

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH HISTORY

Trinity Lutheran Church of Cyrus was officially organized on October 16, 1968 although incorporation papers were not filed with the state until November, 1968, and its first joint worship service and congregational meeting were not until January, 1969. Trinity was formed by the merger of three older congregations: St. Petri Free Lutheran (formed in 1883), Scandia Free Lutheran (formed in 1889), and Cyrus Lutheran (formed in 1884 and joined by Scandia Lutheran [ELC] in 1953). Herman Rosholt, Fred Tinseth, Earl Ettesvold, Martin Estenson, Palmer Barsness and Gerald Wiger volunteered to act as incorporators of the new congregation. A name committee, consisting of Marion Hill, Thora Tollefson, and Helen Ettesvold, reported that "Trinity" was the most suggested name mentioned in a poll of all members of the three predecessor congregations. Therefore "Trinity Lutheran Church of Cyrus" became the official name of the new congregation.

The first officers of the church, elected July 26, 1968 were: Herman Rosholt, president; Gerald Wiger, vice-president; and Earl Ettesvold, secretary.

1969 The first joint worship service and annual meeting was held on January 18th, at the Cyrus School Auditorium with Dr. E. A. Hansen, the president of the SW Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church, presiding. Congregational officers elected were: Gerald Wiger, president; Charles Bright, vice-president; Jere Ettesvold, secretary; Curtis Gunvalson was appointed financial secretary and Mrs. Sigvald Berg, treasurer.

The Rev. Robert E. Crofton was officially called as the congregation's first pastor on June 19th although he had served the congregation since its merger.

1969-1972 The people worshipped at two locations—Trinity East (the former Cyrus Lutheran Church and Trinity West (the former St. Petri Lutheran Church).

1972 In January, all worship services were moved to the Trinity East site and the former St. Petri Church became a youth center and eventually a Senior Citizen's Center until it was dismantled in 1982.

Trinity becomes the first congregation in the area to have early communion for fifth graders.

The Rev. John R. Maim was installed on July 2, as the second pastor of the congregation.

1973 An architect was hired to draw up plans for a new narthex on the front of the church and a new upper addition to the education unit.

1974 Construction on the narthex, second floor of the education unit, and a remodeled nave was begun. Worship was held in the Cyrus School Auditorium.

1975 The first service in the remodeled sanctuary was on Easter Sunday. The new units and remodeling was officially dedicated on August 24th.

From March through August, the Trinity ALCW paneled, painted, and carpeted the basement fellowship hall and redecorated and installed new flooring in the kitchen.

The Trinity West site was sold to the Senior Citizens of Cyrus for use as a meeting hall and activities center.

1976 The congregation on November 28th voted to give twenty feet of its parking lot to the Cyrus Café in exchange for the landscaping, blacktopping, and lighting of its remaining parking lot.

1977 The congregation's constitution was revised and updated.

1978 The Lutheran Book of Worship ("the green hymnal") was introduced to the congregation on October 15th.

1979 Eva Pederson retired as church organist on October 1st after 56 years of service to Trinity and the former St. Petri Lutheran Church. She is replaced by Phyllis Helgersen and Gorden Thompson.

The permanent use of lay readers in the worship service is introduced.

1981 The mortgage for the 1974-75 addition to the church is burned on July

1982 The Rev. Marlan M. Johnson becomes the third pastor of Trinity on April 25th.

A member of the congregation, Lyle Hansen, builds the new free standing altar for the sanctuary.

New paraments, utilizing various traditional forms of stitchery, are begun to be made by members of the congregation.

1984 A new organ is dedicated on January 15th and cushions for the church pews are purchased.

1986 Gordon J. Straw, son of Doris and Tom Straw, is the first son of the congregation to be ordained into the ministry on July 13th.

1987 On January 18th it was voted to approve the church merger which formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA). The merger was finalized with the ratification of a new constitution on January 15, 1989.

1989 A new public address system is installed and the church sanctuary and basement is installed with air conditioning,

The Rev. John P. Smith is installed as the fourth pastor of Trinity on September 10th.

1990 The congregation begins supporting Dr. Mark & Linda Jacobson, medical missionaries in Arusha, Tanzania.

A closed circuit television system is installed in the church to enable those unable to climb the stairs to still participate in worship services.

1992 The congregation approves an elevator and building project. Ground breaking for this project was held on October 15th.

- The church's first pictorial directory is completed.
- 1993 Ribbon cutting and the first official use of the elevator occurs on March 14th. The dedication of the elevator and office addition is held on March 28th with the Rev. Charles Anderson, Bishop of the SW Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, presiding.
- The Trinity Lutheran Church women hold their 25th annual Fall Bazaar on October 23rd.
- The confirmation mentoring program is introduced
- 1994 The addition to the Cyrus South cemetery is finalized and is dedicated on October 9th.
- The celebration of Holy Communion is changed from once a month to twice a month plus on holidays.
- Trinity becomes one of the founding congregations of the Pope County Free Thanksgiving Meal and immediately becomes known for supplying its lefse and a majority of the volunteers.
- 1995 Trinity's Trust Fund is developed with all interest from it to be used for non-budgeted mission and outreach. The Fund is approved by the congregation at its Annual Meeting on January 21, 1996.
- The three year Crossroads Bible Study is begun with over 10% of Trinity's adults involved in it.
- 1996 The Kitchen is completely rewired and updated.
- The red "Worship His Majesty" hymnal is dedicated on May 19th.
- The mortgage from the 1993 Elevator and Office Addition is burned on October 6th.
- 1997 The Greeter program used to welcome all worshippers is started on Sunday mornings.
- The Cradle Roll is started up to recognize children upon their baptisms through age 3 when they begin going to Sunday school.
- The parsonage is air-conditioned.
- 1998 The Stewardship Board organizes a community Welcoming Committee and begins taking out gift bags to new people in the Cyrus community.
- Major repairs and painting are done in the parsonage and new carpeting is added.
- 1999 A new Congregational Mission Statement with goals is accepted with changes to the church's constitution at the January 24 annual meeting.
- The congregation's second pictorial directory is completed.
- The Godly Women Out of History Group is organized and begins presenting its original program written and directed by Marcella Hansen to neighboring congregations.

- 2000 The Helping Hand Fund is added to the church's budget and \$21,000 is raised for the Luther Crest Bible Camp's Fund Appeal.
- Many members of the congregation become involved with the LAMP program and begin spending a week in Canada teaching vacation Bible school programs to the natives Americans there.
- Members of the congregation make the "Cave Entrance" which is used for the first time on Christmas Eve.
- 2001 The new electronic keyboard, as well as the blue "With One Voice" hymnbook, are dedicated on July 22nd.
- On October 7th the area Youth Worker is installed by the seven participating congregations. Trinity was one of the three founding congregations of this program.
- The church is re-shingled and plans are made to redesign the roof over the narthex and make changes to the bell tower when it is discovered its supporting beams were rotten.
- 2002 The long lost' statue of Jesus is found, refurbished, and placed above the interior entrance to the sanctuary.
- The bell tower is taken down, a new shingled roof is placed over the narthex and the parking lot is resealed and striped. The line of credit used to finance these projects is paid off in less than two years.
- The Parish Nurse Program and Health Team Committee is organized with Sheryle Dahl becoming the congregation's parish nurse,
- 2003 The church's bell is placed on a memorial base in front of the church and the lit cross is placed on the front of the church.
- The Sunday school begins it's "Special Friend" mentoring program for all of its youth.
- The congregation begins financially supported the "Amigo de Christos" program started by one of its members, Joyce Skogstad, to help a small church and two orphanages in Mexico.
- 2004 New high efficiency furnaces and air conditioned is installed in the church and the parsonage is completely resided.
- The Ark Angels bell choir is established.
- 2005 The church is vandalized with the community rallying together to get it cleaned up before the next day's worship service.
- The first outdoor service held in conjunction with the first official Cyrus Days is held on July 31st.
- The confirmation program is extended from two years to three years with the requirement that a parent attends the first year with their 7th grade student.
- 2006 The church is completely resided with steel siding.

The congregation's contemporary worship group is formed and Gordon Thompson is honored on October 22 for being the Trinity and St. Petri choir accompanist for over 57 years.

The church council begins to be downsized per congregational approval from 25 members to 17 members.

2007 The congregation's third pictorial directory is completed.

On April 29th the congregation celebrates the retirement of Evelyn Lindstrom who served as its church secretary for over 20 years.

The adult bell choir is formed,

A four week class on financial Stewardship has unfathomed success.

2008 The Godly Women Out of History group takes their program and their ministry to New Jersey and Washington, D.C.

The congregation grants Pastor Smith a two month sabbatical to work and study at an archaeological dig in Israel.

The pews in the church are repaired and upholstered.

2011 A video system is installed in the sanctuary just before Christmas. The three TV computer driven system is used to support worship on Sunday morning and to provide video support to special programs and Sunday School.

2012 Phyllis Helgerson retires at the Choir director. Kathy Banta steps forward as the new choir director.

2013 After 24 years, John Smith retired as the Pastor at Trinity. Minette Stalheim Johnson is installed at the interim pastor while Trinity searches for a new full time pastor.

2014 Trinity begins a summer outreach program entitled Wednesday Night Alive. During the summer special speakers are invited to share their faith stories in a relaxed setting on Wednesday evenings. The vision is to provide a friendly time and space for young and old alike to come and spend time in their faith journey.

2015 Reverend Chris Richards is installed as the full time pastor of Trinity. Pr Chris, a life-long Morris resident comes to Trinity with his wife, Amy, and three young boys. This is Pr. Chris' first call.

Trinity ratifies the updated constitution that revamped the Church council.

From the time of its organization, Trinity has had an active Sunday school and adult education program, as well as an active Luther League. Every three years from 1976 through 2006, large delegations of senior high youth have attended National Youth Gatherings in New Orleans, Kansas City, San Antonio, Denver, Dallas, St. Louis, and Atlanta.

The Trinity Lutheran Women, officially organized on December 9, 1968, have regular Bible studies and "Do Days" in which quilts, soap, layettes, and various other items are made for world missions.

Since October of 1969, the women of the church have been involved in a yearly Bazaar in which most of the proceeds go to missions outside of the local congregation. After more than 40 years the "Trinity Bazaar", which had been held yearly in the Cyrus High School, was moved to the Church and renamed "Mission Fest" a whole church activity that continues to provide significant proceeds to missions outside the local congregation.

Finally, over the years the congregation has been blessed by the dedicated musical contributions of many different youth and adult choirs, soloists and instrumentalists who have provided the congregation with special music every Sunday and on other special occasions,