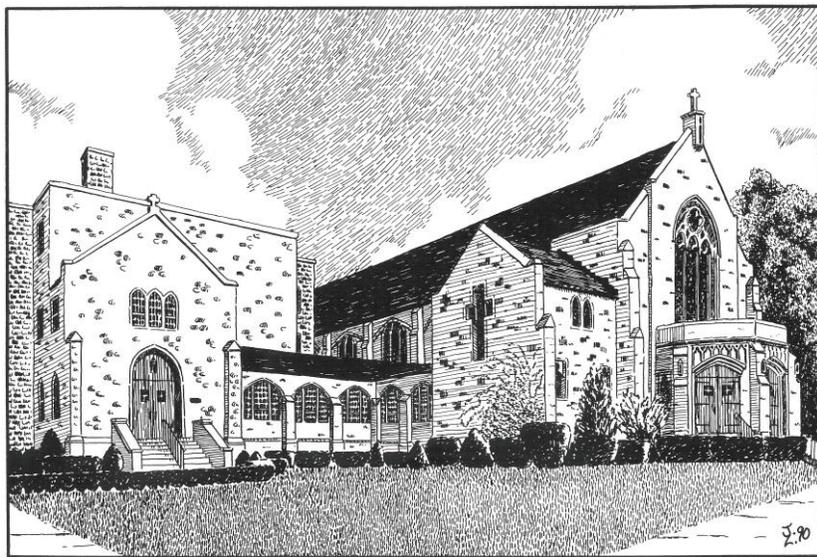


The Evangelical Lutheran Church
of the
Holy Trinity
Greenville, Pennsylvania



History Supplement
1990 – 2015



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As the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity entered the 1990s, it was dealing with significant changes in community, congregation, and the national Lutheran Church.

The Greenville area continued to suffer the economic and psychological effects of the closing, relocation, or downsizing of major local industries which had provided employment, the financial foundation, and a sense of community identity for decades. Since this was also true for the entire "rust belt" region, the sense of loss and dislocation was widespread.

Within the congregation, issues of membership loss, worship attendance, and finances, which had appeared in previous years, continued to be of concern as members were affected by the personal changes made necessary by the economic downturn. The "contemporary indifference toward religion and questions about the church's relevance" and the "growing apathy toward religion," noted by Pastors Brath and Keck years earlier, remained as factors.

Another source of identity, synodical membership, had also changed. From its founding, Holy Trinity had belonged to the Pittsburgh Synod, covering all of western Pennsylvania, as part (from 1918) of the United Lutheran Church in America. When the Lutheran Church in America was formed in 1962, the synod added West Virginia to its territory and became the Western Pennsylvania-West Virginia Synod. Members and pastors of Holy Trinity were active in synodical leadership, publishing, institutions, and committee membership.

When the merger which formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) took effect on January 1, 1988, synods were reconfigured, increasing in number and decreasing in size. Holy Trinity became part of the current Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, comprising only 100 congregations, with headquarters in Oil City, Pennsylvania. Holy Trinity is now represented in many areas of synodical life as the synod attempts to find ways to do ministry in an area with decreasing population and fewer congregations (86 as of December 31, 2013), many of which are unable to financially support a full-time pastor.

At Holy Trinity, The Rev. Martin M. Roth began his service as pastor on April 14, 1986. He saw worship as central to the Christian life, and that his essential work as pastor was providing leadership in forming parish life around Word and Sacrament and helping equip people to live out their ministries both within the congregation and in all other aspects of life. As this was consistent with work begun under Pastors Keck and Smith and during consultation with the synod, in June 1988 the congregation affirmed "mutual

ministry" as the basis of congregational life. The position of Director of Mutual Ministry was created to replace the then-vacant post of Director of Christian Education, and Bonnie Massing assumed this task in May 1989. Also, with the beginning of the ELCA, Holy Trinity had revised its constitution and reorganized its governing structure to address five functional areas: worship, learning, witness, service, and support. These two concepts helped shape the congregation's ministry for the years ahead.

Darla Engstrom's resignation as parish secretary had been accepted in June 1991. With the hiring of Lynne Wilson as the parish secretary as of August 1, 1991, a four-year period of staff stability with no changes in personnel began.

These years were difficult financially for the congregation. The Congregation Council first had to find a way to come to a determination of current and accurate membership statistics. The financial situation could then be looked at more realistically. After some initial attempts at deep budget decreases, it was quickly realized that cutting back was not a way to move into the future in a faithful and hopeful way. Extraordinary efforts by Congregation Council, Finance Committee, pastor, and members who responded to a variety of ways of communicating the vision for the future of the congregation and the financing needed to support that vision, made possible the presentation of a balanced budget for 1992 following a "Challenge '92" stewardship emphasis.

Major concerns about the state of the physical plant had also arisen, but by a special congregational meeting of May 17, 1992, the congregation felt able to authorize the Congregation Council to obtain a loan of \$110,000 to finance projects involving the heating system, work on masonry and plaster, stained glass window repair and protection, painting, and parking lot paving and lighting. It was also noted that this was a sign of the future, and that matters of building maintenance and equipment replacement would continue to appear as the building aged. Additional projects about this time were the renovation of the kitchen and the upgrading of two bathrooms to make them handicap accessible.

For the summer of 1993, Pastor Roth had been granted a six-week study leave during which he considered "Proclaiming the Gospel in a Pluralistic Context" by means of visits to different kinds of congregations and consultations with a number of parish pastors and seminary professors. One of the major conclusions of his study was the conviction that a long-range planning process was needed at Holy Trinity.

At the January 1994 congregational meeting, an overview of such a planning process, designed to guide Holy Trinity during the next five years, was presented by a consultant from the Lutheran Center for Lay Ministry. The consultant led seven-fifteen people from Holy Trinity through the process and reported to the June 1994 congregational meeting. A task group was formed for each identified congregational strength and area

for development, long-range objectives were presented and approved at the January 29, 1995, congregational meeting, and Council established a means to monitor progress toward reaching the goals.

As Director of Mutual Ministry, Bonnie Massing had, as her foundational task, teaching members about their baptismal call, and helping them identify their gifts of time and talents to be used within the congregation and in other aspects of life. For tasks, large and small, within the congregation, Bonnie was responsible for recruitment, training, support, and recognition of work completed. She worked closely with the committees and the pastor, and her efforts made it possible for much to be done and for many, many people to be involved in accomplishing the work of the congregation in all aspects of its life. Bonnie also worked with the pastor in welcoming prospective and new members. Another result of Pastor Roth's study leave was the revamping of this process to better receive new members, and to help them become involved through service and participation.

In the area of witness and service, sponsorship of the "Lutheran Vespers" program on local radio had begun as part of the congregation's 125th anniversary celebration and continued until 1998. All Saints Lutheran Church, Bowie, Maryland, was accepted as a mission partner for three years. Requests for use of the building were approved, for example, by Intermediate Unit IV for special education/Head Start classes and by Al-Anon. A recycling box for newspapers was provided behind the church.

Homebound members of the congregation were visited and remembered in other ways, and a worship service for residents of Mapleleaf Manor was conducted every other month. In regard for a theology of creation, the Social Ministry Committee recommended to council that a spring Stewardship of Creation Service (blessing of soil, seeds, and water), a St. Francis Day (October 4) Thanksgiving for Animals Service, and a Harvest Service (fall) be added to the worship schedule.

The "Women of the ELCA" worked through interest groups for Bible study, needlecraft, "Flying Quilts" which produced utilitarian quilts and layettes which were distributed where needed worldwide by Lutheran World Relief, "Brown Baggers" who met for lunch on Sundays after the second service, and "Helping Hands" who prepared and served lunches after funerals held in the church. A craft group was eventually added. Several combined meetings were held during the year, an Advent meal and program, for instance.

The work of the community food pantry operating out of Holy Trinity had come to a purposeful end in 1989, but the determination of a renewed/continuing level of need within the community resulted in the creation, in early 1991, of the ecumenical Good Shepherd Center, Inc. of which Holy Trinity became a charter member; its food pantry

was the first component to operate. To his day, the Center remains a focus of material and monetary support and many volunteer hours for the congregation and its members.

Another important ecumenical relationship developed, initially able to happen at this particular time because of the personal friendship between Pastor Roth and Father Thomas Kelley of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church. The local Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue began in 1991 with a gathering featuring Father Kelley speaking on "The Necessity of the Reformation" and Pastor Roth speaking on "The Tragedy of the Reformation." While some had come warily or merely out of curiosity, the event was warmly received, perhaps most so by those in marriages having one partner in each church. Over the years, Dialogue sessions have been led by bishops of each communion, faculty members from Thiel College, visiting scholars, and others. Small group meetings held in some years provided opportunity to share old experiences and hurts and new joys, correct misinformation, and share Bible study.

From the beginning of his time at Holy Trinity, Pastor Roth had stressed the importance of reverence and hospitality in worship; he promoted the emphases of the Lutheran Book of Worship, including the claiming of baptismal identity and the participation of the laity in worship leadership. Members became Liturgical Deacons, Communion Assistants, Acolytes, Crucifers, Ushers, and Altar Guild members. They were instructed in the history and meaning of worship as well as in the specifics of their tasks. Many remarked that serving in this way also greatly enhanced their experience as worshipers.

The addition of a regular Saturday evening service began during the liturgical "green seasons" of 1989-1990 and gradually became part of the year-round schedule. Spoken Morning Prayer was prayed on the weekday mornings of Advent and Lent, and weekly weekday services of Evening Prayer were scheduled during Advent and Lent. Special weekday services were held on St. Francis Day/Thanksgiving for the Animals, All Saints' Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday and every day of Holy Week (including a Saturday evening Easter Vigil as the first service of Easter), and Ascension Day.

Director of Music Florence Jowers reported that Organist/Choir Director Dr. Dudley Oakes would be resigning from his post at Holy Trinity at the end of August 1990 to assume full-time duties at Thiel College. Kevin Barger became Assistant Organist in August 1990 and served until May 1993. In September 1994, Andy Yoos was hired as Assistant Organist.

Florence Jowers had been working to become an Associate in Ministry (AIM) in the ELCA. When she had fulfilled the requirements, her Commissioning was held at Holy Trinity with Bishop Paull Spring of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod officiating.

Florence requested a five-month leave of absence starting August 1, 1995, and then resigned effective December 31, 1995; an Order for Farewell and Thanksgiving was held for her at the January 28, 1996, congregational meeting.

Terri A. Konzen had been hired as the substitute organist during Florence's leave of absence. Upon Florence's resignation, Terri was interviewed for the permanent position and was hired as Organist effective January 1, 1996. In order to facilitate Terri's doctoral studies at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, a succession of Assistant Choir Directors was hired to conduct weekday choir rehearsals: Gregory Ramsdell in June 1997, Andrew Moreland from August 1998-January 1999, and Dr. Michael Bray from January-June 1999.

In 1993, the Congregation Council appointed a task force to investigate the possibility of installing a Columbarium at Holy Trinity as a means of allowing members and their immediate families to follow the ancient custom of church burial. The proposal was accepted at a special congregational meeting, and the Columbarium was designed by Armento Liturgical Arts of Buffalo, New York, and installed in the baptistery by volunteers from the congregation. The Columbarium was dedicated May 29, 1994. The first unit comprised 40 niches, 24 of which were in use or had been reserved by June 1995. Another unit of 40 additional niches was added in September 2001.

A proposal to institute the use of Eucharistic Ministers was adopted in September 1993. These are persons who are trained to take Holy Communion directly from the altar toward the end of the worship service to the homebound or ill so as to make them part of the worshipping community that day. The first group began serving by June 1994. In February 1996, the office of Lector was established; these are persons who read one of the lessons during worship, coming to the lectern from a seat in the congregation and not being vested.

A policy on means of preserving the excellent acoustical qualities of the worship space was accepted in 1993. The use of the Revised Common Lectionary for congregational worship, beginning the first Sunday in Advent 1995, was adopted.

The learning ministry remained a priority at Holy Trinity even though the staff position of Director of Christian Education had been replaced by the Director of Mutual Ministry. Sunday Church School classes were available for all ages, first communion and catechetical classes and Vacation Church School were held. The Theologian-in-Residence and Lenten Forum programs continued. Camperships were available for those attending Camp Lutherlyn. In 1992, Parish Night Out, a Wednesday evening schedule of a meal and events began.

The growing need for more direction for this aspect of ministry had been discussed for several years and had become more clearly defined during the long-range

planning process, but the present staff was pressed to the limit. A part-time (five hours a week) youth coordinator, a Thiel student, was hired in 1994, but a report the next year expressed disappointment in this attempt to better engage the youth in ministry. A planning group began meeting. A special congregational meeting was called for November 19, 1995, to consider the proposals that had been developed: that the office of Associate Pastor be established and that the Rev. Julia Fraser be called to that office, beginning January 1, 1996, on a part-time (15-20 hours per week) basis. The focus of the call was to address in a more intentional way the congregation's ministry related to children, youth, and families with children. The rationale for calling a pastor was to provide theological guidance for the educational ministry, and for that person to be able to function in worship leadership and pastoral care situations also. Both motions passed, Pastor Fraser accepted the call, and she was installed at Holy Trinity on January 21, 1996, by Bishop Paull Spring. By April, a Youth Room had been dedicated during the congregation's Anniversary Weekend, and at the June 1996 congregational meeting, Pastor Fraser made a presentation on goals and plans for her work. Her creativity and skill in designing educational curricula and programs and her ability to work with dedicated committee members and teachers made it possible to move forward on several fronts: Holy Trinity's first "solo" Vacation Church School in a number of years was held, the confirmation program was revamped, there was an expanded schedule of youth activities, and the Parish Night Out program was enlarged. There was increasing involvement of children and young people in worship, in attendance and as Lectors, Acolytes, singers and instrumentalists. A children's choir was formed. In particular, the confirmation program took on a pattern of small groups meeting with "guides" for peer support and mentoring in faith development followed by classes for catechetical instruction; with some changes, this design continues today.

Staff changes about this time included the resignation of Lynne Wilson as Parish Secretary in December 1998. There was a two-month interim and then an "emergency crew" of Paul Good, Peggy Brooke, and Michele Shine until Tammy Williams was hired as Parish Secretary in May 1999.

Longtime custodian Norman Alexander retired in October 1997; he attended the Council meeting that month and Pastor Roth gave a brief history of Norm's service and presented him with several gifts. Also remembered was Rozell Alexander, Norm's wife, who had worked with him at the church but who had died several years earlier. Lee Barrall was appointed as interim custodian, and Pat Bartel was hired as of January 1, 1998. At this time, the job title was changed to Sexton. Pat resigned in April 1999. Jan Truax was hired that same month, effective immediately, and several months later her husband, David Truax, was added to the staff.

One of the first things to come out of the long-range planning process was the creation of the Friends of Music concert series. The first season began in March 1995. This was designed as an attempt to reach out to the community at a point of congregational strength, sharing Holy Trinity's tradition and appreciation of good music and enhancing the cultural life of the area. The hope was that the connection between the gift of music and the Grace of God would be one way of witnessing to the community. A steering committee, including community members, was created to oversee program planning and arrangements, forming task forces as needed. The series has been warmly received over the years, by audiences and performers alike. Artists have been delighted with the experience at Holy Trinity, the acoustics of the space, and the warmth of the reception they have received.

Lutheran/Roman Catholic dialogues continued. The historic signing of the Joint Declaration on Justification between Lutherans and Roman Catholics at Augsburg, Germany, on Reformation Day, October 31, 1999, was marked by a significant local celebration. Parishioners processed from Holy Trinity and from St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, forming lines along which lights from the altar candles at each church were passed until being joined in one flame at the site of meeting in downtown Greenville, where a brief service of thanksgiving was held. It was a moving and unique event.

Other outreach efforts included the development of a multi-year "Shared Heritage" program with First Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, a partner in ministry with which Holy Trinity historically shared concern for maintaining faithful proclamation and worship in the Lutheran tradition. Continuing financial and prayer support were provided to the Karagwe Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (mission partner to the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod) and to mission partner Chaffee Bora congregation of the Woliso Parish of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

Within the congregation, a prayer circle was formed; as needs arose, prayer requests were made known to a designated person and then passed from one to another around the circle. Coffee hours and Greeters were provided and special efforts to reach visitors and inactive members were attempted.

In 1993, seven people from the congregation, including the pastor, were selected to participate in a "Ministry through Small Groups" orientation seminar in Chicago as part of an ELCA pilot project. On returning to Holy Trinity, the original group enabled three other groups to form over the next two years.

Regarding worship, a motion was passed in 1998 to authorize Dr. Paul Weber to compose a musical setting of the liturgy for Holy Trinity as a memorial gift given by a family in memory of their parents. This setting was introduced in 2004 and is still being used. In the spring of 2005, there was an anniversary celebration of the needlepoint

kneeler project, which had begun 30 years previously. A beautiful new freestanding altar was designed and built locally and was dedicated on the first Sunday in Advent 2007. The new ELCA worship book Evangelical Lutheran Worship, most copies purchased as memorial gifts, was introduced and began to be used in the fall of 2007.

Terri Konzen resigned as Organist, effective November 17, 1999. Interim musicians were Carolyn Brock, Brenda Martin, and Charles Thompson, with Dr. Michael Bray serving as choir rehearsal assistant. Charles "Chuck" Thompson had begun as an interim organist in March 2000. On June 1, 2000, he became Director of Music, but he resigned after a year. The interims during this period were Carolyn Brock, Beth Harrison, Betty Boulton, Ray Ocock, and John Becker, serving until Maidene Hackett was hired as Director of Music and assumed her duties on August 1, 2002.

Other staff changes included Jerry Smith being hired, in August 2002, as part-time sexton after the death of David Truax. Jerry resigned in April 2006, and Sean Oros filled that position until Joe Marso was hired.

In March 2002, Associate Pastor Julia Fraser became one of the Assistants to the Bishop in the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, in addition to her duties at Holy Trinity. She was also nearing completion of work on her Master of Sacred Theology degree. She resigned as of December 31, 2004, to accept a new call. During her service at Holy Trinity, the educational program had been strengthened and more people had become involved. The members of Holy Trinity expressed their gratitude for her hard work and creative efforts.

In addition to Pastor Fraser, Bonnie Massing retired as Director of Mutual Ministry as of June 1, 2005. She was thanked for her tireless efforts in trying to engage as many people as possible in ministry, her hospitality, her good humor, and her caring nature. After Bonnie's retirement, the job description was reworked and the position was renamed "Director of Shared Ministry." Heather Wilt was hired to fill this position in September 2005. Tammy Williams had briefly left the position of Parish Secretary because she thought she wanted to try something new, but she responded positively when the congregation invited her to return to Holy Trinity. In January 2008, she was rehired as Office Administrator with a revised job description.

In the first few months of Pastor Roth's time at Holy Trinity, some basic financial decisions were made which made possible much of what would be done in the years ahead. About a third of a significant bequest was spent for immediate property repair and upgrading. Interest on the rest of the Tillotson Fund was to be used to support Baird scholarships; instrumentalists and special music; a visiting theologian program; lay conferences/school/ seminars; and a benevolent project to be named annually. Also, the

Congregation Council chose to set an example of good stewardship for the congregation and made it a practice to tithe any unrestricted bequests received by the church.

Matters of finance and property concerns occupied much time for congregational leaders in the years ahead as they tried to be responsible stewards of what had been entrusted to the congregation. Long-range and strategic planning helped to clarify goals and set priorities for achieving ministry objectives.

The installation of the elevator/lift is an example of such a process. Congregational goal-setting identified related things such as evangelism/outreach/accessibility. In 1999/2000, preliminary exploration into the feasibility of installing an elevator was mentioned; in May 2001, the exploration of securing a lift at the Clinton St. entrance was authorized; and, in April 2002, the establishment of an elevator fund and the undertaking of planning related to procuring an elevator were authorized. In February 2006, an update was received from the newly-formed elevator subcommittee with the expressed hope that the task could be accomplished within months. The lift was certified in December 2007, and it was dedicated at the 5:30 p.m. service on Saturday, December 22, 2007, although two more years of dealing with details remained. This included deferred maintenance and improvement projects taken on "while we're at it."

Other property concerns were constant. In addition to regular maintenance and repair issues, repeated problems with the roof and the heating system indicated that major projects would have to be undertaken as the building continued to age. As it was, finances had to be frequently rearranged to deal with unexpected property issues.

In the area of stewardship, goals such as "developing planned giving" and "building an endowment" emerged. A two-year grant was obtained from Thrivent Financial Services for Lutherans that enabled Holy Trinity and Thiel College to work together so that the college could use Holy Trinity as a pilot project which could then be employed with other congregations in this and other supporting synods of the college. The goal for the Thiel-Congregation Advancement Team (T-CAT) was to assist Holy Trinity in addressing its members with the invitation and challenge to leave a legacy to the congregation through planned giving that would situate the congregation for a strong financial future. The project began on January 1, 2007. Brochures were designed and printed and have been distributed in various ways. A number of luncheons/dinners were held, presentations made, and invitations extended. At Holy Trinity, the "Society of the Rose" (the reference being to the rose in Martin Luther's seal) was created as a way to acknowledge those who have and will indicate their intentions to remember the congregation in their financial planned giving. At the end of the two-year period, there were 42 members and the estimated value of all intended gifts was about \$1,300,000. A planned giving committee was formed to continue the emphasis beyond the two-year grant.

Dealing with any congregation's finances has become more complicated over the years. Holy Trinity's Congregation Council, Finance Committee, treasurer, and pastor are responsible for managing annual income, expenses, and budgeting, for handling debt and investment, and for ensuring compliance of congregational practices as they relate to the fiscal guidelines of the ELCA. To help with this work, the Finance Committee began a search for a professional financial planner to assist the congregation in making the wisest use of its growing investment portfolio. As a result of this process, it was approved that the congregation's investments be placed under management with JFS Wealth Advisors. The congregation's leaders are always working to make their procedures and reporting easier to understand.

In 2008, council accepted the plan proposed by Pastor Roth for updating the congregational constitution to bring it into compliance with the current ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations. This was accomplished and final approval was given at the January 25, 2009, congregational meeting.

Holy Trinity has a high regard for the pastoral office. Members have shown this by the way in which they have supported significant ordination anniversary celebrations for the called pastors of the congregation and for those members of the congregation who are retired pastors or pastors with calls to special service. Members have attended ordination festival worship in honor of the dozens of pastors ordained at Holy Trinity. Holy Trinity has supported a number of seminary interns in the past and, more recently, Brian Riddle, and Derek Nelson, who was ordained at Holy Trinity on October 25, 2008. Holy Trinity has been the church home for Thiel students, members, and associate members as they have prepared to go to seminary: Timothy Alleman, Emilie Theobald-Rowlands, Cora Lazor Weiland, Brian Riddle, Steve Nesbit, Jim Judy, Erin Betz, Derek Nelson, and Brian Evans in recent years. Those from earlier decades included Pat Maier, George Keck, Martin Roth, and Steve Kanouse. Holy Trinity has supported its pastors with prayer and encouragement, with thoughtful notes and words.

As Pastor Roth approached retirement, he described his time at Holy Trinity by saying, "I have attempted, as your pastor, to hold out, not my vision of the church, but the vision of the church I understand to have been rooted in the biblical faith. In my laboring I have tried to expend myself in helping this congregation to be faithful to the apostolic faith and to be engaged with the world of which we are a part." He will be remembered for his love of worship and music, his attention to the use of language, his participation in the community, and his fostering of ecumenical relationships. Above all, he treasured ministry to and with the people of Holy Trinity and felt especially privileged to have had among that number other pastors who had retired or who had calls to non-parish areas of service. In his final parish newsletter article, he noted, "We remember the joys and sor-

rows of times past, but in the context of hope and the sure knowledge that the faithful God who brought us together will continue to bless us as we go our separate ways." Pastor Roth presided at his final service on June 28th, 2009, a festive occasion featuring special music and followed by presentations and a reception at which the Roth's greeted many members of the parish and well-wishers from the community.

Because Pastor Roth had announced his plans for an August 1, 2009, retirement nine months before the effective date, the Congregation Council was able, in consultation with the synodical bishop, to name a transition team and to do much of the work and congregational self-study needed for the call process before the actual vacancy started. Pastor Albert Gesler and Dr. Derek Nelson were engaged as interim pastors. With their guidance, the efforts of an experienced staff and strong congregational leadership made it possible for the regular and ongoing work of the congregation to continue during the vacancy. One thing that did suffer was worship attendance, which dropped to a low average of 133 until a new pastor was called.

Diligent and careful work by the Call Committee and the Congregation Council resulted in a call being extended to The Rev. Lee D. Penvose on January 9, 2011. A closing farewell litany was prayed for Pastors Gesler and Nelson at the January 30, 2011, congregational meeting.

Pastor Penvose accepted the call and began his service at Holy Trinity on February 21, 2011, and was installed on May 15, 2011. Pastor Penvose and his wife, Marilyn, are both from western Pennsylvania. He had served parishes there and had been Assistant to the Bishop of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod for eight years before becoming pastor of a congregation in Ohio for fifteen years. His years of pastoral experience and his familiarity with Holy Trinity and this synod made it possible for him to move into leadership of the congregation with ease and graciousness. On the day he presided at worship and preached at Holy Trinity as part of the call process, Pastor Penvose set the tone for his ministry; as reported in The Messenger (February 2011), he "helped us to see Jesus' Baptism as the beginning of Christ's identity as the Savior, and our own baptism marking us with our identity and purpose as Christ's disciples in this time and place."

Pastor Penvose's initial focus was on preaching and adhering to the liturgy; becoming well-acquainted with members, staff, and programs; continuing the development of lay leadership; strengthening evangelism; and strengthening youth ministry. He set before the congregation "that vision of the Church which is God's vision as witnessed by the scripture: the Church is a community of disciples gathered around Jesus and empowered by the Spirit to participate in God's mission to love and save the world."

Pastor and Congregation Council at once embarked upon a process that would last for some months. A "mutual expectations" list was developed and continually refined as

things moved forward. A priority for the pastor was to emphasize and move the congregation toward a "gifts-based" ministry, helping members discover their spiritual gifts and use them in their lives as disciples. During the summer months of 2012, Pastor Penrose met with the former Call Committee to revisit the original call documents and develop a list of "emergent ideas" to be considered by Council in formulating new goals for ministry under "shaping inside" and "sharing outside" categories. New Vision and Mission Goal statements were approved and were adopted as bylaws by the congregation at the June 2014 congregational meeting. Also, a constitutional amendment reducing the size of the congregation council from fifteen to twelve was passed on first reading at the same June 2014 meeting and adopted by the congregation at the January 2015 congregational meeting. Plans continued to be reshaped and implemented as a result of this process. For instance, opportunities for members to complete a Spiritual Gifts Inventory were presented.

The remarkable stability of congregational staffing; well-organized committees, programs, and financial procedures; and the faithful work of many people made it possible for all the "usual" activities of worship, learning, witness, service, and support to continue even in the midst of long-range planning and 150th anniversary events.

Office Administrator Tammy Williams began working at Holy Trinity in May 1999, and on May 18, 2014, she was feted at a congregational reception to celebrate her 15th anniversary. Congregational receptions were also occasions for celebrating 10th anniversaries of service for Director of Music Maidene Hackett (in August 2012) and for Director of Shared Ministry Heather Wilt (in September 2015). After many years of service as Sextons, Joe Marso resigned in August 2012 and Jan Truax retired in September 2012. In their place, Mary Conner's cleaning service was hired on a temporary basis, and in January 2013 Mary was approved as the new Sexton, becoming the newest member of a hard-working and dedicated staff.

In worship, the congregation's use of Evangelical Lutheran Worship was enlarged by learning a fifth musical setting (of ten in ELW) for the liturgy. The Weber setting, written for the congregation, continues to be used as well. A Chancel Choir of first three, then four, young women was organized by June 2011 and regularly provided musical leadership at the 8:00 a.m. service until the singers all graduated from high school in June 2015. The Columbarium, established in 1994, as of June 2015 has 76 of its 80 niches either reserved or in use; planning for additional niches is anticipated. An Ecclesiastical Arts Committee has been formed to assure that all the works of art in the church receive proper care. In 2012, an Order of Blessing and Dedication of the Creation Series Needlepoint Art, now hanging in Brath Hall, was held. The artwork was created by the Thursday Needlework Interest Group.

A continuing project is developing plans for the restoration of Holy Trinity's 1970 Casavant Opus 3050 organ following an inspection in April 2013. Part of this work was a focus for 150th anniversary offerings. A continuing concern, addressed again by Pastor Penvose in his June 2015 annual report, is that "too often too many of us are neglecting to gather in worship."

Through the years, Holy Trinity has made its learning ministry a priority, as a way both of passing on the faith to the children and of helping young people and adults to keep growing into Christian maturity. The youngest members are enrolled on the Cradle Roll, Sunday Church School classes are available for all ages, and a summer program of Vacation Church School for ages two-five and Camp Lutherlyn-staffed Day Camp for older children continues. Pastor Penvose uses the traditional study time before Evening Prayer on Wednesdays in Lent as one focus for his teaching ministry; he has led members in Bible study or topics including discipleship and worship.

A well-designed Confirmation (Affirmation of Baptism) process is in place, consisting of small groups with "guides" for peer support and mentoring in faith development and of classes for study of the Bible, Small Catechism, and other topics. A long-standing practice is for confirmands to meet with members of the Congregation Council for conversation in the weeks just before Confirmation, still held on Reformation Sunday.

Members are supported in learning beyond the congregation through the availability of camperships for Camp Lutherlyn and scholarships (made possible by designated endowment funds) for education beyond high school.

Service and witness activities are many. Within the congregation there are, among others, the prayer shawl and lap robe ministry, special occasion deliveries to the ill and home-bound, the produce table, availability of Fair Trade products, notes and cards, sunshine baskets, delivery of altar and holiday flowers, and an advocacy issues bulletin board. Beyond the congregation, the Flying Quilts group continues to send items to Lutheran World Relief (70 quilts and 75 layettes in 2014); the Friends of Music concert series and sponsorship of the Community Medical Ethics project are maintained; Holy Trinity's facilities are used by AA, Al-Anon, NA, Scouts, Seniors for Safe Driving, and other community groups; the congregation supports the Good Shepherd Center in many ways, designated the Greenville Memorial Pool campaign and the ELCA Fund for Leaders as recipients of portions of the 150th anniversary special offerings, and surpassed the goal it had set for its participation in the capital campaign for Bethesda Children's Home, Meadville. And, of course, members witness to their faith and serve the community in many ways at home, work, or in school and through community activities and organizations.

The Twelfth Night celebration, church picnic, Faschnacht, and Souper Bowl luncheons, receptions for special occasions, and senior activities have continued over many years as regular occasions for fellowship.

In 2012, a Library Renovation Fund was established, to be used to completely renovate and rename the library in honor of Pastor Martin and Sally Roth's service to the congregation. The Rite of Dedication and Naming was held on February 3, 2013. The Roths were very touched by and grateful for this gesture and rejoiced that the room is well-used for congregational and community meetings and gatherings, especially funeral visitations.

Much is accomplished in the care and maintenance of the physical plant each year, but major building and property concerns – the heating system, the slate roof, the organ – now face the congregation. These matters have been evaluated, planning has taken place, and some work has been done. Deciding how to deal with these issues will occupy the time ahead.

The pastor, congregational treasurer, and Finance Committee are always working on ways to organize the congregation's finances and reporting, to help members understand the situation more easily. The investment portfolio is under management by JFS Wealth Advisors; in 2013, the Finance Committee produced a written Investment Policy Statement.

Finances remain challenging, and all who work with this area of Holy Trinity's life are to be commended for managing the congregation's income, expenses, investments, and debt in a way that enables and challenges the congregation to accomplish so much. Even in a period of slow recovery in the general economy, the congregation has been able to increase its giving beyond the congregation in amount and as a percentage of total giving. Members are being encouraged to remember the congregation and its future as they consider planned giving opportunities, through the Society of the Rose or in other ways.

2015 has been a year of celebration of the 150th anniversary of the congregation, with the theme "Gathered and Empowered to Serve." Under the guidance of the 150th Anniversary Steering Committee, the congregation has enjoyed special events and has been given the opportunity to honor our heritage and look to the future with special offerings designated for Holy Trinity's Organ Restoration Fund, the Greenville Memorial Pool Campaign, the ELCA Fund for Leaders, and Holy Trinity's Direct Loan Payment Budget. On Sunday, April 19th, Festival Worship was followed by a banquet in Thiel College's Lutheran Heritage Room. An organ recital on Sunday, May 31st, was on the theme "The Holy Trinity" and featured current Director of Music, Maidene Hackett, and former Holy Trinity musicians Chris Michaelsen and Florence Jowers. Dozens of pastors have been ordained at Holy Trinity, and they were invited to return on Saturday, August 8th, for Or-

dination Festival Worship and a luncheon. Holy Trinity members were asked to submit their 150th anniversary "Memories, Hopes, and Dreams" to be included in a booklet that will be produced as an anniversary keepsake for everyone to receive at the Sunday, December 6th, Closing Anniversary Worship and potluck dinner.

In his time at Holy Trinity, Pastor Penvose has communicated the joy of Christian living, the conviction that worship is the way of being Church together, and the teaching that discipleship is the way of living in Christ. As Holy Trinity moves into the future, the pastor has reminded the congregation in recent sermons that they are to act not out of a sense of scarcity but with the realization of the abundance of what they have been given. In considering what is to be done, they are to ask not "What is the least I can get by with?" but rather "What does God expect?" The baptized are to remember the verbs--go, give, come, follow--the actions of discipleship.

In these ways, asking God always to help and guide, the intention to continue in the covenant God made with each one in holy baptism can be affirmed:

to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

(From the Rite for Affirmation of Baptism)