual report. In it you will see the metrics surrounding our worship during the pandemic shut down and since we have opened, conducting 2 services on Sunday and continuing to broadcast a recorded service through our Facebook Page, online. Please take note the extent of our outreach is now 2-3 times higher than what it was pre-pandemic. God has blessed us again with the ability to reach out with the Gospel at a time when others might have believed the church would suffer. This is not only true for Trinity, but every church across the nation who has used a digital, internet, format to broadcast worship services. Please check out the report.

Finally, during this time, we have been spared from the Covid-19 virus in our congregation...We also praise God for this and we thank you for your diligence in practicing safe behaviors, showing love to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and in our community.

We thank the Lord for his unspeakable gift we have in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 9:15)

In his Service,  
Pastor Timothy Azzam

## Annual Meeting Pastor's Report: Trinity Lutheran Church – Oscoda, MI – August 16, 2020

If it has not been said enough, the Year of our Lord 2020 will go down as being the most memorable and forgettable in a long, long time. News of a dangerous virus and the various things that have been done to mitigate its spread have introduced words in our vocabulary that we would otherwise have rarely used. Who would have thought the words Corona, Covid-19, personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, masks, and testing would become common parlance? Not only have our words changed, but also our behaviors. We have stopped hugging and shaking hands, we keep 6 feet from others, and we slip in and out of stores and other buildings as quickly and efficiently as possible avoiding all possibility of transmitting the disease. Needless to say, this all has affected our Congregation and how we “do church.”

With stay at home orders we conducted 19 worship services by webcam on Facebook from my office, 5 of which were Lenten or Holy Week services. These services began March 18 and continued through June 21. During this time, the worship services appeared on the newsfeeds of Facebook for everyone who “followed” Trinity and became available from our website for anyone who sought them out.

Below are the numbers provided by Facebook regarding those who actually viewed the worship services in part or completely. Notice the numbers change when we began recording and publishing on Sunday when in-person services resumed.

March 18,	311 views,	(MW)	June 7,	165 views	
March 22,	341 views,		June 14,	161 views	
March 25,	236 views,	(MW)	June 21,	118 views	+ 39 Outdoors = 157
March 29,	293 views,		June 28,	160 views	+ 15 <sup>@8</sup> + 24 <sup>@10:30</sup> = 199
April 1,	229 views,	(MW)	July 5,	106 views	+ 9 <sup>@8</sup> + 32 <sup>@10:30</sup> = 147
April 5,	293 views,	(PS)	July 12,	155 views	+ 17 <sup>@8</sup> + 14 <sup>@10:30</sup> = 186
April 9,	162 views,	(MT)	July 19,	120 views	+ 17 <sup>@8</sup> + 11 <sup>@10:30</sup> = 148
April 10,	323 views,	(GF)	July 26,	148 views	+ 24 <sup>@8</sup> + 22 <sup>@10:30</sup> = 194
April 12,	336 views,	(ES)	Aug. 2,	185 views	+ 16 <sup>@8</sup> + 21 <sup>@10:30</sup> = 222
April 19,	294 views,		Aug 9,	109*views	+ 14 <sup>@8</sup> + 19 <sup>@10:30</sup> = 142*
April 26,	297 views,				*as of 9:45 AM August 13
May 3,	280 views				
May 17,	205 views				
May 24,	175 views				
May 31,	201 views				

Church consultants have noted two things that you may also see: when the states locked down church buildings and people desiring to worship were forced to seek out worship “online”, attendance skyrocketed, much higher than indoor worship attendances would otherwise have been.

Contributing to the high participation were people themselves, sharing videos with their friends on social media. As church buildings began to open up online worship leveled off but remains at levels greater than in-person attendance had been previous to the Corona Virus measures.

This means:

- We have a virtual congregation of people interested in the ministry we provide.
- We have an opportunity to acknowledge and follow up with those who comment who are not our regular members.
- We need to understand that the virtual congregation is likely larger than the one which worshipped in-person prior to the pandemic.

Reopening the church for in-person worship remains a formidable task requiring the marking off of pews to retain social distancing, the removal of commonly touched items, and intensified cleaning and sanitizing. Cleaning must occur prior to every worship service.

Additional adaptations included

- the purchase of video recording equipment, (Camera and Tripod),
- learning and training on its use, and allowing an additional hour preparing video for uploading.
- Making time to do it all. During Lent and Easter, recording worship happened twice each week requiring approximately 16 additional hours to practice, preach, produce, edit, and upload over and above regular sermon preparation time.)

During the last 4 months every member has been phoned by me twice as were available, two congregational mailings have been sent.

There have been 6 deaths in the congregation since the first of the year including Yvonne Kreuzweiser, Rodger Wenzel, Lorraine Boike, Lee Dawley, and Robert Perry, the husband of Nancy Perry. Others have been hospitalized, and undergone tests and procedures. During this time contact was made as possible with each person and family and funeral services were conducted as allowed, many being private or delayed.

A survey was also taken by the elders to further learn how we might best provide worship opportunities to you. The result of the survey states that members of Trinity will not be returning to in person worship in greater numbers than they already are any time soon. Many await a vaccination or some indication that the spread of Covid has been reduced to numbers no longer dangerous. This suggests that our in-person numbers will likely not change until next year at this time.

In the Michigan District nearly every event until the end of the Year has been cancelled or re-imagined so as to stay within Michigan's current Phase 4 reopening plan. As a result, my conference attendance will be much different this fall than other years as much will be done virtually or in day trips.

Conclusion, though our language and behavior has changed considerably as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, our Lord does not change. His language to us is still the same. Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you, he declares to us. We live each day in His care, and He is always faithful.

Blessings,

Pastor Timothy Azzam



Chris Exnowski, Wayne Fortney, and Bill Ruckel

**Homebound:**

Alice Dettmer – Medilodge  
Richard & Phyllis Fitzgerald

**Military:**

Jason Cooper  
Courtney & Karina Pierce (Army)  
Marc Stiller (U.S.A.F. – Sherman)  
Nathan Boettge (Marines - Fortney)



**Flood Bucket Mission Project:** Trinity and Thrivent Financial are sponsoring a flood bucket mission project for LERT (Lutheran Early Response Team). We will fill 5-gallon plastic buckets with cleaning supplies. Donations of the following items are still being collected: paper towels, Comet cleanser, Pine Sol, bleach (1-gallon size), window cleaner, Handi Wipes, sponges, scrub brush, and rubber gloves. Thrivent Financial will provide the 5-gallon buckets with lids. Due to difficulty in purchasing needed supplies, the filling of the flood buckets has been postponed until September 13<sup>th</sup>. Lots of volunteers are needed.



Thank you to everyone that worked to help clean the church building and the grounds! Your help is appreciated more than you know.

# STEWARDSHIP

## God's Love Is Constant

A pastor visited a member of his congregation who was a farmer. He noticed that the farmer had a weathervane on top of his new barn with the inscription, "God is love." What do you mean by putting those words on your weathervane?" he asked. "Do you mean that God's love is as changeable as the wind?"

"Oh, no, just the opposite," the farmer replied. "I mean that God's love is the same no matter which way the wind blows."

Very likely the farmer had in mind the verse from Hebrews 13:8 which reads, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*" This is a good verse for all of us to remember. Maybe we've had some disappointing things happen that can make us doubt God's love for us. Maybe things are not going well at work. Maybe one or more of your children are going through difficult times. Maybe someone we know has died. Life can be very confusing and frightening. Sometimes it's hard to admit to another person that we're concerned that we don't "have it all together." God knows, and His love for us remains constant even though our emotions may run from very high to very low.

As painful as some of these experiences are, we can really learn from them. Best of all, they serve to help us mature in faith. Furthermore, they teach us about other people. If we have these problems, shouldn't we think others may too, even if they don't talk about them? The Apostle Paul knew what it was like to have problems, and he found a purpose in them: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God*" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). First, we should praise God for the comfort He gives us. He is the Father of all mercies! Then, Paul says, we should comfort others just as God has comforted us. How can we do this? By listening, by being patient when friends don't act as they should as a result of their emotional pain, and, most of all, by sharing our experience with them and telling them of the comfort God brings. Doing these things is practicing good stewardship of the gifts God has given us. God will help us keep our eyes on Him instead of our circumstances, and He will help us to place our trust in Him.

--Bill Davis, Stewardship Chair



### September Mission of the Month Harbor Lights Pregnancy and Information Center

Harbor Lights Pregnancy & Information Center is a non-profit organization established in 2010. The organization provides services to women and men as they face the challenges of a pregnancy. They provide services to women, men and families of Iosco County and all of the surrounding counties until their youngest child reaches the age of five. You can use a mission envelope that can be found in your envelope packet.

If you already support a mission, please continue to do so by designating that particular mission by name on a Mission envelope. Thrivent members remember that you can allocate your Choice Dollars to the Harbor Lights Pregnancy and Information Center.



**Oscoda FISH (Friends Instantly Sharing Help)** is in dire need of people who would be available one day a month to answer the phone from their home taking calls from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. from those in need in our community. Training is available and a resource guide and manual are available for reference. Please call the FISH phone line at 739-9400 any weekday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. to volunteer. Your assistance with this valuable community resource is greatly needed and would be deeply appreciated.

## FROM A PREACHER – GREAT WORDS

If you have a church that you consider family, let me tell you what is really going on in pastors' minds and hearts right now.

1. They are relearning everything about how to do ministry. Much of what they were taught about church leadership and programs are not as relevant or workable right now.
2. They are begging God on a daily basis for wisdom to make the right decisions.
3. They are trying their very best to get “pumped up” for less than half the number of people they used to see in church services.
4. They are in love with their spouses more than ever since they are listening to the fears that pastors can't share with anyone else.
5. They are constantly praying for and thinking of ways to keep themselves, their family, their staff, and the church leaders and their families safe from this virus.
6. They are hoping the church family will remain faithful with their finances so that ministries won't have to be cut.
7. They cry when alone because in answering God's call to minister to God's people, they can't pray with them in the hospital or even shake their hands at church. This tears their hearts out.
8. They worry themselves sick over 33% of the congregation that no longer participate in the livestream services provided by the church. Will they ever see them again?
9. They get frustrated at Christians who join the current narrative of culture by criticizing and being divisive on social media. They'd like to straighten them out with a post of their own, but the Holy Spirit helps restrain them.
10. They tell themselves and others that when this is all over, the church will be stronger than ever. Then in private they wonder if it's true.
11. And in spite of it all, in their most intimate times of prayer, they thank God for allowing them to be pastors. They can't imagine having more fulfilling lives.

*-- Adapted, Dave Hastings*



### ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN DEPENDENCE

Much as we value the stream of loving contributions of clothing, medical equipment, and other humanitarian goods; much as we deeply appreciate the service of dedicated volunteers; much as we welcome generous financial support from churches and individuals who make possible international and domestic shipments of relief supplies, the Orphan Grain Train mission does not depend ultimately on goods, workers, or dollars. Reliance is only on Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd. Every morning during operational hours, volunteers at Orphan Grain Train suspend their work of sorting clothing and filling boxes to hear God's Word and to seek His help in prayer. We pray this mission be blessed in order that people in need will have their sicknesses overcome, fears calmed, and thanksgiving expressed to the Lord who abundantly cares for all. Orphan Grain Train has been an extension of Christ's care around the world for 28 years, every day of which has depended on Him. (Visit [ogt.org](http://ogt.org).)

Reaching into 69 countries with the message of Christ to accompany humanitarian aid and mercy care, Orphan Grain Train distributes food, clothing, medical supplies, Christian literature, school materials, tools, personal transport devices for the disabled, and more. Orphan Grain Train also quickly responds domestically with disaster relief when hurricanes, fires, or drought place American lives and livelihoods in jeopardy. Orphan Grain Train—Michigan, located at 126 E. Main St., Sebawaing is the first sustained presence of OGT in Michigan. The new branch Center is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 am - noon. For more information visit [www.ogt.org/](http://www.ogt.org/) or [ogt-mi.blogspot.com/](http://ogt-mi.blogspot.com/) or contact me at 989-600-2264.

IOSCO COUNTY



## FOOD GIVE AWAY

**Saturday, September 26, 2020**

**11:00am**

until food is gone

(distribution may start early due to traffic overflow)

**FREE!**



## Trinity Lutheran Church

5625 N US-23, Oscoda, MI 48750

**Please remain in your vehicle;  
we will come to you!**

**First come—first served. Limited supply.**

Brought to you by these partners:



**Trinity  
Lutheran  
Church**

Oscoda, MI



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

**LOTS OF VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED FOR THIS WORTHWHILE  
GRANT-FUNDED COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

# SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



9/1 Justine Alderete  
9/4 Terri Westberg  
9/5 Deserae Evans  
9/6 Frederick Rogel  
9/10 Matthew Abee  
9/15 Amber Brewer  
9/21 Annette Inman  
9/22 Jack Poland  
9/24 Vicky Boyce  
9/24 Rachel Koski  
9/24 Melarie Seidel  
9/25 Sue Welther  
9/29 David Golm  
9/30 Karen Kaiser  
9/30 Melissa Ludeña

9/3 Bill & Joyce Davis  
9/12 Ryan & Kristen Bilbey  
9/13 Mike & Melarie Seidel  
9/20 Adam & Samantha Travis

## *Know the Elders*

The Board of Elders concerns itself with the wellbeing and spiritual life of our congregation and pastor. Pastor Azzam and your Elders are happy and eager to hear from you!

They may be reached at:

Pastor Azzam - 739-4820  
Mitch Davis, Jr. - 989-820-1469  
Charlie Rainey - 724-6704  
Roger Tack - 989-293-8050  
Ron Weidenfeller - 724-7701



The deadline to submit articles for the October Newsletter is September 20, 2020.

## Just for Fun



Luther's Small Catechism ("Der Kleine Katechismus") was published in 1529 for the teaching of children at home by their parents.

Rather than "Lutheran," Martin Luther preferred to describe the reformation as "evangelical," which is derived from the Greek word meaning "good news."



1. There were two men who never died in the Bible. Elijah was one, who was the other?
2. How many brothers did Jesus have?
3. What is the shortest book in the Bible?



Answers to Quiz:  
1. Enoch  
2. 4 - James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon.  
3. 2 John