



# TRINITY NEWS

Special Church Council Edition

## POSTPONED CHURCH COUNCIL

Brothers and sisters – what a year this has been! We have taken the pandemic one week at a time, hoping that things would improve. We do now seem to have a light at the end of the tunnel with increased vaccinations, but we do not know when it will be safe to have groups meet indoors.

We are required in our bylaws to hold an annual Church Council meeting, which “shall be held on the second Sunday in November of each year, or at an alternate date chosen by the Church Board.” The defined quorum is 24, or twice the number of people on the Church Board. Based on advice from the PEC, our board decided to postpone the meeting until January, with the current board and budget “frozen in place.” We had to again postpone the proposed January meeting.

The board has decided to move forward with a VIRTUAL CHURCH COUNCIL, mailing the material, reports, and nominations (what you are now reading!) to every household, allowing a week for additional nominations “from the floor” and then proceeding with a “vote by phone.”



## State of the Church

*By Pastor John Jackman*

This past year, we have gotten so tired of certain words and phrases – “unprecedented, historic, uncertain times,” and certainly “abundance of caution.” Certainly no one living today has experienced what COVID-19 brought us – and brought the church. Who would have dreamed way back in March of 2020 that the church building would be closed for a full YEAR? Not even the most pessimistic among us. Yet here we are!

So this report could be like an encyclopedia volume if we covered every aspect that was unusual in 2020. I hope to keep it short and focused on the major issues – I won’t reiterate what everyone already knows.

Our last “in-person” service in the sanctuary was March 15, 2020. We scrambled to convert to entirely virtual services. We were way ahead of many other Moravian Churches in this, since we have been webcasting for many years. This was a very rough time for many churches. It wasn’t easy for us, either – but since my home office is a video production company, we certainly had an advantage! With the arrival of Holy Week only a couple of weeks out, we were also blessed that the Interprovincial Board of Communications had just come out with a full set of hymn recordings for the Holy Week services – the hand of God was on that. With a small team of choir members and volunteer readers, we were able to record and edit Holy Week reading services and have

them available. And so we have continued week by week through the year. Some of those online services have been memorable and effective. We began to include as many people as possible, including the youngsters through our weekly “Children’s Chat.” That Children’s Chat is possibly the best idea I have ever had in my years of ministry – it is certainly one of the high spots of my week!

We set up a Zoom account and pretty quickly started to have Sunday School meet via Zoom every Sunday morning.

We have held some in-person events as it was deemed safe. The Sunday School classes held a successful shredding event. We have had a couple of Zoom meetings with the LOGOS children, and had one in-person LOGOS get-together on the lawn. In the fall, as weather allowed, we held a number of “Laurel Ridge” style Vespers services on the lawn – Roman Brady led these with singing around a fire ring. We will probably start these again as it warms up. We have had a number of service events collecting food and bagging rice for Sunnyside.

### INSIDE:

- Nominations
- 2020 Financial Report
- 2021 Budget

**We will post a video version of this report on our website .**

A special Christmas Committee was appointed by the Board to consider the various possibilities for our beloved **Christmas Eve services**. While many alternatives were considered, we quickly decided that it was best to put all our energy into a virtual service where families could gather at home and share lovefeast, sing the traditional hymns, and lift their candles together. So we organized the **“Lovefeast-in-a-Bag”** that many of you had, together with a webcast that included all the hymns in our traditional service. We were blessed when Dewey’s Bakery decided to donate the buns we needed. This was a huge success, and we will probably carry forward some part of this into future years. We gave away 600 buns and candles, with Lovefeast odes and a recipe for making your own Lovefeast coffee at home. Coffee-maker Bruce Sherman came in and made a load of the “real stuff” in the copper kettle, and many locals brought in Mason jars to get their coffee as well. Many people took part in creating the virtual webcast – thanks to all who helped! Overall, the web records show that on our website and Facebook group, over 800 screens played the entire service. Since many of these were families with anywhere from 2 to 6 people watching, we can reasonably estimate that we had over 2400 people who “attended” our lovefeast this year – about three times the attendance that we usually have in person!

We have had a similar positive experience with the **webcast**. While our average Sunday “in-person” attendance in 2019 was 79, our average number of people watching most of our webcast (on website, Facebook, and YouTube combined) is 151, and includes people from all over the US – and sometimes other countries. We have regular viewers from various parts of NC but also PA, VA, and other states – and some of them have been

sending in regular contributions to support our ministry. A number of former members who had drifted away – or lived too far away to easily get in every Sunday – now tune in each week. A worship committee met via Zoom to review the webcast and suggest changes to make it more “new viewer friendly.” We now include some explanations of the “churchy” things we do, rather than assuming that every new viewer already knows the Moravian terms and practices. We moved the announcements to the end rather than the start, since we would lose many viewers during those.

This leads me to the financial state of the church. The prospect of months without in-person services was quite serious, and the board took immediate action to cut back on expenses such as utilities after the shutdown. We also applied for a loan under the Paycheck Protection Program, and received a loan that helped cover salaries for two months. We used that entirely for salaries (as defined in the program) and so that loan should be forgiven and become a grant. When UNCSA closed, our student organist moved back home to his parents’ house, and we temporarily eliminated the organist position. Oscar Hernandez and Scott Carpenter have come in to help us record on an as-needed basis. The office manager had to resign due to health reasons, and it was decided not to replace her immediately – though as we ramp back up to more normal operation, we will need to find a good office manager. Music Director and Stu-

dent Pastor positions were cut back to half; in August we discontinued the student pastor position. We will revisit that issue later when we are moving back into more normal meetings and we feel the role can be effective for young adults and families. The Music Director position went back to full when we started the Vespers services.

The combinations of our economies and the continued faithful giving of our members (and the giving of some new viewers) is that we were able to stay “in the black” for the first time in many years. Realizing that many other Southern Province congregations are worse off than we are, the Board voted to pay the Provincial Assessment in full in October. Because the cash flow for the Province has been severely impaired, we felt it a responsibility to do this since we were able. We have also been able to donate several thousand dollars to Sunnyside Ministry during this period.

This is good news in a difficult time – but we must be looking forward. The pandemic seriously damaged our program of outreach and programs for young families since most of that was built around the ability to have in-person meetings. As the year moves on and more people are immunized, we need to discover a new balance that is different from the way we have done things in the past. We will need to be even more intentional about inviting people back to church when they have had a year away, and now have completely different hab-



its; we will need to carry the improvements in our webcast back into our live worship and work to keep engaged with our new “distance” members. We will need to have a focused and enthusiastic program that will engage the young families that are in the Sunnyside area. We will need to train teams of members to be involved in the various aspects of this new era for Trinity.

Many struggling congregations of every denomination have been dealt a mortal blow by the pandemic. When I hear pastors at other congregations talking about returning to “normal” and going back to all their old practices, I think that those churches are ones that probably will not survive. So much of what we did in the 1980s and 1990s simply does not work any more, and hasn’t worked for a long time. The congregations that are ready to find a new way of *being* church in their communities are the ones which will survive and thrive. I believe that Trinity is in the latter category, and we must place our energy in moving into the future, not recapturing the past!

## Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee in recent years has been composed of the Pastor, two board members who are not going off, and two members-at-large. The Committee this year was comprised of Pastor Jackman, Gary Stilley, Angie Fisher, George Shouse, and Ruth Wheeler.

Members serve three-year terms, and are eligible to run again. After a second term, they must take a year off.

The current Board includes:

- ◆ Pastor John Jackman (Chair)
- ◆ Gary Stilley (Vice Chair)
- ◆ \*Linda Shouse (Secretary)

- ◆ Angie Fisher
- ◆ Bonnie Russell
- ◆ Bobby Hege
- ◆ Ronald Robertson
- ◆ \*Shirley Mullis
- ◆ \*Terri Cheek
- ◆ Terri Mabe
- ◆ \*Greg Gentle (Salem Congregation Trustees)
- ◆ Tammy Bass (Salem Congregation Elders)

\*Going off but eligible to run again

Greg Gentle was willing to run for Salem Congregation Trustees again. The incumbent regular board members did not want to run again, so the Nominating Committee created a list of potential nominees and approached them in order. The nominations are as follows.

We need to elect THREE new board members and ONE Salem Congregation Trustee.

### **Board:**

**Mary Bergstone**

**June Edwards**

**Paul Sluder**

**Salem Cong Trustee:**

**Greg Gentle**

Usually, it is our practice to allow nominations from the floor. The nominee must be an active communicant member (inactive members are not eligible) who has agreed to run. We will allow a week for open nominations. If you have a new nomination, please contact Pastor Jackman directly at the Church Office (336) 724-5541 or at home (336) 946-2040. Nominations will close at midnight on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

If there are no additional nominations (this is what usually happens) then we have a vote to accept the slate of officers proposed by the Nominating Committee. If this is the case, then the Phone Tree will call each household, and you will be asked to press “1” to accept the nominations or “2” to reject. If there are additional nominees, then the call

will ask you to press three numbers – each number representing the nominee. So for example, the message may say “Press “1” to vote for Mary Bergstone, “2” to vote for June Edwards, “3” to vote for Paul Sluder, or “4” to vote for Joe Zinzendorf. We will make the voting procedure clear and easy.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS THE CALL? Members can also call the church office at (336) 724-5541 and leave a message registering their votes. We will allow three days for votes to come in. *It is typical of our congregation to simply accept the slate as presented, and that’s the most likely outcome here.*

## Church Triumphant

Every year, during our Church Council, it is a tradition to recognize those members who have entered the Church Triumphant in the previous year. Since we were unable to do that, we included that recognition (very appropriately) in our All Saints Day Service webcast on November 1

- ◆ Charles Lee Binkley
- ◆ Milton “Butch” Brendle, Jr.
- ◆ Rebecca Hastings Fisher
- ◆ Samuel Emerson Fort
- ◆ Nancy Craver Foster
- ◆ Mary Collins Perryman
- ◆ Francis Earl “Bill” Price
- ◆ Mitzie Lowder Reavis
- ◆ Ian Josiah Simmons

In most cases, only a small graveside service was held. When we are fully gathered together again we will hold several memorial services to properly honor the passing of these members.

### Upcoming Schedule

Sunday School Zoom—9:30 am

Sunday Worship webcast—11:00 am

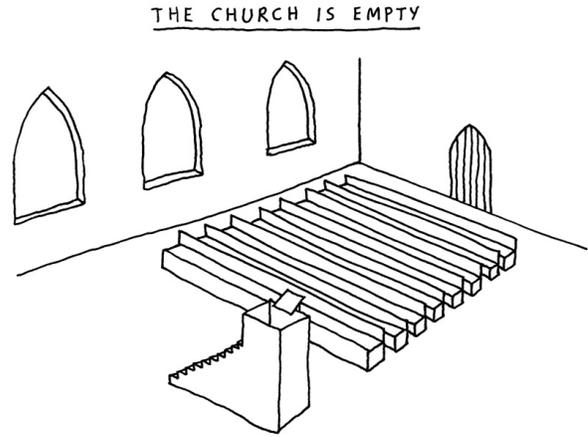
2/21—Lent Communion

2/28—3/21 Sundays of Lent

3/21—Virtual Service Anniversary

3/28—Palm Sunday

4/4—Easter



THIS IS BECAUSE EVERYONE IS BUSY



HELPING AT THE FOOD BANK



DELIVERING PRESCRIPTIONS



CREATING ONLINE WORSHIP



RUNNING THE DEBT ADVICE CENTRE

CartoonChurch.com

*In all things love.*

*In non-essentials liberty,*

*In essentials unity,*



Return Service Requested



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