



LIVING
Love

The Atlantic District LC-MS
61st Regular Convention

Section Five: Vice Presidential Regional Reports

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REPORT OF THE FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (St. John 13:34 ESV)

All people, whatever their calling, should seek perfection, that is, growth in the fear of God, in faith, in love for their neighbor, and in similar spiritual virtues. (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXVII, 37)

In response to Christ's love and endeavoring to share His love, the First Vice-President has assisted the Bishop with particular issues that affect the entire Atlantic District as the Bishop has seen fit, representing the Bishop and the Atlantic District in various contexts and events.

The Bishop appointed him to work with materials collected and received from closed congregations and ministries of the district and has helped facilitate the sharing of those materials with places in need.

The First Vice-President has worked with legal issues concerning congregations, workers, and the Atlantic District. He has interfaced with district paid staff and volunteers to accomplish the goals of the synod and the district.

The First Vice-President has investigated issues on the Bishop's behalf with issues with respect to the national LCMS, issues within the local Atlantic District, issues relating to agencies in our area, and issues that involved interactions with elected public servants. These many specific assignments involve congregations, workers and agencies of the Atlantic District.

The First Vice-President has worked extensively with pastorally vacant congregations and with congregations in transition of all types. This has included on-site visitations and meetings, leading of meetings and worship services, conducting phone and digital conferences, and the like. He also participated in many ordinations and installations either as a preacher, musician, or liturgist. The First Vice-President has worked closely with new church workers as they embrace their vocations. He also has worked with those who seek to be rostered as workers in the Synod.

The First Vice-President conducted a summit for pastors to address issues concerning racism in the Church.

The First Vice-President worked extensively with the Bishop on a manual to guide congregations in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

He has worked with the Bishop to update the personal information for church workers and parish information for each congregation of the Atlantic District. He also has encouraged all congregations to submit their statistical information to the LCMS.

He has worked with the Secretary of the LCMS Atlantic District on the revisions of constitutions and bylaws for several congregations.

The First Vice-President has worked directly with the circuit visitors, pastors, ministers of religion—commissioned, and laypeople, providing pastoral counseling and spiritual direction as needed. He has been a sounding board for the Bishop as well.



The First Vice-President also has attended many circuit pastoral gatherings throughout the Atlantic District in addition to a host of other gatherings in the Atlantic District, has interacted with the Atlantic District Task Forces as appropriate (working most closely with Task Force Five—Youth), and has worked with agencies of the Church as needed.

Respectfully submitted with gratefulness to our Lord and to His people as we are “Living Love,”

The Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor

First Vice-President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Atlantic District



CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS: REGION ONE

Circuit 1

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Niskayuna

Since the last District Convention, a lot has happened at Immanuel. We have weathered Covid, joined with Zion and Trinity in Schenectady to form the Three Church Ministry, and we have set a new vision for the ministry of Immanuel. This new ministry vision is called the Open Table.

The Open Table concept was developed by the congregation. The idea is that we all have seats open at our tables, whether it's our dinner table, a table at our backyard barbecue, or a table at a restaurant or coffee shop. These open seats are where we start our mission. The goal is to connect with the people around our tables so that God can use us to bring them to his Table.

We renovated our entry way to mimic a restaurant as well as changing our worship service to fit the same vibe. We have added new musicians to our worship team, making our worship more vibrant and contemporary.

Immanuel just completed a full overhaul of our worship technology, including installing new screens for worship, a computer system to run the screens and a high quality streaming camera to ensure that our on line presence remains high quality.

Over the last three years we have seen the challenges of keeping people connected through Covid. But God has been faithful and has brought a number of new people over the last few years as well. We are thankful that we are now experiencing higher numbers in worship than before Covid!

We also have seen an 8% increase in giving, which has been a true blessing as well.

In the coming months, Immanuel will once again be partnering with a day care to provide summer and after school care for our community. We continue to work with Zion and Trinity to support the Three Church Fund which we use for direct help to those in need. And we are continuing to develop Open Table Experiences, outings and fun activities designed to make it easier for people to invite their friends to be a part of what the church is doing.

The greatest surprise in ministry has been that we were focused on adult ministry, partnering with Zion and Trinity for Youth, Family, and Immigrant Ministry. However, over the last 6 months, God has seen fit to bring a number of young families and babies into our congregation.

We have been blessed to have 5 adult baptisms in the last year and a number of babies as well. We have welcomed 15 new members over the last year and we welcomed another 13 the year before.

God is good and we are blessed to be moving forward with purpose and focus as we look forward to the next stage in what God has planned for Immanuel.

Submitted by Matthew Schultz, Pastor

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Glens Falls

In the midst of many challenges and changes, our Lord has enabled ministry to not only continue, but to thrive here in the North Country of upstate, New York. Seeming setbacks provided new opportunities for growth and mission.



One example: the lockdown in the spring of 2020 birthed a new video ministry, resulting in the live-streaming of our services to Facebook and YouTube. This outreach continues, and online attendance regularly surpasses our in-person attendance. People have worshipped with us from surprising places, including Norway and China!

In addition to the installation of new video and sound equipment, we were able to purchase a new organ, which has been enthusiastically received. The sound is vastly improved, and no more punch cards are needed! During the past triennium we also repaired and repristinated all our stain glass windows, installed a new furnace, stuccoed our church building, asphalted the parking lot, and improved our landscaping. Our many volunteers have worked hard with maintenance of and improvements to our church home here in beautiful Glens Falls.

And yet the church is not just a building, but more importantly a people. As the people of God we came together in the midst of a global pandemic to do the work of the church – baptizing, communing, worshipping, praying, studying God’s Word and encouraging one another. The means of grace never went away, and throughout it all God has been faithful and good.

This summer also marks the twentieth anniversary of Pastor Wagner’s installation at Good Shepherd. May God continue to bless our ministry together where we have been called to serve in the gateway to the Adirondacks.

Submitted by Paul Wagner, Pastor

SonRise Lutheran Church, Pottersville

SonRise Lutheran Church, endeavoring to continue its congregational ministry despite the closing of Camp SonRise, has benefitted from the generosity of Christ Episcopal Church just north of Pottersville. Not enough can be said about the warmth and friendliness of our hosts.

Our congregation really consists of three congregations: the year round members; snowbirds who spend about 4 months living in the area; and the summer vacationers. When all three are present our church gathers as many as 35 for worship. As the vacationers settle back into other places they call home our numbers are reduced substantially and for the winter months of January through April we may have barely a half dozen in church. Like all other churches we have been seriously affected by Covid reducing participation in all three categories of worshipers and eliminating a number of activities dear to us. Most years one or two members are added to our roles, but that has not kept pace with deaths and those who have moved from the area.

Pastor Bruce Rudolf serves full time from June through December, and prepares services for the remaining 5 months of the year while he lives in Florida. Pastor Wagner (Glens Falls) covers services in his absence. The major question in terms of our continuation is whether or not we are able to find a retired pastor who really likes snow and would have a year round ministry among us. A full time pastor dependent upon us for full salary and health insurance would not be viable. Donations from several generous benefactors keeps us viable.

Ministries beyond our congregation have continued. Our Church supports a missionary in the Czech Republic through Mission Central affiliated with the LCMS, who with his new bride visited us this past fall and spoke at our circuit gathering. In the past proceeds from our Oktoberfest enabled North Country Ministry to start a food pantry once a week for Pottersville, among the poorest communities in New York State. More recently the Oktoberfest raised \$9000 to assist members of Schroon Lake Community



Church in rebuilding after a fire destroyed their sanctuary. Due to Covid the Oktoberfest has not been held for the past two years. 80,000 children have been fed a meal through our change jar ministry working with Food for the Poor. Well over 600 prayer shawls have been given, mailed and handed out at the local craft fairs. Recipients at the fair are always amazed when these are given for free and when the women offer to pray right at that moment for the person receiving the shawl. Up until Covid, women from SonRise provided hot chocolate at the local Downhill Derby (a sleigh riding event each February). Men's and women's Bible studies are offered June through November. This past year knitted caps, mittens and scarves were given out to area residents donated by congregations assisting us in New York, Ohio, North Carolina and Florida. A \$3000 grant from LWML has enabled the congregation to provide winter coats to students at the local school. Christmas gifts for local children who were in need and warm coats and sweaters distributed through North Country Ministry are also provided each winter.

Since the last convention report we have begun to offer our parsonage, a 15 year old beautifully furnished, 4 bedroom colonial as a weeklong vacation to church service professionals.. Last year one particular pastor from the New Jersey District became quite emotional as he told us how much this meant to him after the stress of dealing with the effects of Covid on him and his congregation.

Realizing that for most of our worshipers over the course of a year we are their second or even third church, for the past 7 years we've endeavored to maintain contact with these parishoners through an email devotional sent out three times a week including news about SonRise. Beginning with a recipient list of about 40 it now numbers well over 150. Some readers who have no other association with SonRise except the email, have donated to our fund to purchase school supplies for local students each fall. A clergy association has been formed that usually meets at Christ Church/SonRise enabling Pottersville and Chestertown clergy to become better acquainted and more supportive of one another's ministries as well as better informed about the needs of our area. . All of our congregations are for the most part elderly and small.

We believe the life of SonRise, as the only congregation of the Atlantic District in the Adirondack Park, is a ministry worth saving (one family while vacationing at their home up here drives an hour to worship with us) and pray that with God's gracious guidance and blessing we may continue to do precisely that.
Submitted by Bruce Rudolf, Pastor

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Saratoga Springs

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church rejoices to be "GATHERED BY GOD TO SHARE THE LOVE OF JESUS" as we CONNECT with Him and one another in vibrant WORSHIP, GROW in Godly wisdom, and with our gifts SERVE others as we have been served.

Since the most recent Atlantic District Convention in 2018, the Lord has: added 55 souls to His kingdom through Holy Baptism in St. Paul's font; joined 14 husbands and wives in Holy Matrimony at St. Paul's altar; and received 54 saints into glory through Christian burial under the auspices of St. Paul's. He has further blessed the congregation in that time to receive 21 youth and 23 adults into fellowship through confirmation and profession of faith, and 15 through transfer of membership.

In addition to the usual joys that attend those who seek to lead many to righteousness, St. Paul's has further rejoiced to praise God for: the celebration of St. Paul's 125th Congregational Anniversary, and of Pastor Adam Wiegand's 25th Ordination Anniversary; wide and enthusiastic participation in the Red Letter Challenge; the ordination of small groups for Bible study; community-wide food drives; strong en-



rollment and staff stability at St. Paul's Christian Childhood Center, and its repeated recognition as "Best Daycare of the Saratoga Region."

However, in addition to the usual challenges that attend those who seek to shine the light of Christ into dark places, St. Paul's has mirrored the national trend of decreased attendance due to infrequency in worship. Further challenges in recent years were found in: the departure of key staff (Associate Pastor and Lay Deacon); a transition in office secretary and preschool director; vacant positions and abrupt changes in elected congregational leadership; unexpected significant expenditures; and finally, a pandemic which compelled the reinvention of virtually every aspect of congregational life.

Just as in the Exodus the Lord daily provided manna and quail to Israel, and they labored to gather it up, so has He been training St. Paul's people and pastor in prayerful reliance on Him, as well as personal engagement in ministry. It is a joy to report that in every single challenge faced, the Lord clearly demonstrated His faithfulness by raising up people and solutions that provided a way in the wilderness: though nearly half of the congregation is still "scattered" and have not returned to worship, God has gathered an equal number of new people to St. Paul's. Though our Christian Childhood Center faced possible closure due to low enrollment, God has built waiting lists in each classroom such that expansion is now a possibility.

Witnessing such faithfulness from the Lord is inspiring faithfulness in the congregation, which is now looking ahead to taking part in an LCEF Ministry Clarity process. By this St. Paul's is excited to both plan and embark on the next phase of our journey in which we will rejoice to be "GATHERED BY GOD TO SHARE THE LOVE OF JESUS!"

Submitted by Adam Wiegand, Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Schenectady

Trinity Lutheran Church, Schenectady, NY continues to faithfully fulfill its mission "to reach out to all people and bring them into a living relationship with Jesus Christ." Amidst the challenges we faced over the past 3 years we continue to fulfill the work that we are commissioned to do. Of course we depend totally on the Holy Spirit to guide us through this journey.

One of the blessings through the Covid season is the coming together of Zion, Immanuel and Trinity working together as one congregation, three churches. Not only did we have joint services and shared pulpits with the three pastors, but we also ministered to the needs of the community with the distribution of food items, clothing and gift cards donated by members of the three congregations.

At Trinity, our attendance after the reopening for in person worship holds between 75-80 percent. We continue our on line services for those who not comfortable to be in person. Also more and more people are tuning in to our worship. We continue our midweek Bible study /prayer meeting, in person and via zoom.

We continue to struggle financially even though Trinity members are faithful in their giving. This is a low income congregation. However we continue to trust God for His provision.

We continue to attract more and more the un church and the de church with the gospel of our Lord. We hope to reach out to all especially the youths in our community.

As we continue to plan for the future, we will be Committed to being an active part of our community, we continue to work with Zion and Immanuel as the Lord wills.



Guided by our vision statement and our shared focus on people, worship, outreach and growth, all that we do is for Christ. As we look to the future, we trust in the Lord's gracious providing. As God has richly blessed us in the past, He will continue to do so in the future as we seek to grow the Kingdom of God.

Submitted by Mohan Singh, Pastor

Zion Lutheran Church, Schenectady

As we celebrate 150 years this year, we thank God for all that He continues to do for us in our community. We bring the Word and sacrament to the saints in our community three times a week. We continue to increase our membership during our bible study and youth fellowship. Our saints who has been here and were contemporaries at Sunday School will be celebrating fifty years of service; they will be having a weekend celebration and end the weekend with a thanksgiving service at church. Our organist, Scott Trexler, is always ever ready with our boisterous choir to render hymns and anthems of praise and thanksgiving. We had a wonderful service on Easter Sunday with 327 communicants and 114 families celebrating the Resurrection with us. We livestream our services on Sundays and we have people from Europe and Africa joining us virtually for worship. Baptisms are increasing and we were blessed to have our young children coming for confirmation class and serving as acolytes.

We started a three-church ministry (Immanuel, Trinity and Zion) and we had joint midweek services during Advent and Lent. We thought it best to form a 'subcommittee' for the three-church ministry and we agreed to focus on music, care and youth. To God be the glory it is going on well. We continue to exemplify Christ with the social Gospel as we continue to support and assist "Street Soldiers" in providing them with food, clothing and sharing God's Word with them.

We started a Wednesday evening fellowship of praise and worship, prayer and testimony at our parking lot to share and testify about our Lord and God.

We continue to visit the sick and home bound and sharing Christ's meal with them. We welcome Deacon Glenn Schermerhorn as our commissioned deacon.

Submitted by Francis Rigobert, Pastor

Circuit 2

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Delmar

Bethlehem Lutheran Church remains faithfully committed to our mission to Connect with Jesus; Connect with others; Connect others with Jesus. We, like many churches, are struggling to understand how the pandemic has impacted the landscape of our ministries. We are working hard to adapt and adjust to the new reality created by COVID-19. In the early months of the pandemic, we were able to quickly enhance our infrastructure thus allowing us to provide high-quality online worship and Bible studies. As things return to normal, we are looking with hope toward the future and the opportunities that exist to reach out into our community with the Gospel.

Over the last triennium, we experienced a shift in pastoral leadership as we sadly said good-bye to Assistant Pastor Josh Krepel who took a call to Peace with Christ Lutheran Church in Aurora, Colorado. In



July of 2019, we welcomed Jessy Wilson to the staff as an SMP Vicar. In February of 2022, Jessy was ordained and installed as Assistant Pastor. We recently said good-bye to Senior Pastor Mark Mueller, who took a call to Ascension Lutheran Church in Casselberry Florida. Pastor Jessy Wilson is currently serving as sole pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. In March of 2022, we were blessed to welcome a new Lay Deacon, Melissa Derenches, to our team.

In 2021 we were deeply saddened by the loss of our long-time Lay Deacon and friend, Karla (Didi) Skultety. While we mourn the loss of a friend and partner in ministry, we rejoice that Didi is now with her Savior, Jesus Christ.

We are hopeful in 2022 as we see our worship numbers slowly rising toward pre-pandemic levels. We have also seen the return of some of our beloved ministries and outreaches that were paused or put on hold during the pandemic. On the Saturday before Easter, we hosted almost 300 children at our annual Easter Egg Hunt. On April 24th we were blessed by the return of The Jubilate Singers & Orchestra conducted by Dr. Ralph C. Schultz who shared beautiful Christ-centered music with a church full of people from across the Capital Region.

Guided by our mission to Connect with Jesus; Connect with others; Connect others with Jesus, we look optimistically toward the future, confident in the Lord and excited for the opportunities He will provide.

Submitted by Jessy Wilson, Pastor

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Delhi

Delhi is a small community straddling the West Branch of the Delaware River in the northwestern Catskills. Our congregation's roots go back to the 1930s when two groups of German immigrants – one to the south of Delhi, the other to the north – found each other and worked to establish a Lutheran congregation, eventually located in Delhi because it was midway between the two groups. The congregation was incorporated in early 1943. Today our members come not only from Delhi but throughout Delaware County.

The life of our church family, its worship, outreach, and ministry, continues to be centered around Christ and His gifts to us. Word and Sacrament ministry remain at the heart of our life together and, we pray, will continue to do so. During the last year, we worked to revitalize our prayer, confirmation, and men's ministry. We began a children's message during service and look forward to restarting our Sunday School in the Fall. We held midweek Advent and Lent services with our sister church, Trinity, Stamford. We are exploring other ways to reach out to the community through music, care ministries, and outreach to SUNY Delhi, the local college.

God has richly blessed our congregation. Our mission is to share those blessings and His love with those in our communities. We trust in His continuing care and love to strengthen us for that work.

Submitted by Robert Wilson, Pastor

Love Lutheran Church, East Greenbush

Pastorally Vacant



As the Atlantic District enters a new era, Love Lutheran Church, east Greenbush, remains a mission outpost dedicated to sharing the heart of love – Jesus Christ.

Love has received a lot of support from local church's and ministers to help sustain us during the last few years. Pastor Cohn from Saint John's and Pastor Dietsche of St Peter's Hospital. We continue to maintain our membership although a few families have yet to return to full worship with us following Covid.

The Senior housing project has been scrapped due to push back from the neighborhood and a lack of legal representation to counter the locals. The Town of Schodack was a supporting in the project of but neighboring towns fought against us.

Love has one member participating in the Atlantic District Deacon program and is nearing completion of those courses.

All other previously mentioned activities, child care and autism work with a local school have all been terminated.

We do continue to offer support group meetings at our church 4 times per week. This is a well received outreach.

Love continues to offer regular weekly services and appreciates the ongoing support from local congregations and Ministers.

Submitted by John Busdiecker, Executive Director

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Albany

Our Savior's Church and School has experienced transitions and explored new opportunities with the change in leadership under God's faithful blessings and direction.

Pastor Paul Koehn accepted a call to serve in the Michigan District. The church remained pastorally vacant for approximately two years. During this time, the congregation continued to adapt and explore options that brought about live streaming of one service each. Before the pandemic, throughout the period when in-person gatherings were not possible, and since reopening, Our Savior's has worked to care for its members and reach the lost by trying to rethink what works. The Launch Pad is an indoor play space available to the community free of charge several mornings a week when children and their adult caregivers gather for play and community. A Night to Shine has given people with unique developmental challenges an opportunity to celebrate, to be celebrated, and to become stars during a night that rivals any prom. Vacation Bible School draws from the Church, School, and the entire Capital Region for a week of learning and growing as God's precious children. The Daily Bread Food Pantry helps supports and supplement the needs of those in our public school district with bi-monthly food distribution. With great rejoicing, a robust weekly schedule includes both traditional and contemporary worship, Bible studies, breakfast and lunch gatherings, Kingdom Kids (Sunday School) and Thrive (Youth Group).

The School has been blessed and embraced new opportunities under the faithful and zealous leadership of Principal John Richardson, who came to Our Savior's after Principal John March. The 2021-2022 academic year was blessed with 141 students from pre-school through eighth grade. The return to in-person instruction has revitalized the joy and passion for teaching and learning. Several classrooms have benefited from some additional care and upgrades to maximize both function and flexibility. While not a part of a formal league, students have had opportunities to experience team sports and competition with other schools in the area. With great thanksgiving, the School is poised for a successful conclusion to this



academic year and even stronger start to the next academic year with a projected student body increase of 15%.

On September 1, 2021, Our Savior's installed Pastor Bill Wrede as Intentional Interim Pastor. Pastor Wrede will remain at Our Savior's until March 1, 2023. In anticipation of calling a settled pastor, the congregation is working with Pastor and the District to assess their current ministry and chart a bold and God-blessed vision for the next chapter. The goal of Intentional Interim Ministry is to a) acknowledge, celebrate, and move forward from the past, b) evaluate the form of governance with an eye towards clear responsibility and accountability, c) analyze finances for the purpose of being viable, sustainable, and growing, d) prepare for a settled pastor from the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Submitted by William Wrede, Pastor

St. John Lutheran Church, Stuyvesant

Over the last three years St. John's Lutheran Church like most churches had to find a way to operate and share the Good News while dealing with COVID-19. During this period we, like many, saw many called home to be with our Lord including our own Deacon Diane Marsche.

Facing the challenges caused by COVID, the congregation began to grow its online presence including sharing of worship services, found ways to continue to share the Good News with the community that we strive to serve, have been blessed to see the growth of our Sunday school and sharing of God's love with them, and have had to find different ways to share the love of Christ.

The results of COVID 19 have also given us a chance to examine ourselves, what we have done previously and are doing now and being committed to being an active part of our community we are continuing this to find new ways to support ministries that reach people with the Gospel who don't know Christ.

Submitted by Daniel Cohn, Pastor

St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Albany

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! In the midst of challenges and changes over the past four years this attitude of thanksgiving has been evident in each member. Since the last District Convention St. Matthew has seen Pastor Keffie Dean accept a call to serve as a religion teacher at the high school he attended in Wisconsin. After a little over a year vacancy, Pastor James Dorner was called to serve as part-time Pastor in a multi-parish agreement with St. Paul's beginning July 2020.

Like so many, St. Matthew's church and preschool closed in-person worship and care during the early days of the pandemic. We decided to do a test run with 20 students during the summer for a camp. After this success, we opened to full capacity for the start of the school year in 2020. Around the same time the church also began worshipping in-person again. In December of 2020 the preschool at St. Matthew experienced a massive covid outbreak which saw almost the entire staff and over half the school and their families become infected. We praise God that no one passed away, but the rattled staff did not feel comfortable returning to work. As a result, the school operation was suspended.

Under the guidance of Pastor Dorner, St. Matthew began to explore options for doing mission and ministry with St. Paul's. The congregation voted officially in early 2021 to leave their building and join St. Paul's in worship at a new location: 1500 Western Ave. in Albany. This is the site of the now closed



Christ Lutheran Church. In May of 2021 St. Matthew and St. Paul's began worshipping as one congregation. In-person Bible study and Sunday school was brought back in the fall and in December of the same year at the Christmas Eve service a new name was voted on and announced. On the day when we celebrate the birth of our Savior, we announced the birth of Unity Lutheran Church. We are waiting to officially consolidate into one new congregation until after St. Matthew's old property is sold.

The soon-to-be Unity Lutheran Church has seen growth in our attendance and a close to 50% rate of those in worship staying for Bible study and Sunday School. In October of 2021 Unity hired the director of the since closed St. Matthew preschool to open an after-school care program at our new location. This has proven to be a much lengthier process than anticipated but we are hopeful to open before the school year ends and continue with a full-day summer camp for children. With the help of Rev. Billy Brath of LCEF we have developed a guiding statement for Unity, "We are growing as God's disciples, compassionately connecting our neighbors to Jesus". This two-fold mission is already being enacted and we look forward to more growth and more opportunities to connect our new neighbors to Jesus.

Through all of these changes and challenges we have seen a positive and excited attitude in our church members, both old and new. It was discovered that 177 years prior, these two congregations were one and only split apart because of space constraints. With joy, we add to the historic story of the Lutheran proclamation in Albany and look forward to the saving witness the Holy Spirit will work through us in the decades to come. All of this would not have been possible without the Atlantic Districts generosity toward us with a lease of our new property and the purchase of a parsonage for Pastor Dorner's family to reside (walking distance to our church). Not only are we excited for what God will do through us, but we look with anticipation to partnering with our neighboring LC-MS congregations in the Capital Region and the District as a whole. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Submitted by James Dorner, Pastor

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Albany

"Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever." (2 Chronicles 20:29) Not all things endure forever, which is why we hold onto the One whose love does. St. Paul in Albany has seen some major changes since last convention. Pastor David Gruenwald took a call and after a 15 month vacancy received a vicar from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, James Dorner, in July 2019. After finishing his schoolwork and receiving his degree James Dorner was ordained at St. Paul in July 2020. On that day St. Paul entered into a dual parish agreement with St. Matthew in Albany to have Pastor Dorner serve both congregations.

In 2019 an inspection was conducted of the church parish hall and identified close to half a million dollars in structural damage to the property. St. Paul began talks with the District about leasing the property of the since closed Christ Lutheran Church and trying to sell our old church. Within a year the church which served the Lutheran population in downtown Albany for 148 years was sold and our congregation moved to the former Christ Lutheran location and began a merger with St. Matthew's. May of 2020 saw St. Matthew and St. Paul's hold their first joint worship service at the new location. On Christmas Eve of the same year the now unofficially merged congregation voted to rename themselves Unity Lutheran Church.

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Submitted by James Dorner, Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Stamford

Trinity, Stamford is a small but loving congregation nestled in the Catskill mountains on the banks of Lake Utsayantha. We seek to faithfully worship our Lord and witness to His love in Stamford and beyond.

We began a midweek Bible Study on Thursday afternoons and look forward to restarting our outreach to local nursing homes as soon as permitted. We held joint midweek Advent and Lenten services with our sister church, Immanuel, Delhi. We continue to explore new ways to reach out to the community, confident that God will guide and sustain us and enable us to grow.

Submitted by Robert Wilson, Pastor

Circuit 3

All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lagrangeville

As so many sister congregations within the Atlantic District, All Saints Lutheran Church, Lagrangeville, was experiencing an active and promising period of ministry only to be interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. And, also as so many of our sister congregations, All Saints followed a specific procedure allowing both safety and, finally, total re-opening in March of 2020. Some of the procedures adopted during the pandemic remain in place, including the exclusive use of individual cups at Sacrament, the required wearing of masks by unvaccinated worshippers, and social distancing [3 feet, in accordance with CDC recommendations].

The Leadership of All Saints Lutheran Church has striven to return to as much a normal congregational life as possible. This includes reinvigorated monthly Book Club meeting and Men’s Breakfast. In 2021, the Annual Festival of the Blessing of the Animals was once again held the first weekend in October, including Yard Sale and representatives of community agencies offering service to the community. Community Dinners have also been restarted with the first having a large response. In a twist of irony, in 2019, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic coincided with our planned St Patrick’s Day Dinner. The



first dinner since the pandemic has somewhat abated was the St Patrick's Day Dinner.

Returning to most normal activities has been a blessing to All Saints, as has been the reception of several new member despite the pandemic. And yet, we look to the future and how best to engage the community with the Gospel of Hope. In order to do so, All Saints has agreed to participate in the Friends of the Deaf [Mill Neck Manor] ASL Interpreter Services. By providing this service [ASL interpretation of Worship Services], it is our prayer to reach more with the Gospel of Jesus Christ who otherwise would not hear His Word of salvation and hope.

Looking further toward the future, along with several congregations of our region, All Saints is participating in the LCEF/AD sponsored "Ministry Solutions" series of seminars. Ministry Teams will meet with other participants to review, develop and implement measures that best utilize the gifts which Gd has given the congregation.

In so many ways, the past quadrennium has been stressful beyond all anticipation. And yet, echoing St Paul, 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. [Romans 8:18] We have seen His glory even now [John 1:14] and strive to reflect that glory to all around us, that in our community and beyond, all may be saints of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Submitted by Henry Albrechtsen, Pastor

Ev. Lutheran Church of Christ the King, Pawling

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Christ the King in Pawling has served Pawling and the surrounding communities for nearly sixty years. Like all congregations, Christ the King has faced myriad challenges related to COVID-19, but, by the grace of God, we have persevered, driven always by our intent to provide the Word of God and the Holy Eucharist to His people. After a pause of two weeks, we returned for in-person services with limited attendance through Holy Week, and, once in-person worship was restricted by the state, offered scheduled communion appointments through the week in addition to the streamed Sunday service. Beginning on Pentecost of 2020, we resumed in-person worship, initially with five services a week to accommodate capacity restrictions, until such time as our region's restrictions were lessened. Our normal weekday events were held online, with the addition of a virtual cocktail hour on Tuesday evenings to provide a time for catching up and socializing.

Christ the King is very blessed to have dedicated volunteers, who, in the face of the upheavals of the last two years, have seemingly become even more active and committed to serving the community and the world. In the early chaos of 2020, many people volunteered to deliver groceries to those within and without our congregation, and some continue to do so even today. We also continue in our support of the Pawling Resource Center, which provides a food pantry and a multitude of other resources to the local community. Members of the congregation, usually led by Anita Dykeman, continue to give their time and money to support organizations such as Orphan Grain Train, Operation Christmas Child, the Lutheran Care Center in Poughkeepsie, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Heritage Foundation, and others. We also continue to have an active LWML group, which serves the congregation, community, and world in a number of ways.

In June of 2018, we welcomed Pastor Stefan Gramenz, a recent graduate of the seminary in Fort Wayne. Pastor Gramenz has become quite active and visible within the community, whether by serving on boards for community organizations, speaking at the village Memorial Day observance, or helping with the local



library book sale. He can also regularly be found next-door to the church visiting with residents at the King's Apartments (a facility of The Lutheran Care Network) or chatting with community members at the park.

Despite the difficulties of the last few years, we have been happy to welcome a number of new members by baptism and adult confirmation, with about a dozen more currently being instructed. As a result, the congregation seems to be both increasing in numbers and increasingly youthful. Thanks be to God, who does all things well!

Submitted by Stefan Gramenz, Pastor

Ev. Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Peekskill

Our Redeemer is a small congregation that has been in Peekskill since the late 1930s. This year is the 32nd year that Pastor William P. Terjesen has served as the congregation's pastor. The congregation and its pastor maintain a classic, historic Lutheran worship and practice, and put a great emphasis on the teaching of the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions.

Being a small church, Our Redeemer regularly faces all the challenges small congregations face. Yet the Lord has provided for all our needs and we are still pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We have come through the pandemic by the mercy of our Lord, and this year we were able to have the exterior trim of our building scraped and painted top to bottom, which for various reasons was long overdue. We don't know what the future holds for our congregation, but we know it is in the hands of our gracious Savior, and therefore, we look forward with hope.

Peekskill is a city with a large Roman Catholic population and quite a number of Baptist and other protestant churches. Maintaining a solid, evangelical Lutheran witness is very important to the congregation.

We are thankful to the Lord Jesus Christ for blessing us with His grace, and for keeping us in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, as He provides for our needs and leads us to faithfully proclaim the truth that sets people free.

Submitted by William Terjesen, Pastor

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Fishkill

Like all congregations, Our Savior Lutheran Church in Fishkill was deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but we found ways to continue our mission: "Centered on God's Word and Sacraments in Christ, we share His Truth and His Love among ourselves and with the world."

Worship — Centered on God's Word and Sacraments in Christ

We were well positioned to livestream our worship services during the pandemic because we were already doing this for our 5:30 p.m. Saturday service, thanks to the donation of a Mevo camera about one year earlier. When in-person services were impossible in the early months, we used Facebook Live in order to worship "together" as a congregation at 11:00 a.m. each Sunday, encouraging members to comment in real time to have a sense of participating with one another. As soon as it was feasible, we added back our contemporary worship service at 9:30 a.m. as an additional livestream option. Communion was offered by individual appointments, and then at parking lot services. After a couple of months we introduced in-person worship services without singing, with masks, and with assigned seating to allow for social



distancing; these services took place at our other worship times of 8:00 a.m. on Sunday and 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, while the online services still allowed for singing. Gradually all of the modifications and restrictions were lifted, and we have now returned to “normal,” although attendance has not fully recovered and a number of people continue to watch online worship services.

Discipleship — Sharing God’s Truth among Ourselves

Sunday School was particularly hard hit by the pandemic; some parents felt strongly that children should continue to wear masks while others felt equally strongly that masks should not be required. We followed official guidance the best we could. Sunday School is now being done in one large group instead of separate grade-level classes. Adult Bible studies, which were conducted via a free conference call service, have returned to in-person. Confirmation classes were conducted by Zoom and then in a hybrid format; the class of 2020 was confirmed at a special outdoor service, while 2021 was done indoors with assigned seating for social distancing.

Fellowship — Sharing God’s Love among Ourselves

The pandemic provided an opportunity to put our faith into action by reaching out to fellow members to check on how everyone was doing. Returning to group activities presented challenges because food and beverages were often involved. Most have returned to normal, although some individuals continue to participate by conference call.

Evangelism — Sharing God’s Truth with the World

Vacation Bible School was canceled altogether in 2020 but returned with great joy in 2021, and we are looking forward to 2022. Our Little Lambs Preschool had to combine the 3- and 4-year-old classes but continues to lay a foundation of faith for children of our congregation and our community.

Servanthood — Sharing God’s Love with the World

OSLC continues as an active partner of Mid-Hudson Love INC with our Personal Care Pantry. The annual coat drive was canceled for two years but is returning this fall.

Youth — Raising Up the Next Generation

Since the departure of our paid part-time youth worker in 2019 we have relied on a committed team of volunteers to keep our youth group active. Our group has welcomed youth from two other congregations to join us in attending the National Youth Gathering in Houston.

Staff

A celebration of Rev. John M. Young’s 25th ordination anniversary was held in the summer of 2021, and in January 2022 he marked twenty years of ministry at OSLC. We had two lay deacons who have moved on and currently have none serving. Easter Sunday 2022 was the last worship service for our organist and choir director of five years, so we are actively seeking to fill that position.

Submitted by Rev. John Young, Pastor

Resurrection Lutheran Church, Cairo

Resurrection Lutheran Church - Cairo has been a vital part of Cairo for 64 years. Our Mission is to “Help people know Jesus Christ.” We seek to actively share the love of Jesus with the people of our community. Our most recently adopted Vision is stated this way: “Resurrection Lutheran Church will stand



as a lighthouse shining the love, truth, and life of Jesus, even in the spreading darkness of our age.”

In March, 2020, the Covid pandemic started with great impact on all we do. Immediately, we began online worship services, as well as developing audio Devotions that were emailed daily to all worshipers throughout the lock-down period. In addition, the Pastors, Deacons and Elders made regular phone contacts with church members for spiritual support and prayer. Sunday School materials were distributed to young families to work through at home, & multiple Adult Bible Classes were offered through Phone & Zoom. In May, 2020, we began two Drive-In worship services each Sunday morning. These were locally transmitted over the radio so people could listen in their cars. The Drive-In services provided absolute safety, yet permitted regular Word and Sacrament ministry & maintained a certain sense of community. We thought that this would be temporary, but the Drive-In services lasted nearly two years, through rain, cold and snow. The Drive-In services kept us together as a congregation, and we slowly and safely added back indoor services. At the same time we added back one ministry at a time, as deemed safe. As the pandemic has receded, all ministries are now running at full speed (except our music ministry which took a big hit with the retirement of our excellent music director simultaneously with Covid. Lord willing, in time this ministry will re-develop).

Since the last Convention, we began two new ministries. The first is a ministry to those afflicted with memory loss (Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia) and their care givers. This ministry is called Grace Place. Those with dementia come once a week to the church where they receive a variety of experiences: friendship, crafts, Bible lesson, prayer, lunch, music and fun. The caregiver then is free for the four hours of the program, although some elect to stay, as they find support through Grace Place. This is a vital ministry that can be replicated by other churches.

The second new ministry is called “Two and You”. This is a weekly 90-minute class for 2-year-olds and a loving adult. The program includes a Bible lesson, craft, music, playtime, snack, and other fun activities.

Our Joyful Christian Preschool has been thriving since 1984, with classes for 3 and 4-year-olds, five mornings each week of the school year. Over the years, children and families have been and continue to be drawn to the Lord and to become part of the congregation through the school. Unfortunately, lately this happens less often than in the past.

Our Sunday School Classes meet weekly, although the number of children attending is not what we would hope for. Confirmation Classes for 5th and 6th graders continue meeting weekly. Vacation Bible School is offered for one week each August for children from RLC, other churches in the community, and the unchurched. Approximately 120 children, teen helpers, and Adults are blessed through this ministry each year.

Our Adult Christian Education program of Sunday morning Bible classes, special mid-week classes (Membership Classes, Baptism Classes), and on-going Small Groups, also continues to include an annual congregation-wide “40-Days...” spiritual growth program during Lent, featuring themed Sunday sermons, coordinated daily devotions & weekly small group gatherings. These opportunities increase the number of people involved in small group Bible study, Christian fellowship, and they also encourage regular worship and help to assimilate new people into the life of the congregation.

Our Community Care Ministry exists to express the love and care of Jesus by serving the community in Jesus’ name in various ways. We serve about 70 local elementary school children with food insecurity through an ongoing weekend Backpack Program. We are also the local sponsor of the Dolly Pardon Imagination Library free book/reading program in our community. Over the last seven years, the program has mailed over 16,000 books to local preschool children. Our Food Pantry serves about 35 families per week, in addition to special food give-aways prior to Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.



Each Summer RLC participates in several Community Fairs, hosting a table offering a children's faith-related craft, give-away items, and church ministry information. This provides a great opportunity to meet and interact with families in the community, and share the Love of Jesus with all who stop by.

We are blessed that our church building is located near the main intersection in our town. Therefore our large two-sided Road Sign, with a changeable Christ-centered message each week, is seen regularly by all who pass through. Over the years, we have used it to offer faith-encouragement to the community and we know it has drawn new people to attend and make their home at RLC.

RLC sponsors a Mission of the Month, offering congregational members & friends an easy & convenient way to financially support trusted missions, both local & outside of our community; and we participate annually in Operation Christmas Child.

RLC continues to operate under a Constitution with an Accountable Leadership structure, which has enabled more efficient operation, more effective ministry, and more active involvement of God's people, with all systems focused on our Mission: to help people know Jesus Christ.

Resurrection is served and led by the Rev. Victor Nelson as Senior Pastor, The Rev. Steven Williamson-Link; and assisted in ministry by District Lay Deacons Shirley Algozzine and Amanda-Marie Freemann.

Submitted by Victor Nelson, Senior Pastor

St. Mark's Second Ev. Lutheran Church, Hudson

Greetings in Christ's name to all.

St. Mark's finds itself in a period of transition since the departure of our former Pastor. While having a pastoral vacancy has caused some challenges in providing the services to our congregants and community that we would desire, we have received God's blessings in increased involvement by our members coming together to do the work of the church. By trying to find a "job" for everyone we have experienced a unifying effect that will hopefully continue.

We are glad to welcome back members in attendance who have been absent for some time. God's hand is truly at work here.

The church leadership team is now meeting weekly to discuss and plan for the Reimagining Worship tasks which will be a big help in determining our direction as a body and how we can reach out to our community. We are in discussions about outreach opportunities to bring God's word and peace to our local areas.

We continue to support our St. Mark's sponsored Food Pantry which is operated by several of our members. The Pantry is a blessing to many in our area who face difficult times. It has grown exponentially over the years and is considered a staple in our community.

We have been blessed by support from our friend and retired Pastor Stan Webster who is serving us one Sunday a month to distribute communion. We have also had support and advice from Reverend's Olsen, Cohn and Nelson which we are thankful for.

On the three Sunday's a month that we have no Pastor we have had lay people conduct the service and are using available video sermons which have been widely received by those in attendance. Printed copies of the sermons and a copy of the bulletin are being sent to members who were not in attendance.



We owe a great deal of thanks to the following LCMS Reverend's for making their sermons available to us as recordings and for their messages:

Matthew Harrison, President LCMS

Jonathan Kern, Immanuel Lutheran, Colorado Springs

Mark Thompson, Zion Lutheran, Lincoln Illinois

Jonathan Huehn &

Timothy Fitzner, Christ Lutheran, Normal Illinois

We are extremely thankful for the ability to use this means of sharing the Word of God.

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned Mark 16:15-16 (ESV)

Submitted by Richard Viebrock, Congregation President

St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Hyde Park

St. Timothy is a small but active congregation. We hold our regular Sunday morning service at 10AM and at 9AM we conduct a session we call 'Beyond the Sermon' covering the lessons for the day. We also hold Bible Studies on Wednesday evenings. We have a Deacon Candidate, Robin Friesheim, who has completed her classroom work and is working on her service projects. With our active congregation we had to stop in-person services due to Covid on the 22nd of March 2020. We immediately began using Zoom for services. On the 14th of June 2020 we were able to reopen which allowed the majority to return to in-person worship while continuing using Zoom. We were able to discontinue using Zoom following the 4th of July service in 2021. With our size we were fortunate and didn't really have difficulty in getting most people to the in-person services.

While the congregation lacks youth which means we cannot offer a regular Sunday School we were fortunate to confirm three youth and an adult during 2020 and 2021.

St. Timothy loves to reach out to the community to the extent that our small size permits. Our LWML group is called the Mite-y Angels who reach out frequently to the community and beyond. They run a soup sale during the winter months that draws people in, many coming as the sale opens enabling them to visit with our ladies and each other. We also participate in the community Adopt a Family program so we can provide a meal and gifts to a family for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We regularly donate to the Hyde Park Food Pantry and have recently begun to provide a means for emergency delivery to their clients during the times they are not open. Our strongest outreach is to be a congregation member of Love INC (In the Name of Christ) which provides needed items to most of Dutchess County. This organization has approximately 19 congregations participating. We provide volunteer services for the clearing house that certifies the need for clients calling in. We also help with deliveries for clients near us and transportation to clients participating in the education programs designed to get them out of the need to be a client and possibly connect them with a local congregation. We have benefited by serving with Love INC.

With our small size we are hoping to be able to serve God more fully in the community and hope that our participation in Reimagining Ministry sponsored by the district will lead us to reach out more.



Circuit 4

Atonement Lutheran Church, Stony Point

Rev. Martin Tyce is celebrating 10 years of service at Atonement. He continues to lead worship services, visit members at their homes, hospitals and nursing homes. He teaches confirmation, communion and new member classes. During the pandemic, Pastor Tyce led worship services from his house via Zoom. There have been 6 new members welcomed to our church as well as 6 baptisms and 8 students confirmed.

Sunday school classes are offered for children ages 3 through 8th grade. Bible study takes place on Sunday mornings for adults (anyone confirmed and older are welcome). Vacation Bible School is offered for one week in the summer. These classes were held via Zoom also during Covid shut downs.

We have an active Youth Group for students in 7th through 12th grade. The Youth Group holds various events (Halloween party, Easter egg hunt) for the Sunday school students. They also help with the annual Oktoberfest, church Christmas decoration, Mother's Day breakfast and various fundraising events. The Youth Group goes on an annual retreat each winter.

Atonement also has a Ladies' Guild that meets monthly and hosts annual luncheons and fundraising events. This group takes care of the altar preparations for regular and holiday worship services. They also assist in preparations for baptisms, first communions and confirmations.

The Fellowship committee plans and hosts a variety of events throughout the year. The Marist Brass Ensemble joins and plays at our worship services twice a year. Atonement continues to be a meeting place for Boy Scout Troop #10 and a newly formed Girl Scout Troop. The Boy Scouts help with minor repairs and work on the facilities. Both troops host annual Scout Sundays with a coffee hour.

Submitted by Martin Tyce, Pastor

Family of Faith Lutheran Church, Middletown

Pastorally Vacant

The last three years have ushered in a time of transition at Family of Faith that continues today. As with all churches over the last couple years, the COVID pandemic presented a tremendous challenge that necessitated many adjustments and a great deal of flexibility. Family of Faith was able to shift to worship services on the Zoom platform during the church closures and then gradually welcomed people back to the sanctuary with masks and distancing. While most congregants have returned to the sanctuary on Sunday, the Zoom option has remained available.

In June of 2021, Pastor Tad Thayer retired and moved to Delaware. A short time later, the church was very thankful to gain the assistance of retired Pastor Don Lee. Pastor Lee has been a great source of help and guidance as the church navigates through its pastoral vacancy. While small, Family of Faith is blessed with many displays of love and evidence of the many blessings that God has to offer. The church leadership is currently looking forward and focused on developing a plan for the future of Family of Faith.

Submitted by Daniel Harrison, Elder/President/Deacon-in-Training



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hurley

The quadrennium since our last District Convention has seen success in ministry, as well as set-back.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church embarked on several community based projects shortly after my tenure began in 2018. These included conducting mid-week devotions and Sunday social hours [musical offerings, games] at the local Lutheran Care Network facility – Hudson Valley Senior Residences. Public Concerts were offered in our sanctuary, as well as continued charitable endeavors.

Then came the COVID-19 pandemic and the general shut down of our activities – everything from community endeavors to Sunday worship and Bible studies. The Council and Leadership of Good Shepherd worked tirelessly to abide by the CDC and other government recommendations, slowly reopening in phases so that today, Good Shepherd is fully functioning, including Sunday School, fellowship hour, work-days and the like. We have continued to issue pre-recorded Sunday worship to shut-in as well as conduct a Wednesday evening, as well as ZOOM Bible Class and outdoor Tailgate Parties, direct responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Truck and Treat – a community alternative at Halloween – has also been reinstated.

Although it remains a slow process, Good Shepherd is stepping out in faith in order to reengage the community. This includes the traditional Yard Sale, Sunday concerts, and participation in Friends of the Deaf [Mill Neck Manor] ASL Interpreter Services. Ulster County has a large concentration of hearing impaired residents. By providing this service [ASL interpretation of Worship Services], it is our prayer to reach more with the Gospel of Jesus Christ who otherwise would not hear His Word of salvation and hope.

In vivid terms, Good Shepherd is approaching the future with the hope that is our in Christ. Good Shepherd has been blessed to share the Sacrament of Baptism with two children, as well as welcome two others to the altar through instruction and admission of First Communion.

The highlight of the return to normalcy was having the Annual Congregational Picnic by the Esopus Creek, at Robert E Post Park - a highlight not just for the members of Good Shepherd, but also area residents and members of All Saints, Lagrangeville – a bridge congregation.

We are still processing the effects of the pandemic – the decision by some not to return to fellowship [approximately 5% of the active membership] and how best to move forward. To that end, Good Shepherd is participating in the LCEF/AD sponsored “Ministry Solutions” series of seminars. Ministry Teams will meet with other participants to review, develop and implement measures that best utilize the gifts which Gd has given the congregation.

Above all, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hurley, continues to walk in the Light of Christ, seeking the path that He has chosen for ministry and mission in this place, fully confident in the words of the prophet, 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare[b] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. [Jeremiah 29:11]

Soli Deo Gloria

Submitted by Henry Albrechtsen, Vacancy Pastor



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Warwick

Jordan Voges was ordained into the Holy Ministry and installed as pastor at GSLC on June 27, 2020. Services were exclusively live-streamed to the congregation until August, 2020, when, in addition the live-stream, we resumed gathering together. We also resumed our congregational study hour and youth catechesis for Confirmation around that time. Sunday school resumed in fall of 2021. GSLC also began a mercy-ministry called “Soup for the Soul.” Nearly every Wednesday, from November 2020 to May 2021, homemade and donated soup was freely distributed to any and all from our community. We repeated this ministry during the winter of 2021 into the early spring of 2022, distributing 4,411 pints of soup over the two years. Additionally: we continued our support for Compassion International and Citizen’s Purse (Operation Christmas Child); our website was redesigned; several major building upkeep projects were completed; the daycare renting out our lower level flourished; and, by God’s grace, the Gospel continued (and continues) being proclaimed in Warwick, New York.

Submitted by Jordan Voges, Pastor

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Monroe

There has been much change in St. Paul over the past few years. When the COVID pandemic forced us to close our doors to in person worship in March 2020, many adjustments needed to be made. Pastor Robert Wilson was quick to stream services from his home and incorporated many active church members in the readings and musical worship. By May 2020, we were performing parking lot worship services. Our talented media team would set up equipment for pastor and worship leaders as well as for our music worship band. When the weather got colder, we went back to indoor services but held Saturday service in Fellowship Hall and Sunday service in our sanctuary. We continue to offer online worship for those members who still do not feel comfortable with in person worship.

In April 2021, Pastor Wilson accepted a call to Delhi, NY. Ever since, we have had Pastor Marty Tyce as our interim pastor performing services on both Saturday and Sunday. Slowly but surely, members of our congregation have been returning to in person worship. In fact, some families which had left our church prior to the pandemic have since returned.

There have been many changes in our administration as well. COVID caused the resignation of our office manager and reduced the hours of our bookkeeper which in turn has caused her to retire as well. Due to health reasons, our music director never felt comfortable coming back to in person service which subsequently also resulted in her retirement as well. So, St. Paul has been operating on a complete volunteer basis. All office duties have been split amongst council members and the choir has continued to work together with the help of Alex Heironymi, who has consistently volunteered his time. And Ed Quintana, our mission trip leader, is currently undergoing Lay Deacon training.

As a congregation coming out of COVID and undergoing a change in pastors, St. Paul has continued to thrive. We have been able to continue all of our ministries even with the reduced number of helpers. Our bible studies, preschool, Sunday School and vacation bible school continue. We have strived to engage the Monroe Woodbury community with a successful Easter Egg Hunt in early April of this year and most recently held a blood drive. In November 2021, we installed a message sign which will help us communicate with the local community. In addition, in January 2022, we incorporated new cloud based church software which not only made it easier for our council members to work from home, but also enabled us to revamp our website to make it more interactive to our current members and more engaging to prospective members. We are constantly looking for ways to inspire our congregation as well as the local



community to join us in serving the Lord.

We feel truly blessed to have Pastor Marty Tyce with us as we transform ourselves and seek ways to engage residents of the Monroe Woodbury area. We are also incredibly fortunate to have a generous congregation which has kept us financially secure despite the COVID pandemic. We look forward to growing in spirit and service in the upcoming months.

Submitted by Dawn Tomasini, President

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Warwick

Pastor Christopher Grant resigned his position with us due to health reasons. His last Sunday is June 12, 2022.

We are currently looking forward to VBS. Scheduled for August 10, 11, and 12. Our Theme this year is Zoomerang!

Our Food Pantry is open year round the last Sunday of each Month from 12p-1:30p. We currently serve approximately 25 families.

Our 30 Months/30 Charities ministry continues. Mission Statement: Council will choose 30 Charities associated with the Warwick Valley Area or our Church. Each month, the selected charity will receive \$2,000 from St. Peter Lutheran Church. This Mission will last for 30 months, beginning September, 2021 and ending January, 2024.

Our recipients to date:

1. 9/21 Adopt a Student, St. Louis, MO LCMS Seminary
2. 10/21 Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child
3. 11/21 St. Peter Lutheran Church Food Pantry
4. 12/21 Warwick Ecumenical Emergency Fund
5. 1/22 Warwick Humane Society
6. 2/22 12th Rock
7. 3/22 Beautiful People
8. 4/22 Small Things Inc.
9. 5/22 Warwick Odyssey of the Mind Teams

Upcoming recipients:

10. 6/22 My Choice Pregnancy Center (Middletown)
11. 7/22 Warwick Community Center
12. 8/22 Winslow Therapeutic Riding Center
13. 9/22 Warwick Area Farmworkers' Organization
14. 10/22 St. Andrew Ukrainian Church

Submitted by Christina Gust, President



CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS: REGION TWO

Circuit 5

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran, Mt. Vernon

Immanuel meets on Sundays for divine worship, celebrating God's abiding presence in the feast of victory in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, worship services were held virtually and jointly with St. Matthew, Manhattan. Lenten devotions and Bible Study were also joint gatherings.

We are thankful to God for the blessed memory of those who were called to glory, and we rejoice at the salvation of souls by Holy Baptism into Christ Jesus, wrought by the Holy Spirit.

Immanuel continues to sing the praises of God in thanksgiving for His mighty deeds in Jesus our Lord and remains steadfast in faith and witness.

Submitted by Peter Deebrab, Pastor

Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew, New York

"Come, holy Comforter, Thy sacred witness bear In this glad hour! Thou, who almighty art, Now rule in ev'ry heart, And ne'er from us depart, Spirit of pow'r." These words of the well know hymn from the 18th century serve as a testimony of God at work in his Church and through the ministry of the congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew in Manhattan.

The sacred witness of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of His people through the Word and Sacrament is their story and their song. From the onset of the COVID19 pandemic and the ensuing months of restrictions and precautions a new and strange way of congregational worship took effect – virtual gathering. Without a doubt, the "gathering" on Zoom was a glad hour of the Liturgy of the Word. The return to in-person worship was also a gladdening time. The Divine Service is the highlight of the faith journey of God's people. "Phone visits" are on-going. Mid-week Lenten devotions and Bible Studies helped in the nurturing of faith and witness. Members embarked on the personal challenge of reading the New Testament and the Book of Psalms. We give thanks for the faithful departed and rejoice at the anointing of the Holy Spirit at the font of life of those who were welcomed into the kingdom of grace and are now numbered with the saints. Connection with the LWML at the Zone and District levels continues.

Over the past year, St. Matthew has been engaged in a joyful outreach ministry to residents in an Assisted Living Home. Congregation witness includes distribution of baked goods at Christmas, and of palm branches and palm crosses on Palm Sunday. The tutorial program on Fridays, which is led by students of Columbia University, continues to be of great benefit to the children in the community.

To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:25)

Submitted by Peter Deebrab, Pastor



Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Yonkers

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Yonkers, NY, is stepping into a new chapter. After a period of about a year of pastoral vacancy and prayerful discernment, we have called our new pastor, and are now seeking to discern God's will for us as a neighborhood church in a place and at a time of change and wonderful growth of diversity in our neighborhood and congregation. We are blessed to hear the word and receive the sacrament every Sunday, and to have resumed our weekly studies. Additionally, we are meeting as a church to not only look to what God has in store for Holy Trinity, but what we might be called to do here and now to walk the path He has prepared for us. We are faithfully hopeful and optimistic as we enter into this new chapter!

Submitted by Erik Johnson, Pastor

Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Bronx

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour enters this new triennium in the midst of a revitalization of the congregation. As the pandemic was difficult to navigate for so many congregations, Our Saviour also moved through the challenge of having her beloved pastor of 19 years accept a call into full-time military chaplaincy in the United States Army. While the congregation celebrated God's work in the life of their previous pastor, they also gave thanks for the faithful service of their associate pastor as Pastor Hannah continued to steady the worship life of the congregation, even in the midst of the pandemic.

As the congregation returned to worship, they welcomed their new vacancy pastor, who has begun serving both the congregation and the school community. The congregation also expressed their desire to seek out a new vision, working to re-engage those members who were concerned about returning from the pandemic. At the same time, Our Saviour Lutheran School was shrewd in navigating the pandemic time, being thoughtful and creative with strategies that would allow for the school to continue serving. This including a challenging decision of closing the lower school (Grades K-7) while developing a more focused mission to serve Grades 8-12.

The congregation of God's people at Our Saviour remain faithful in their attendance and very supportive of life in the Morris Park section of the Bronx. Our Saviour has opened her doors to a significant number of community groups that help support and rehabilitate those who are recovering from different struggles. In many ways, Our Saviour has become a mission station for the community, where God's love is consistently shown through word and action.

In the upcoming triennium, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour is looking forward to a new vision in her partnership with Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church as both congregations serve in new ways with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope. As the people of God in the Morris Park section of the Bronx, Our Saviour continually gives thanks to God for His many blessings and for the ability to faithfully live the mission of our parish: "The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour is a faithful community in Christ that receives and shares the gifts of God."

*Submitted by Matthew Gonzalez, Vacancy Pastor
Rev. Dr. John R. Hannah, Associate Pastor*



Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bronx

“Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, by God’s grace, is a praying community of service that receives, teaches, celebrates and shares Christ Jesus.” Giving thanks to Jesus our Redeemer for the dozens of baptisms and confirmations we have had, we are grateful to our Lord for bringing new people to this praying community of service. St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tremont has merged into Redeemer and the Tremont property will be redeveloped for future ministry. We hosted the Gospel of Mark presentation produced by faculty members of Concordia Seminary St. Louis and St. Louis area Pastors. Redeemer completed four of Pastor Zach Zehnder’s devotional challenges—the Red Letter Challenge, Forgiving Challenge, Being Challenge, and Prayer Challenge. We hosted learning events with Lutheran Hour Ministries, especially with “Building Households of Faith.” Multiple service awards and scholarships were given to graduates in our parish. Cantor Jean Boehler produced a beautiful pipe organ recital on our tracker pipe organ and we welcomed the gift of the harpsichord from Concordia College New York named “Lenore” in honor of Lenore Wittrock Ressmeyer.

Redeemer was selected to be a model congregation for “Forming Lutherans” (forminglutherans.org) to help other places learn about the Ancient Catechumenate; Deaconess Raquel A. Rojas, Ms Carol T. Sandblom, and Pastor Dien Ashley Taylor each were presenters for this. Our Youth Group (EYES—Energetic Youth Engaged in Service), among many other activities, led a letter-writing campaign that prompted the City of New York to repair a dilapidated sidewalk just north of our church building; neighbors had complained for many years but the young people of our parish championed this and got the work done. Two new auxiliaries began for children (CHEEKS and ELBOWS) in an online format for additional religious education during the week. Redeemer participated in numerous Synod, District, and Circuit events by being on boards for parachurch agencies (Wartburg, Martin Luther Camp Corporation, Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, Lutheran Publicity Bureau) Synod board (Pastor Taylor on the LCMS Board for National Mission), District work (Board of Directors of the District, Task Force members, etc.) and the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, (President Deaconess Rojas, Vice-Presidents, music leaders, and the like).

Redeemer was honored as “Congregation of the Year” by Lutheran Counseling Center and has heavily supported and advocated its efforts. Thousands of dollars were raised and sent to people in need locally and around the world. Many facilities were renovated and updated. Redeemer welcomed a student intern from Concordia College New York and assisted the college community at the time of its closure. The Redeemer Food Pantry fed many people in the neighborhood. Redeemer Sunday School and Vacation Bible School continued to operate in-person, in digital formats, and in hybrid formats depending on circumstances. The pandemic also prompted the creation of additional Bible studies offered in both hybrid and digital formats. Many moved away from New York and many others in our parish fell asleep in Christ during the pandemic. And yet, thanks be to God, new people have joined and we continue to celebrate the longtime service of volunteer and paid workers as Redeemer continues forward in Christ’s mission making disciples for life, engaging the world with the Gospel of hope, and living the love of Christ in words and actions.

Submitted by Dien Ashley Taylor, Pastor

St. Mark’s Lutheran Church & School, Yonkers

St. Mark’s Lutheran Church has been called by the gospel to create a community of faith, hope, and love. Consecrated for this task by the Word of God and prayer, we engage in teaching, witness, works of mer-



cy, fellowship, and worship.

The last several years have presented a great many challenges, some related to the pandemic and other due to shifting demographics. We have risen to these challenges by developing online worship resources as well as experiments with Zoom bible studies and fellowship times. A great deal of effort has gone in to adapting the ministry of our parochial school to these new realities. Accessing the resources available through the federal Paycheck Protection Program helped us to continue with fewer disruptions than might have otherwise occurred.

Arts in Mission – NY, our family music outreach, has developed digital resources that have made it possible to reach out to the toddlers and their families of our community... and beyond.

As Covid restriction begin to loosen, St. Mark's is exploring the possibility of resuming a number of our community outreach efforts, including our annual Oktoberfest, an event which has been well received in the past.

We pray that the Holy Spirit, who has called us by the gospel, would continue to enrich us with his gifts, that St. Mark's might continue every more boldly to "engage the world with the gospel of hope."

Submitted by Robert Boehler, Pastor

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bronx

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church has been is ever thankful to God for the continued growth that He continues to bring to our congregation, both in faith and in hope for our future. As we closed the previous triennium preparing for a development project on our property, we began this past triennium with the challenging reality that the project would not be feasible. This created a concern for the congregation about financial sustainability, yet God remained gracious in providing for the needs of His people in the Bronx.

Throughout this quadrennium, our congregation navigated the COVID pandemic with online & outdoor worship services, thankful for God's continued grace in keeping His people. Though we mourned at the passing of those who were called unto the Lord because of the awful COVID-19 virus, we continued to look to God for His peace and healing as we returned to worship together. As opportunities for healing were made more available, the congregation began to return to regular worship.

In this past year, we have revitalized our Sunday School program, with a joyful presence of children and their families becoming more involved in the life of our congregation. Also, by God's grace and recognizing the economic struggles that many have faced, Trinity has joined together in partnership with The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour (Bronx) to continue serving in ministry and mission, which includes coming together to the support the work of Our Saviour Lutheran School. In this partnership, Trinity continues to serve a multi-generational parish, desiring to help be the "village" that raises up the children of the congregation and keep them engaged through different community groups that shape life as a "Family of Faith."

In the upcoming triennium, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church is looking forward to our new vision in the partnership with The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Our Saviour as we serve in new ways with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope. As a 'Family of Faith in the Castle Hill section of the Bronx,' Trinity continually gives thanks to God for His many blessings and for the ability to faithfully live the mission of our parish: "Trinity exists to receive and share God's gifts."

Submitted by Matthew Gonzalez, Pastor



Trinity Lutheran Church, Hawthorne

Trinity Church, throughout these challenging last years, continued to be a Gospel “hotspot” in Mid-Westchester, radiating the Good News of Jesus Christ and providing the welcoming ministry of Word and Sacrament in His Name to folks and families from surrounding localities and diverse backgrounds. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, in the words of our mission/vision statement, “is a caring family of faith, pilgrim people of the heavenly Father, which by His Word and Spirit, receives, celebrates and offers the unchanging Christ to a changing world.”

Much, of course, changed in our world during the course of the COVID pandemic, here as well in the “Sixth Borough” or “Golden Apple” (as we call it, right next to the “Big Apple”). Many of our church activities had to be curtailed or cancelled, but we were blessed in never having to close the church. Worship services were held every Sunday and holiday (yes, with capacity controls, masks and social distancing for many months). Virtual streaming of our services was also permanently added, on Facebook and YouTube, with local members joined by worshipers from across the country and around the globe.

Trinity marked her 125th Anniversary as a congregation in 2018-2019—right before the pandemic hit--with a full year of celebration, thanksgiving and remembrance. The year’s theme was “Built on the Rock—Christ Jesus Himself” from Matthew 16:18. An Anniversary Year Inaugural Service and Luncheon, with former pastor, the Rev. Christian Schonberg, as preacher, marked the start of the celebration, on Reformation Sunday, October 28, 2018. Capping the year was the 125th Anniversary Sunday held on Reformation Sunday, October 27, 2019, with our bishop, the Rev. Derek Lecakes as our preacher (and “congregational selfie photographer!). A festive catered luncheon and program followed. A number of special events filled the year, including a talent show, reunions of those baptized, confirmed and married at Trinity and a re-formulation of our vision statement.

Gains in new members have been modest, but steady each year. Young couples, with young children, are increasingly seen. Our Sunday School is alive and well, and delights the congregation with creative seasonal presentations (for a taste, see the Sunday School Christmas program from pandemic year 2020: <https://youtu.be/5FNmZPRJH1M>). First Communion, begun in the last triennium, continued in this one, with two classes of youngsters welcomed to His Table. Sunday Bible Fellowship, weekday Bible study groups and participation in the Believe and Being Challenges have been among the opportunities for growth in the faith for teens and adults.

A number of Trinity activities for growth, fellowship and outreach were held or returned, such as Vacation Bible School, bi-monthly pizza and movie nights, Rally Day, Blessing of the Pets, 9/11 Memorial, bi-yearly “Tag and Treasure” sales, Oktoberfest, Guild holiday fairs, Ascension Day Balloon Lift, Strawberry Festival, Hawthorne Day kiosk and Friendship and Narrative Communion Sundays. Others waylaid by the pandemic are being reactivated, including the Bell Choir, youth group, healing services, the men’s ministry and our Summer Book Club.

The congregation supports the church’s work-at-large through gifts and service opportunities, aided by mission Sundays, our annual October stewardship emphasis and a very active LWML-affiliated Trinity Guild. During this triennium we began sponsorship of a first, then a second Concordia, St. Louis seminary. Trinity is also an association congregation of the Lutheran Counseling Center, with which her pastor, Rev. Dr. David Elseroad, has served as a pastoral counselor and marriage and family therapist for



the last twenty years (and fifteen years at Trinity).

The Trinity Preschool, well-regarded in the community, has posted a waiting list each year for the much sought-after thirty places for three and four-year olds. We were delighted this triennium to see the addition of two certified Lutheran teachers to our preschool teaching staff.

Just recently Trinity Congregation rejoiced in the public recognition of our two new Atlantic District lay deacons, David and Christine DiLeo, both very active over the years in our parish's ministries and mission.

God's people at Trinity are looking to the future with renewed vision, imparted by the Spirit of the living God who calls us anew through Word and Sacrament to ever-stronger faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to bold witness to His Name here in mid-Westchester and beyond!

Submitted by David Elseroad, Pastor

Village Lutheran Church, Bronxville

"Knowing, Living and Sharing the Love of Christ" by the preaching of God's Word and Sharing of the Holy Sacraments while creating new and exciting programs in their lower Westchester campus is the focus of Village's ministry. While still grieving the closing of Concordia - New York, the church seeks to honor the memory of her alma mater, while also creating new partnerships as the "town and gown" congregation for Iona College Health Campus, (formerly Concordia College-New York). The church continues to provide neighborly assistance to The Wartburg-Mt. Vernon and the Lutheran Counseling Center (with counselors on-site).

With a growing mission endowment, the church has thankfully weathered the pandemic with the partnership of Lutheran Church Extension Fund and a successful Pandemic Relief appeal. With the assistance of LCEF, the church also completed a strategic plan called "The Clarity Plan" to emerge from the pandemic healthy and strong. The five-year plan will see the church and school celebrate milestone anniversaries while focusing activities around the pillars of worship, Christian education and evangelism.

Adding a ride-to-church program called "Lift", regular streaming of services from the sanctuary, a growing diaconate and a focus on Youth and Family Ministries are all additions this past triennium. The church and school continue to outreach to the community through AA and other community programs including a bereavement program for children and families.

The church's Chapel School, a pre-school 2 year old - 8th grade parochial school has sustained and grown enrollment, after an initial pandemic drop, and is being led by son-of-the-congregation, Michael Schultz, Principal and Maureen Butler, Preschool Director. The school, accredited with Middle States and Lutheran Schools Accreditation, continues excellence in education with an emphasis on student-led service learning and community building around Diversity and Inclusion.

Submitted by Robert Hartwell, Senior Pastor/Trustee

West Point

In 2019 Mike Colacicco continues to serve as our Preaching Station President, Gayle Colacicco is in charge of the Altar Guild and Reverend Rob Carter leads the worship services. The congregation continues to meet for worship at 10:30am on Sundays during the academic year, and in July and August to ad-



just to be able to offer services to the New Cadets during Cadet Basic Training out at Camp Buckner, and support Chaplains time during the week. Through coordination with LTC Ron Hasz Pastor Carter was able to participate in the march back with his daughter Bethany. Congregation at Atonement Lutheran Church participated in our Fall event, taking the Cadets out on the Hudson River in the Superintendents boat. Cadets and Families helped prepare the Chapel for Advent Services which was followed by pizza for lunch. During Advent we had soup suppers and Bible Study on Wednesday Nights. We participated in a Habitat for Humanity project with Cadets and members of the congregation in Poughkeepsie, New York. In the congregation went to the Post Bowling Alley for fellowship, wings and nacho's after the worship service. In February we recognized all of the Scouts in the congregation on Scout Sunday. The Spring Cadet led service was supported by Luke Rose, Hanna Dienes and Drew Bailey. Drew volunteered as an instructor for the Protestant Sunday School while he was a Cadet, Drew and Hannah were later married. Lutheran Ministry provided the only Protestant Ash Wednesday and Good Friday Services which continues to be the case through 2022. The congregation filled plastic eggs with candy and the Cadets and High School students set up the eggs used in the post Easter Service egg hunt in the playground next to the firehouse due to the area adjacent to the Old Cadet Chapel being repurposed to be able to accept graves. A Baccalaureate Service was offered at the end of the academic year for our graduating and commissioning Cadets. We had three students complete the instruction to be able to receive communion. Weddings were officiated for Richard and Luran Nehring, 11 FEB 2019, Erik and Samantha Hamilton, 27 April 2019 and Alice Nehring was baptized on 11 February 2019. Pastor Rob supported 9/11 service at Nyack Hospital, and prayers for Veterans Day and Memorial Day in Highland Falls. Pastor Carter was recognized for his Service in the Army Reserve as a Chaplain and received the US Army Chaplain Regimental Award of the Four Chaplains Medal.

In 2020 Pastor Carter was mobilized to support the response to COVID19 and served in New Orleans April –June. Worship services moved online and were completed using Microsoft Teams. LTC Ray Kimball completed the research and sourcing necessary so that we were able to have a hotspot in the Old Cadet Chapel to be able to continue to offer remote services during the period where in person attendance was discouraged. Both the Lent and Advent Bible studies were done online. Our social events were curtailed, we did not go out on the River or have a Bowling Event. When in person services were resumed we did not resume use of the common cup. There was no Chaplains time during Cadet Basic Training. Amos Lorne Fuerch was Baptized 12 JAN 2020. Pastor Rob supported 9/11 service at Nyack Hospital, and prayers for Veterans Day and Memorial Day in Highland Falls.

In 2021 there was no Chaplains time during the Cadet Basic Training, weekly worship services were supported. Summer Cadet Services were held in Eisenhower Theater. We stopped providing the option to view worship services online. Lent and Advent Bible Study remained online. In February we recognized all of the Scouts in the congregation on Scout Sunday. Spring Cadet led service was led by Branton Fletcher. Mike and Gayle Colacicco and Ray Kimball were recognized with the US Army Chaplain Regimental award of the Order of Aaron and Hur for their service to Lutheran Ministry at West Point. The retirement Ceremony for Pastor Carter from the Army Reserve was held after worship on August 31, 2021 with support from Bishop Derrick Lecakes and CH (LTC) Steven Hokana from LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces. He was recognized for 31(+) years of Army National Guard and Reserve Service as an Infantry, Medical Service Corps, and for the past 11 years as a Chaplain. Retiring as a CH(COL) awarded the Legion of Merit and the US Army Chaplain Regimental Award of the Order of St. Martin of Tours. Fellowship followed after the service at the West Point Club. Pastor Rob supported 9/11 service at Nyack Hospital, and prayers for Veterans Day and Memorial Day in Highland Falls.

In 2022 while COVID numbers have gone down and masks are no longer required we have continued



the practice of having separate wafer and juice cups available and use intinction with those taking our traditional communion. In February we recognized all of the Scouts in the congregation on Scout Sunday. We are able to have the post Easter service egg hunts between the parking area and the wall that borders the Chapel and cemetery property. Our Spring Service was led by Pastor Rob. We resumed both coming together for Bowling and a Spring Social this year. We currently have three students working through their first year of confirmation. Pastor Rob supported 9/11 service at Nyack Hospital, and prayers for Veterans Day and Memorial Day in Highland Falls. The Preaching Station began the LCEF and Atlantic District Reimagining Ministry program to look at who Jesus says we are, where He is directing us to go next so that continue to be intentional in how we witness His Grace, Peace and Mercy to the Cadets, Faculty, Staff and members of the community into whose lives we are invited to share.

Submitted by Robert Carter, Pastor

Circuit 6

Lutheran Church of St. John the Evangelist, Brooklyn

St. John the Evangelist Lutheran Church, Brooklyn has been in a pastoral vacancy since August 2020. However, we were blessed with an interim pastor from Oct, 2020 – Feb, 2021. Under his leadership, we revised our mission statement and renewed our desire to reach out to our community and “...put God’s love into action so that all people are welcomed to meet Jesus Christ through Word and Sacraments and community service.” During his tenure we were blessed with the commissioning of new deacons and a vicar who are all available on a regular basis. We thank God for the District’s care to see that we have our needs taken care of when an ordained minister is required.

While we transitioned to on-line worship during the height of the COVID pandemic, we have been meeting in person since July 2020 with several still joining us online every week. Our in-person attendance has climbed up to pre-COVID levels. We are struggling to continue to care for our vacant property and get it ready for opportunities to serve again. We anxiously await the time we can call a pastor and he can join us in mission and ministry.

Submitted by Kathy Witto, Director of Children’s Ministry

Saint Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Brooklyn

St. Peter’s will celebrate its 125th Anniversary in November, 2022. Blessings have always abounded in this Cypress Hills church founded in neighborhood homes long ago.

Pastor David Benke is approaching the time of service at St. Peter’s of Dr. Arthur Brunn (1904-1949), and is celebrating his 50th year of Ordination into the Holy Ministry in 2022. He is currently assisted by Vicars Henry Chanderdatt and Jose Pinedo-Whatts, plus Atlantic District Deacons Sonia Holder-Bowman, David Chanderdatt and Steven Rein, as well as long-time Director of School Clara DelValle.

During the Pandemic, St. Peter’s parish and neighborhood were ravaged by the Corona virus. Steps were taken to continue ministries, and live-streamed worship on Sundays and Wednesdays became a spiritual stronghold for prayer and contact. With a licensed day care center serving 80 Universal Pre-Kindergarten students on site and a staff of 17, great care has been taken to keep the facility and all policies in line with the NYC Department of Health.



As in-person worship is returning the congregation desires to live up to and into its mission – Reaching out with the Love of Jesus in thought, word and deed. There is much work to be done in the neighborhoods around St. Peter’s for the sake of the Precious Gospel.

Submitted by David Benke, Pastor

St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Brooklyn

Over this past triennium, the congregation of St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church of Canarsie, Brooklyn not only survived the COVID-19 pandemic, but was empowered to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in what were, for us, new and exciting ways.

Not long before the pandemic, in September A.D. 2019, we gathered on the day of St. Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist, to celebrate our 140th congregational anniversary. On that glad occasion we gave thanks to God in word, dance, and song for His gifts of Word and Sacrament, continuously shared among us here since 1879. We reminisced, and looked forward in faith. We celebrated the bilingual work which the Lord has raised up here, and the fruitful ministry of our full-time day school, Great Commission Christian School.

Just a few months later, we found ourselves facing the challenge most Christians around the world faced: how to continue ministry in a time of social isolation.

By God’s grace, the members of the Body of Christ at St. Matthew’s worked together to create a website (smlbrooklyn.com), a YouTube channel (SMP Brooklyn), and a weekly Bible study on Zoom to stay in touch and share worship online. Generous giving and a substantial grant from the LCEF helped provide the necessary tools for much of this work. Pastor Christoph Schulze and the congregation’s lay leaders worked together to make sure that mailings, telephone calls, and visitation when possible allowed members of our community to continue praying together, and worshipping while physically separated.

In the last year, our English-speaking congregation has had an average of 20 present for in-person worship on Sundays. Our online presentations continue to share Sunday services with those who cannot attend in person. The French-speaking congregation, led by Pastor Jean Gardy Cenat, has also bounced back to pre-pandemic attendance levels. In a joint-worship service of our groups on May 29th of this year, the French-speaking congregation celebrated the ninth anniversary of the founding of this ministry among us at St. Matthew’s. We give thanks to God for the tireless work of Pastor Cenat and his wife, Martine, and for the contributions of the Atlantic District Mission Society in supporting this work of reaching out to the growing number of French-speaking immigrants who reside in southern Brooklyn.

St. Matthew’s is richly blessed with faithful lay leadership. Deacon Urmatic Singh, Wayne Franklin, Sheryl and Esther Schulze, Sonia and Anil Singh, Jean Thomas, and other members have served to ensure that the work of church, school, and community outreach continues. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit continue to empower the people of God in our humble congregation to be nourished by His gifts of Word and Sacrament, and that we be increasingly willing to share the Gospel of Christ with those have not yet received this gift of grace.

The congregation is served by Pastor Christoph Schulze, who was ordained at St. Paul’s 22 years ago. The congregation also has a legacy of strong lay leadership, especially through the diaconal branch of the Church. Deacons Linda McKinley, Deochand & Basmatie Bhagwatprasad, Chandramah Yarly, Miriam Lamboy, Carmen Sewer, Peter Ajodhia, and Vernon Mukhlall have carried out vital work in visitation, community outreach, teaching, and assisting in leading worship.



In addition to the hymns and liturgical settings of our hymnal, Lutheran Service Book, we also sing songs drawn from the various traditions of our members: Black Gospel, West Indian, and Hispanic. These expressions of the Church catholic allow St. Paul's to offer a warm welcome to those from our very diverse community in Bushwick who come to experience what is going on at the corner of Knickerbocker Avenue and Palmetto Street.

We thank God for His faithfulness to our congregation over the decades, and we rejoice that we may continue to proclaim Christ crucified -- the very image of God's love for us -- at this time, in this place, where His peace is so needed.

Submitted by Christoph Schulze, Pastor

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Brooklyn

St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Bushwick, Brooklyn, is a vibrant and multicultural community focused on weekly gatherings around the Lord's Table and His life-giving Word.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck New York City, in March, A.D. 2020, we had to close our doors -- but just for a few months. By that summer, we were worshiping in person again, with all of the necessary safeguards in place to allow people to come back to church.

And, in the meantime, the Lord allowed our congregation to develop ways to keep in touch with members of the community electronically. Through a substantial grant from the LCEF and through generous offerings from several individuals, the St. Paul's purchased the equipment needed to allow people to participate in worship with us at SMP Brooklyn, on YouTube. We organized a weekly Bible study on Zoom, which was soon triple the size of our previous Wednesday night in person Bible study. The work of our faithful team of tech servants (Sam and Heidi Williamson, Elisa Singh, Jeremy Etwaroo, and Sheryl, Esther, and Lydia Schulze) helped make the weekly work on YouTube possible, and brought forth our congregation's first website, also: stpaulbklyn.com.

A highlight from these challenging days came last Advent, when, a grandfather living in South Korea was able to witness the Holy Baptism of Guinevere Rhee, his granddaughter, in a live YouTube broadcast from St. Paul's in Brooklyn!

Average weekly attendance on Sundays is now back to about 45, and the well-attended coffee hour after the service has resumed recently.

Submitted by Christoph Schulze, Pastor

True Light Lutheran Church, New York

True Light Lutheran Church exists to receive and share the hope of Jesus. We are a multicultural, multilingual congregation in Chinatown and Civic Center, Manhattan. True Light offers weekly worship serves in English and Chinese. Since 1936, True Light remains a vibrant center for Chinese Lutheran ministry and mission worldwide. Our life together revolves around the radiant light of Jesus who gives us his gifts and illumines us to share in love for our neighbors. During the pandemic, True Light extended its ministry in English and Chinese through technical upgrades and live streaming its worship services and offering online Bible studies and other ministry opportunities. The congregation is active in ministry and mission in Chinatown and beyond through various organizations and outreach activities and events. Over



these past four years, True Light has been served by Pastor Sean Daugherty, Vicar Kamba Fung, Pastor Erik Johnson, and now Pastor Joshua Hollmann. Both in Chinese and English, True Light continues to shine the light of Jesus in the heart of New York City.

Submitted by Joshua Hollmann, Pastor

Circuit 7

Evangelical Immanuel Lutheran Church, Whitestone

Immanuel, Whitestone celebrated her 125 years of ministry in 2020! A special celebration was held on October 2019 organized by the parishioners at Terrace on the Park.

Immanuel continue to grow with the vision of a mosaic ministry model towards living out our mission statement : “ Learning, Living and Sharing Christ’s Love with ALL”

We worship in four languages. Immanuel invests in identifying, raising and equipping leaders. In these three years, we have commissioned an Atlantic District Lay Deacon (Eunice Bailey); sent one residential seminarian (Allen Dass) , one residential DCE commissioned minister (Daniel Jakob) and two more students (Jerry and Ajil) entering theological studies through alternate route programs this Fall 2022.

In 2019 Fall, we have called Rev. Sean Chapman as our Associate pastor for our family and youth ministry. He also serves his dual call with Martin Luther School in Queens, NY

Immanuel is a Mosaic Ministry: Immanuel is an intergenerational, multicultural church that desires to share Christ’s Love with ALL.

Immanuel is a Missionary Church: Immanuel embraces Jesus’ words in Matthew 28, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Immanuel is an Equipping Church: Immanuel is a church rooted in the Lutheran heritage. We have various Bible learning opportunities to engage in evangelism, to teach the catechism, to meet in prayer, etc.

From March 2020 onwards we have adapted several new changes in our Sunday services due to the pandemic. Our online presence has broadened our reach beyond our community. We have faithful followers (virtual members) all over the US and some regulars from London, Leipzig, India, Nigeria and Kenya! Our worship attendance grew 120% because of our online service experiences.

We were worshipping 100% virtually from March 2020 - July 2020. We tried out door services for few months . Between Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 - we transitioned to gather alternative Sundays for in-person and virtual services. From 2021 Easter we have returned back to the pre-pandemic times and revived back to our regular ministry settings.

Our Language specific groups (Tamil , Mandarin and Hindi) continue to meet virtually.

Our Zoom Bible Study brings in people from various places to hear and learn the Word!

During Pandemic we were the first responders distributing around 10000 masks donated by one of our new believers from the Chinese community. We were assisting in delivering food for the first responders, hospital workers and police officers. We have close association with local civic association when it comes to reach out to the community. Pastor Johnson and Pastor Sean out in the community making themselves available for anyone in need of spiritual support.

Pastor Johnson and Sean led teams on a Reformation tour to Germany in October 2021, Holy Land Trip



in 2019 and a church planting exploration visit to Nairobi, Kenya in Spring 2022!

Immanuel's Mission House - the hospitality ministry has helped so many families to have a temporary stay during pandemic. We have received more than 100 guests over these three years and it has been a blessing to many. We have visitors from all the continents of the world

Since March 2020 - May 2021, at the height of the pandemic we were ringing our church bell at 7pm everyday as a call for prayer and sending prayers from the bell tower for those who are in need.

Since March 2020 we have created a telephone and Whatsapp prayer group. A group of intercessors comes together from Monday -Saturday and pray for various prayer requests. This has been a great blessing to many. It is still continuing.

Easter 2021 and Easter 2022 we were connecting with local civic association and led our community wide egg hunt. We have had 400 children come through. First of its kind for the kids for an in-person gathering after a year of pandemic restrictions. As a follow up, we had our VBS in our local park where we had children come from the community through our egg hunt connection with parents and families.

From 2019 -2022 we have baptized 23 people of which 18 are adults and 5 children.

Our pastors have officiated 6 weddings and 9 funerals between 2020 - June 2022.

Check us out: www.immanuelwhitestone.com

Submitted by Johnson Rethinasamy, Senior Pastor

Ev. Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Rego Park

Like many other churches in the inner city, Our Saviour experiences both challenges and successes.

We have a successful school that hosts 100+ pre-k students. Our school is in a financially healthy place, albeit, we serve as a non for profit organization which means we only keep a small percentage of what is made. One challenge has been bringing families from the school into the church. Since the school is hosted by the NYC Department of Health, there are limitations around how much we can share the Gospel. Likewise, having staff engaged in the evangelism process is a challenge since not all of our teachers are necessarily practicing Christians.

Our church is doing ok financially. This is on account of having numerous renters including two Indonesian churches as well as single event rentals through online platforms "Peerspace" and "Gigster." These rentals help to really sustain the operations of OSNY. Giving of the church on the whole is ok; some people are more generous than others, which is typically the case. One obvious challenge has been the drop in attendance due to Covid realities. We are not yet worshipping at the numbers we were experiencing prior to Covid. Prior to Covid, the average Sunday saw roughly 100 people. Since we reopened in Advent of 2021, we have capped out around 55 people. Operation costs for us are on the higher side because of the means in which we do ministry. Our building is fully equipped with technologies that need updating as well as internet connection. In addition, we pay hired musicians to join us in addition to our worship director. At this point in time, OSNY is not sustainable based on the tithes and offerings of the congregation.

Throughout this season of pandemic, we have continued with our weekly programming of Discipling Groups. We added an online component so that people who felt more comfortable worshipping from home could do so. These groups have experienced some growth with added members. Curriculum has focused on books of the Bible, Christian texts related to current cultural challenges, and viewing of "The Chosen." They have been a staple of mid-week fellowship and have helped us grow together. In addition,



we have a confirmation class with three students who will be getting confirmed this summer.

We have slowly brought back missional communities, which are essentially opportunities for people in the church to gather in a social setting for the sake of growing in intimacy. We aspire to be like the early church in the book of Acts who lived life together outside of just the worship setting. These missional communities have included Friday Night Dinners, Game Nights, Concerts, watching a game together. The casual social setting of these events advocates conversation and more of a personal touch that cannot really be achieved fully during the Sunday morning church setting.

We have also sought out opportunities to serve our community, both in our neighborhood and in the city. With the pandemic being under control, we have brought back family community events like the Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Candy Handout, Lights On Christmas Block Party, and family movie nights. These events are a way for us to try and serve our neighbors while inviting them to come and join us on a Sunday morning. Though they can be well attended, we still find it challenging to get those visitors into our church for a Sunday morning service. We are learning what it means to throw our seeds everywhere and pray that some of them will grow according to God's will in Christ.

Another major avenue of connection and service in our church has been our participation quarterly at the Bowery Mission. Every season for the past two years, we have sent a crew of church members to the Bowery Mission to serve homeless and hungry of the city. Not only is this a great opportunity for us to live out Jesus' words of feeding the hungry and caring for the meek, but it also helps us to grow together as a family in Christ who have been called to do collective good to our neighbors.

On the whole, I would say that the outlook of Our Saviour is bright. We, like many other churches, took a step back during this season of pandemic. With continued programming and evangelism efforts, however, I believe that we can get back to where we were before the pandemic and even surpass those numbers. We have found a model for ministry that is efficient and fruitful; the proof is in the continued new faces that we see, even as some old faces have left us. Our casual and contemporary approach to worship has broken down some barriers and reservations that people have about "traditional" worship. It has worked for us.

As we move forward as a ministry, we have a motto that we continue to say; "The Lord will provide." Just as Abraham spoke these words over Issac on Mount Moriah, we speak these words over our ministry. The Lord sustained us through the pandemic, and He will continue to do so now. We have experienced this reality through the renters and new faces we have seen over the past 6 to 8 months. As we put our own best efforts forth in doing ministry well, we also pray that the Lord would provide for all of our needs at OSNY and use our church as a beacon of light to the Queens community for decades to come.

Submitted by Anthony Forgione, Pastor

Resurrection Lutheran Church, Flushing

Resurrection has resumed in-person Worship. Masks are required in the sanctuary. We worship an average of 12 worshipers on Sundays.

We also had mid-week advent and Lenten Services. These are for both Resurrection and sister Parish St. John (Flushing). The services were held on Wednesday evenings alternating one week at Resurrection and the other at St. John.

Some of our elderly members are not comfortable returning to in-person worship because of underlining medical issues. However they maintain a close relationship with the congregation.



Even though the Parish experiences a deficit each year, the Parish is still financially viable because of savings and investments.

Looking to the future the Parish in conjunction with sister Parish St. John is currently in conversation with the District's mission Executive, Pastor Rethinsammy, about setting up a missionary outreach. These conversations and initial prospects looks promising.

Submitted by James Gajadhar, Pastor

St. John Lutheran Church, Flushing

St. John has resumed in-person Worship. Masks are required in the sanctuary. We worship an average of 20 worshipers on Sundays.

We also had mid-week advent and Lenten Services. These are for both St. John (Flushing) and sister Parish Resurrection (Flushing). The services were held on Wednesday evenings alternating one week at St. John and the other at Resurrection.

Some of our elderly members are not comfortable returning to in-person worship because of underlining medical issues. However they maintain a close relationship with the congregation.

Even though the Parish experiences a deficit each year, the Parish is still financially viable because of savings and investments.

Looking to the future the Parish in conjunction with sister Parish Resurrection is currently in conversation with the District's mission Executive, Pastor Rethinsammy, about setting up a missionary outreach. These conversations and initial prospects looks promising.

Submitted by James Gajadhar, Pastor

St. John Lutheran Church, Glendale

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church enjoys both challenges and blessings.

Since our school closed in 2014 we have been blessed by the presence of a consistent tenant, Central Queens Academy Charter School. That arrangement has allowed us to pay off debt, restore our organ, renovate our parsonage, and complete long deferred maintenance projects on both our church and school buildings. Unfortunately our tenant is due to leave us this summer. Despite this uncertainty we have also managed to save some money so that a vacancy will not put us at a financial disadvantage in the near term.

Despite our relative financial security St. John's does struggle with lower attendance and membership numbers. While we do not aim to make numbers in worship on Sunday our main goal, it is concerning to be serving so few people in a borough that houses two and a half million people. To that end we have focused on a few things to better serve our membership and our neighbors.

During the pandemic we introduced the practice of Morning and Evening Prayer according to the orders of worship listed in the prayer book "For All The Saints" (published by the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau). The liturgical texts in the prayer book do not include music (though they are assuming melodies from the Lutheran Book of Worship, a resource our congregation is not familiar with), so we commissioned musician and rostered church worker Blake Flattley to write the music for us. On the first Wednesdays of each month—and during Advent and Lent—we gather on Zoom for Morning and Eve-



ning prayer. This gathering for prayer has been an immense blessing for our congregation. Upwards of 66% of our Sunday attendance joins for Morning and Evening Prayer (with an average being somewhere around 40-50%).

Another emphasis we made during the pandemic was Christian education/bible study. On the Wednesday evenings we are not meeting for Morning and Evening Prayer we gather on Zoom for bible study. We have found the percentages of Sunday attenders to be similar for bible study (anywhere from 33–66% with an average around 45-50%). We have studied The Small Catechism, Revelation, Ezekiel, “How To Read the Bible,” and we are currently in St. John’s gospel.

Finally, in the spring and summer of 2021 we planted an urban farm on our school property. Our farm-garden was designed by Nature Based, a small business in Brooklyn which specializes in creating innovative yet feasible ecological systems. We are excited about this mission-fit project that plans to share its harvest with our neighbors. Our goal is to grow nutrient-rich and sustainable food to share for free with our neighbors. Last year we grew and gave away distinct varieties of over a dozen different kinds of fruits and vegetables and we also planted apple trees, blueberry and blackberry plants, paw paw trees, and a peach tree that we hope will produce in the seasons to come. This year we have already harvested peas, arugula, spinach, kale, lettuce, and radishes. Over the course of the summer we plan to grow and harvest eight different varieties of tomatoes, six varieties of peppers, three different kinds of blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, eggplants, beans, carrots, onions, garlic, and more! When the growing season hits its peak we will be outside every Sunday after church offering a free farmers’ market for our neighbors.

We were inspired to start this project due to our rich history with feeding our neighbors. Our longtime parish deacon, Ernie Grimes, has a food pantry ministry with his wife and years ago St. John’s offered a hot breakfast on Sunday mornings. The food insecurity already present in our neighborhood was exacerbated by the pandemic and we found the farm-garden to be a great opportunity to serve.

The thing that sustains everything we do at St. John’s (and certainly anything we happen to do well) is the gospel. We believe the gospel of Jesus is the Lutheran distinctive that we have to offer other Christians and beyond: “To be Lutheran means to stand for a certain point of view or attitude concerning the central teaching of the church. To be Lutheran means to elevate the Gospel, the good news of God’s great work of rescuing men from death for life, accomplished by the atoning work of Jesus Christ and imparted through the presence of the Holy Spirit.” [1] The gospel which rescues us from death for life frees us to minister and love our neighbor. We have challenges and blessings (and blessed challenges!) at St. John’s, but whatever it is we find ourselves doing we will aim to elevate the gospel. People need the gospel. If we do nothing else we will give people the gospel (and a bag of fresh produce).

Note

[1] Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *The Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn*, vol. 2, ed. Philip J. Secker (Mansfield: cec, 2007), 195.

Submitted by Matthew Staneck, Pastor



CONGREGATIONAL REPORTS: REGION THREE

Circuit 8

The Life Lutheran Church, Old Westbury

Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Reverently.

Joyfully.

Together.

The state of THE LIFE Lutheran Church of Old Westbury is strong. Like other churches, we have face significant challenges in finding ways to adapt our ministries to serve in a pandemic world. The last half of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022 have seen THE LIFE ramping our ministries back up to full force since the restrictions we faced with the COVID crisis have mostly been lifted. We are welcoming people back in-person to church in full force and our ministries have transitioned from meeting from a distance to gathering once again in-person.

From the moment the COVID crisis began to affect Europe, THE LIFE has been preparing to adapt and adjust the ways in which we can continue to serve the people of God at THE LIFE with the Good News of Jesus Christ. The ministry team sprung into action developing high quality live-streams and a schedule of services that proclaimed the Good News of Christ six days a week while people were locked down and unable to attend in person worship. Even at times when COVID struck our community the mitigating factors we had in place enabled us to continue our engagement of God's Word. For six months straight, the people of THE LIFE could join us from a distance six nights a week for music, the Word, a biblically based message and prayers. This proved to be very effective as people from all over our community, across the country and the globe joined us simultaneously for our nightly and Sunday services.

When we couldn't gather in person or were limited in the number of people who could attend for safety reasons, we developed an easy and effective sign-up system to attend in person. For those who were joining from a distance THE LIFE put together home engagement boxes, designed after the ever-popular home subscription boxes to bring the Word into their homes for Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. For each season teams of people from the church designed, assembled, and delivered these boxes to over 275 families for each church season. Thankfully, all restrictions have been lifted for 2022 but the home engagement box ministry has continued due to their effectiveness and by popular demand.

With the shift in the way we are church in these challenging times we were able to keep our Dayschool open and our licensed school continues to thrive at full capacity and beyond with a waiting list. Our Men's and Women's ministries, Sunday School, ESL program, local feeding programs, Confirmation and Youth ministries have all survived and are back to meeting in full force and are seeing some of their best days coming out the other side of the pandemic.

We continue to be a training church actively raising up leaders for the church through a strong mentoring program utilizing the lay-deacon program and the Synod's SMP program. This has also enabled us to support vacant churches and fill empty pulpits. Currently, we have five Deacons, with two additional Deacons about to be installed at THE LIFE in the next months. We have four Pastors and one Vicar, with



one more Vicar about to begin his seminary training this August. All of these Pastors have been raised up out of the membership of THE LIFE and are engaged in active Pastoral formation programs with local mentoring and didactic training through Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis.

Currently, THE LIFE offers four Bible studies, three weekly and one monthly with an average attendance of 28 people per study.

The membership continues to grow and throughout the pandemic we were blessed to welcome many new people into our community through the various adaptations we made to engage people during some of the darkest moments of our recent history. Worship attendance is strong and growing. We view the year of 2020 and the first half of 2021 as an anomaly, but we have seen strong growth with an increase in our weekly worship attendance growing over 45% from 2019 through the first quarter of 2022.

Average weekly worship attendance (not including special worship services):

2019 211

2020 316 (mostly due to simultaneous online engagement)

2021 307

2022 332 (Quarter 1)

Church membership continues to increase with over 550 baptized members.

New Members

2019 35

2020 0 No new member classes due to pandemic

2021 30

2022 30 New member Sunday June 26, 2022

Financially, giving has increased in line with attendance numbers.

In March of 2022, THE LIFE launched LIFE For Ukraine, a mission project that supports Ukrainian refugees fleeing to Romania. Currently we are housing 150 women and children in three different centers in Constanta, Romania. Additionally, we are sending food, medical and other supplies into Ukraine on a weekly basis and continue to support Lutheran Pastors in their service in Ukraine. We have partnered with Lutheran Churches in Germany to whom we are sending women and children for longer term housing and support. All of this is made possible by myriad donations from generous churches, individuals and organizations who are actively supporting our efforts of mercy. LFU has also received extensive media coverage of the mission and has been featured on News12, Fox5, Pix11 and CBS. THE LIFE takes great pride in our ongoing global support of such a devastating circumstance occurring in Eastern Europe.

All of these ministries are supported by over 220 people who serve the church in various ways that develop a strong team of people. Our 14 member church council is filled with dedicated and talented professionals who lead, guide and administrate the church in coordination with our ministry staff striking the ever important balance of fiscal and compliant administration all while keep our mission focus at the forefront of all our decisions.



THE LIFE is truly thankful to God through the presence of the Holy Spirit to continue to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. The body of Christ in Old Westbury seeks to continue to live out that mission reverently, Joyfully and Together with all Praise and Glory to God.

Submitted by Justin Vetrano, Senior Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Hicksville

Trinity has been holding its own these past three years during the pandemic. In-person worship attendance is down from what it was three years ago. But in the midst of the pandemic, a new ministry arose. Trinity's members invested in video equipment to Live Stream our worship services. This was brand new to Trinity and now we regularly have members and guests worship with us locally and from around the country and the world.

Our K-8, school has been holding its own as well. There has been a slight decline in numbers compared to pre-Covid registration. The financial strain that the pandemic has put on families, impacted enrollment. Nonetheless, we have maintained. Our Early Childhood Center has remained strong. Our day-care remains open in a community that has great need of child care.

Trinity's Comfort Dog Ministry has grown. We have had such interest from the community requesting Abraham Comfort Dog to make a visit that we added a second dog to the ministry, Beloved. Despite Covid, the need to provide comfort to a hurting world is desperately needed. Trinity recruited and sent a second dog handling team to be trained at Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) in Chicago. LCC coordinates the ministry on a national level. Beloved Comfort Dog and her handlers will officially be installed as part of the Trinity's Comfort Dog Ministry on June 26. Our Comfort Dog teams travel all over the state and have made visits in the surrounding states as well. Feel free to request a visit should you have need. Find us on Facebook, Abraham Comfort Dog & Beloved Comfort Dog.

Like many a congregation that has been affected by this pandemic, we continue to give God the glory in all things.

Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Submitted by John Hopkins, Senior Pastor

Circuit 9

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, Holbrook

St. John's in Holbrook has had a very lively four years since the last convention. We have welcomed many new members and incorporated them into the life of our church. Our midweek Bible Study attendance has increased to over 25 while confirmation classes has increased 9 in each grade. We thank God for growth in faith and the desire to hear His Word. Meanwhile our nursery school is filled to capacity and we have had to use space in another building to allow for greater enrollment.

While we share the challenges common to all churches in our region, we praise the Lord for his continued blessings and pray for more opportunities to reach our community.

Submitted by George Kirkup, Pastor



St. John Lutheran Church, Sayville

Over this past triennium, St. John's has been blessed through the preaching of God's Word and reception of God's precious gifts through the Sacraments of His Holy Church. Our congregation has been afforded further opportunities to study the Word through the years as well. We have shared our blessings by helping to meet the needs of those in our community through food baskets which are distributed at various points in the year, as well assistance at the local soup kitchen. Thanks to the blessing of our gym, our basketball program continues to be a wonderful way to welcome the community into our church. Our music program continues with choir and handbells for all ages. As a congregation, we are continuing to grow together in our lives of faith, and in love for one another, while drawing new members into our flock.

In 2022, we celebrate 125 years of God's blessings and look forward to a year of festivities. Beyond this, we also pray that we may continue to remain faithful doing this work which our Lord has led us to do, and to live faithfully under his blessing, knowing that our Lord is always faithful to us in Christ.

Submitted by Brian Noack, Minister of Religion

St. Luke Lutheran Church, Dix Hills

Throughout the past four years, Gospel has continued to be preached at St. Luke and the sacraments administered. I will say that the congregation has been very supportive and cooperative, especially following COVID guidelines, during the last four years. I especially want to acknowledge the support of St. Luke Church Council, the call committee, and the COVID Return to Operations Committee. We continue to worship in person and via livestream.

It certainly has been a rollercoaster ride since the last District Convention. Pastor Roy Minnix accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church in Richmond Virginia in December of 2018. Since that time, Pastor Thomas Cusanelli has shepherded the church until June 5, 2022, when the church called and installed the Reverend Thomas Johnson as Pastor.

2019 was a successful year. Our preschool was at near capacity. Our Sunday School and Confirmation programs were well attended. We had a successful summer camp and VBS. Through these programs the congregation reached with Gospel and some families began to worship at St. Luke.

Then COVID hit. St. Luke in person attendance was held in abeyance and services were broadcast on Facebook and YouTube. We returned to outside in person worship on St. Luke's great lawn on Sundays and Wednesday night beginning the first Sunday in July, with COVID protocols in place. We returned to inside worship in September while observing New York State protocols until September of 2021 when COVID protocols were relax and we went back to our usual worship schedule and liturgies. Our attendance has increased with each Sunday.

Our preschool program was virtual for the remaining school year of 2020. The 2020-21 school year was in person with New York State Office of Children and Family Services guidelines in place throughout the year. The 2021-2022 the preschool rebounded and was at near capacity (approximately 150 children) with applicable COVID restrictions in place.

Summer Camp and VBS were very well attended for the 2020 and 2021, with over 150 children in attendance each year in both programs. These programs were all outside.



In 2022, Jackie Flynn was formally called as the Director of Youth and Family ministries. Under her leadership all our youth and young adult programs have grown. She has been able to link and build God pleasing relationships between the preschool, camp, VBS and families. Families are now worshipping at St. Luke.

Director Flynn has enhanced community outreach programs such as Trunk or Treat, Thanksgiving Baskets, and Easter baskets. She has worked with the pastor as they have developed innovative worship for Advent and Lenten Wednesdays.

St. Luke set apart three new deacons in addition to deacons already serving St. Luke. Those new deacons are, Thomas Lamendola, Ilene Franzmann, and Paul Rafuse.

In the next triennium we hope to enhance St. Luke's vision and better to serve not only this congregation but all people. We look forward to developing new disciples as our ministry grows. We look forward to many years of blessed ministry for Pastor Johnson as he leads our congregation forward in faith. God continues His plans and His work for the Kingdom here at St. Luke through his Word and Sacrament as well as through his baptized servants who live out their baptisms as they serve their families, communities, and St. Luke.

May the new triennium be blest for St. Luke and St. Luke saints!

Submitted by Thomas Cusanelli, Associate Pastor

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Amityville

I have served as St. Paul's interim pastor since August 2020 and as the circuit visitor of circuit 9 for the same time.

During that time we have experienced many challenges for our ministry aside from covid. Our organist of 40 years died unexpectedly as also our vice president. However, by God's grace,

the folks at St. Paul's are resilient and display a strong and confident faith in their Lord for the present and future!

We are currently identifying potential organists for that position in addition to exploring options for calling a full-time pastor.

Despite those challenges, we thank God for the many joys He has bestowed on us!

We continue to provide mid-week and Sunday services with Word and Eucharist. It's using streaming methods to reach out to homebound members and the cyber community

Our outreach includes the Samaritan Purse, Providing food baskets during the Holidays for individuals and local food pantries. In addition, we conduct evangelism events for children in our area like VBS, Trunk and Treat at Halloween and Easter.

We are currently planning outdoor events for the community which is comprised of concerts and worship services.

Our church has become a member of the Amityville Chamber of Commerce. Our Ladies Aid Society has received their charter with LWML.

Our congregation was established in 1930. We look forward to continuing to serve our community



as a beacon of hope, hospitality, healing and love as we proclaim the Good News of Jesus through word and deed!

Submitted by Kenneth E Schnepf Jr., Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Islip

Trinity Lutheran, on the South Shore of Islip Long Island New York, is the miracle that by God's grace, continues to thrive on the corner of Nassau Ave. and Union Blvd. Having just celebrated our 95th Anniversary this past February, we have also begun to look ahead to our 100th Anniversary on February 6, 2027.

Like so many others, if not all, the last two and a half years have been a challenge like the church has never faced before. From a pandemic, to racial discord, to political unrest, to changes in the life of our members, keeping the flock together has been difficult. Yet hard times produce opportunities and Trinity, by the Grace of God, has faced these challenges with a sense

of hope and through the eyes of the Cross. Our Pastor, the Reverend Michael Staneck, along with our Commissioned Minister of Religion, DCE Christopher Boccalupo have worked tirelessly together, along our other staff, our Deacons, our Church Council and our members, to keep our mission alive. Trinity exists to regularly RECEIVE God's gifts through worship in our church and homes, SHARE the Good News of Jesus with the community GATHER with other Christians and Equip the believers to SERVE our Lord.

One area that has sustained tremendous energy is one that came out of necessity. We are proud to say that we never missed one week of service, from that original week when we were all asked to quarantine and isolate at home. Week one, thanks to the quick work of our staff and members, Trinity transitioned to a virtual service that remains to this day. We offered communion in the parking lot as soon as we were able, and returned in person quickly in the late spring, early summer of 2020. For the safety of all members we practiced social distancing, wore masks and increased our home visits and phone calls. We conducted Bible studies virtually, until we believed safe in person. Our youth continued to meet outside during the Summer of 2020. By the Fall we welcomed back our Sunday school children and families, resumed virtual and in person Confirmation classes, and gathered our youth group back together in doors. Though Vacation Bible school had to be suspended for 2020, VBS returned with some restrictions in 2021 and is now fully ready for 2022. Even our Golf outing after stepping out in 2020, returned with success last year and will continue on as we go forward. All of this has occurred, while being mindful of those around us with medical concerns and differing places of comfort.

This most recent Pentecost, we Confirmed and brought into membership, 13 boys and girls, that included an 18 year old Islip Senior, who worked diligently to complete his studies. We also that same day brought others into membership before the congregation through Profession of Faith and Transfer. All of this occurred a couple of weeks after we gathered some 200 adults and children, celebrated our strength together in Christ, with a Parking Lot Barbecue and Party. Much of what was offered was gathered through donations from local businesses and the hard work of volunteers.

Trinity Lutheran Pre-school has also faced similar challenges to the church these past two and a half years, which has included as well more government funding of public Pre-K programs in our area. With the dedication, tireless work ethic of our Director, Diane Prudente and her capable and loving staff, our school has not just maintained these past few years, but continues to grow.



As this report is being written, our 2's and 3's programs currently have a waiting list and our 4's, for the Fall of 2022, even with the increased public school competition, has remained strong.

Again like many other churches in our District, we have suffered great losses over these past few years. A number of established and involved members were called to their Eternal Glory,

especially in 2020. Other members and families have still not felt entirely comfortable returning to in person worship. Still other families have either walked away from the church all together or have moved away due to the high cost of living on Long Island. This last point also draws the parent and grandparent of these families away, on a more regular basis.

Certainly all of this puts a strain on the budget and volunteers.

As we go forward for the rest of the year and beyond, we will continue to be intentional with, our interaction to our members of all ages, our involvement with our pre -school families and our interaction with our community. Yet always mindful where the Hope is found, how the work is

accomplished and setting our minds on the things above, as St. Paul reminds us to, "Press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14)

Therefore with The Day of Pentecost still fresh in our minds, we go forth armed with the Power of the Holy Spirit, to not take for granted what God has planted here in Islip, this Miracle on the corner of Nassau and Union.

In His Name

Trinity Lutheran, Islip

Submitted by Michael Staneck, Pastor

Circuit 10

Christ Lutheran Church, East Moriches

Christ Lutheran Church continues to serve the Eastern end of Long Island. With members throughout Suffolk County (from Islip to Peconic) our congregation covers one of the largest regional areas in the Atlantic District.

The CV had absolutely no effect on our congregation health-wise. We resumed worship on Ascension Day, 2020, the day after the State announced that Churches could resume gathering. We have not stopped since.

Prior to May, 2020 the congregation utilized live video streaming for the Service of the Word. We continued simulcasting until Advent, 2020. By that time all of our members had returned to public worship.

Our Sunday School continues to grow. We went Virtual through the summer of 2020 resuming in September, 2020.

We conducted our VBS program during July,2020 using a "pick-up package" that contained lessons,



crafts and activities for the week in well packed, attractive boxes. We had multiple requests for boxes from non-members as well. Our Christian Education Board decided that instead of using video-- which most of the children endured during the School Year-- to go this route and give them a break from their long days of Zoom classes. July, 2021 VBS was in person and we had 20 children participate.

We displayed all of the projects after church the following Sunday for the congregation to see as they walked through our Undercroft. Most of the Children brought their crafts in for this event.

We continue to have three services each weekend (one on Saturday and two on Sunday). We also have a Matins Service each Wednesday, joining in song and prayer for the past 31 years here at Christ.

We continue to meet in person and have suspended all video coverage of our services.

Our Food Pantry remains one of the strongest on the East End of Long Island serving many who are in need.

Our choir remains intact and has sung every Sunday since we returned to in-person worship without any incident or issues with CV. We never stopped singing hymns in our worship. While being cautious, we must never forget the One Whom we worship protects His own with His angels. It's time to believe that Word we hear each week!

During CV Pastor Fleischmann did a nightly devotion on Facebook for members and non-members of our congregation alike. These devotions have brought several families into our church, especially from Churches who did not meet for over a year due to fear.

The Lord has blessed us greatly in these ways.

Submitted by John Fleischmann, Pastor

Emanuel Lutheran Church, Patchogue

Emanuel Lutheran Church and School is located on the South Shore of Long Island, about 60 miles west of New York City. The church has a rich history which started worshipping in 1912.

During the past four years, the church has been in transit. Three years ago, Pastor Norbert Folwaczny accepted a call to the Southeast District. Emanuel Lutheran School, which served the community since 1957, closed its doors. Our Minister of Music, Kevin Warnkin, was called to glory on Easter Sunday 2021 during our Easter morning worship service.

We continue to do the Lord's work. Led by the Elders and visiting Pastors we continue having our three weekend worship services. Bible studies, new member classes, baptisms, outreach to the community and our weekly soup kitchen keeps us busying doing the Lord's work. Our New York State Certified pre-school and early education center has stayed open and currently we have 34 children enrolled.

Emanuel Lutheran Church and School resides on Main Street in Pachogue Village in a thriving community, prime for outreach. Nurturing and retaining the current members while reaching out to the community with God's love is challenging without a full-time Pastor.

Our prayer is that by God's grace, Emanuel would be revitalized so that the mission and ministry of Jesus will be advanced. To God be the Glory!

Submitted by James Davis, Congregation President



Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Middle Island

Since the convention, Holy Trinity has been blessed abundantly by the Grace of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit. From 2017 to 2019, during an interim period after the retirement of Pastor Bruce Nathan, the church enjoyed the shepherding of Pastor Ken Schnepf. During this period, Pastor Schnepf served the church on Sundays and Wednesdays, providing Word and Sacrament as well as overseeing Bible studies. The congregation was nurtured through Pastor Schnepf's warm and loving personality, while also being stretched in new directions.

This was a period of sustaining the congregation at a time when families had grown and moved away or began worshipping in other Lutheran churches or non-denominational settings. In November 2019, Vicar David Santos, an SMP Vicar in the Spring 2020 Cohort was placed at Holy Trinity under the supervision of Pastor David Wackenhuth, District Vice President and Region 3 Circuit Visitor. Vicar Santos took the helm as a full-time, sole vacancy Pastor on January 1, 2020.

The onset of Covid in New York state challenged all churches mightily and Holy Trinity was not immune. Through a concerted effort by Vicar Santos and a willingly stretched congregation, the church closed its doors for a total of just 6 Sundays. During those six weeks, bible studies, services, and administrative meetings were immediately hosted online. Additional efforts such as auto-dialer enabled, and daily phone calls kept members connected and inspired with God's Word and devotions. Several members with tech-savvy tendencies assisted those unfamiliar members to enable Zoom, YouTube, Facebook, and other electronic media tools as needed. In all, the congregation embraced the challenge and the opportunity it presented. With appropriate safety protocols in place for the good of all, HTLCNY reopened its doors to in-person worship in late May 2020. In May 2021 all covid-related protocols were made voluntary on the part of parishioners. Full and open worship has carried on since and will continue, God willing until Christ's return.

Throughout the pandemic, HTLCNY enjoyed stable and even above-average financial giving. Additional mechanisms were added to those which pre-existed to ensure supporting the church was simple no matter the donor's age or technical prowess. No deficit was ever recorded and giving remains strong according to the needs of the church. The PPP program was applied for, granted, and utilized as needed. The repayment forgiveness made important updates to the facility more cost-effective.

The year 2021 saw growth among some younger families as well as through older individuals and couples who've been smitten by the warm and friendly congregation known as "Church in the Pines". Thus far in 2022, there has been additional growth during our Sunday services and in the participation in our Sunday School. The outdoor "Chapel in the Pines" located on the property has already been used for 11 am services. Additional pews and updated sound equipment is being added making the area multifunctional for VBS, Music, and Speaking events.

2022 and beyond are very promising for HTLCNY. The church is experiencing joy in the solid foundation of our Lutheran foundation in Word and Sacrament and seeing new people coming to our worship, with a hunger for truth and Bible-based teaching which they were not getting elsewhere. The congregation is alive and buzzing with enthusiasm for projects inside and outside the church walls.

Submitted by David Santos, Vicar



Messiah Lutheran Church, East Setauket

Much change has occurred in the life of the congregation at Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church in the last four years. In 2018, Pastor Charles Bell and Pastor Alfred Hofler retired as senior and associate pastor after 21 and 41 blessed years of service to Messiah, respectively. Pastor Stephen Unger became the interim pastor at Messiah in 2018. In 2020, Pastor Nils Niemeier was called to Messiah as senior pastor, and Pastor Unger was asked to stay with Messiah as associate pastor. The two work to share pastoral duties and responsibilities.

Like so many other congregations in the Atlantic District, Messiah weathered the storm of COVID over the last two years and has faced some challenges because of it. We thankfully did not lose any of our members to COVID, though we did lose several to old age and other maladies. Among them, sadly, was our founding pastor, Rev. Henry Koepchen, who died on April 12, 2021. A gift from his estate helped see us through that year.

During the worst of COVID, we strove to keep better connected to our people through improved digital communications, and focused on developing streamed versions of our Sunday services to better bring church to our members during lockdown and the months following. As part of this work, we installed two high-resolution cameras and a broadcasting system in our choir loft. We also replaced our existing microphone system to better accommodate both the in-person service and the broadcast. We also updated our church office to have new computers with up-to-date software, allowing us to better serve the congregation.

Additionally, we created a YouTube channel for Messiah, updated our church website, and increased the use of our Facebook page. We have continued streaming services for the benefit of those of our congregation who cannot leave their homes and for others far-afield. This and other efforts have brought a number of new attendees and families to us. The increase in communication has also resulted in a weekly e-newsletter. Thanks to digital communication, we were able to continue teaching Sunday school, confirmation, and Bible studies during the pandemic, and have continued them in in-person and hybrid forms. The Wednesday night Bible study consists of a sequential read-through of the Scriptures, while the Thursday night Women's Bible Study covers special topics.

In 2021, we started a new confirmation curriculum (Enduring Faith, from Concordia Publishing House) with our confirmands. With the new curriculum, we also started preparing our fifth, sixth, and seventh graders for first communion prior to confirmation, admitting them to the Lord's Supper for the first time at the 2022 Vigil of Easter.

The Messiah Church Council decided to close our preschool and daycare in 2021 due to a major decrease in enrollment. This was due to both COVID and increased competition from free public preschools. We are now using the space formerly occupied by the preschool to continue to teach and form disciples of Christ in other ways, and are using it for social events as well.

We continue to do outreach within the Three Villages community, supporting a local food bank as well as Lighthouse Mission (with whom we partnered for a rather successful coat drive), and other local charities. Our LWML chapter is quite active with Lutheran World Relief, and they assemble personal care, school, and baby care kits for people in need around the world at their monthly meetings. We have also begun working with the Interfaith Center at Stony Brook University to reestablish a campus ministry and better serve the student body there.

We continue to hold services on Sunday mornings at 9:00 and 10:45 AM with children's Sunday school concurrent with the early service during the school year, and at 9:30 during the summer months. We were



blessed to have installed a new digital sign at Messiah in January 2022 so that we can better share events and church information with passersby and the surrounding community.

We give thanks to God for all the blessings we have received these past four years at Messiah, and we trust in Him to lead us through the next as we continue to grow together in faith, hope, and love in East Setauket.

Respectfully submitted,

Submitted by Nils Niemeier, Senior Pastor

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Aquebogue

It is a pleasure to serve Jesus! All thanks and praise to Him for His grace, mercy and favor!

Like everyone else, we have had our highs and lows with the corona virus pandemic. We are thankful to Jesus for the sense of normalcy He is providing as we return to worship as we previously knew it.

As a congregation, we practice “Gospel Seeds for Human Needs”. This means we open our facility for use by the local community to meet their needs. We currently serve a private school. Six months out of the year we house the homeless through Maureen’s Haven homeless outreach. Twelve months out of the year we host a food pantry. During the school year, we meet the needs of families by providing an After School Care program.

As it should be, the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus is the focal point of all we do. It is our goal to disciple people and walk with them as they come to know Jesus and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, believe in Him.

May Jesus continue to bless His bride, the Church. May all of our sister congregations know Jesus’ blessings and strength in the ministry of the Gospel!

Submitted by Charles Byer, Pastor



























