



**HOLY TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH**
150 YEARS STRONG



**Celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the
Congregation**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of Chicago
Established 1874

A Brief History of Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity organized itself as a congregation on March 19, 1874. This event followed almost 20 years of missionary activity among English-speaking Lutherans in Chicago by two early Lutheran bodies: the General Synod, through its Home Missionary Society in Baltimore, and the General Council, through its Pittsburgh Synod. The role of Dr. W.A. Passavant (1821-1894) in both this early missionary work and the founding of Holy Trinity was particularly critical. Passavant is known both as the "Father of Holy Trinity" and as a founder of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, with which Holy Trinity merged in 1912. Our large upstairs space is named Passavant Hall in his honor. When its roots in the missionary activities of the 1850s are considered, Holy Trinity is one of the first four or five Lutheran churches in Chicago. It is the oldest English-speaking Lutheran church in the city and has held an important place in the history of Lutheranism in Chicago.



REV. WM. A. PASSAVANT, D. D.,
Father of Holy Trinity Church.

Holy Trinity has been in the heart of Chicago from the beginning. The first mission post (from 1856) was located near Clark and Monroe Streets. The mission disbanded in 1861 and the lot and building were sold to Mount Sinai Congregation, Chicago's oldest Reformed Jewish congregation. Passavant revived the mission in 1864, this time farther north in the parlors of his newly built hospital at 141 Dearborn Street.

The first four church buildings of the congregation were in the same general area: the first two near Dearborn and Ontario Streets, the third at Dearborn and Erie Streets and the fourth at LaSalle and Elm Streets (now LaSalle Street Church). By the time Holy Trinity sold its lot and building at LaSalle and Elm in 1912, many of its members and prospective members had moved farther north. When St. Mark's Lutheran Church invited Holy Trinity to share in ministry at its new Lakeview chapel, then at Addison and Maple Square (later called Magnolia), Holy Trinity accepted and moved to a new neighborhood.

Holy Trinity has been described as a church of "firsts" and "mosts." It was the first English-speaking Lutheran congregation in Chicago; the congregation with the closest connection to the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Chicago, originally on the site of Wrigley Field (even its commencement services were held at Holy Trinity) and now Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in Hyde Park; the site chosen for the organizing convention of the Chicago Synod of the General Council; and, for a time at LaSalle/Elm Streets, the "millionaires' church." Yet Holy Trinity has also suffered periods of membership decline and financial problems. Fortunately, it has been blessed with support and aid when most needed.



First church after the Chicago Fire, Erie and Dearborn, 1872

The General Synod supported Holy Trinity for many of its early years; and Holy Trinity was the first congregation to receive missionary support from the General Council. St. Mark's Lutheran Church of Philadelphia (organized in 1850) provided moral and financial support in the 1870s. Both a Norwegian Lutheran Church (probably Bethlehem, then on North Sangamon Street) and Swedish Emanuel Lutheran Church offered their worship space to Holy Trinity when Holy Trinity had none. The Lutheran Theological Seminary of Chicago provided supply pastors when Holy Trinity needed them.



Addison and Magnolia, 1923

In 1923, Holy Trinity formally dedicated its new building at Addison and Maple Square. Since that time the congregation has been blessed and challenged by a constantly changing neighborhood for its ministry. Families with children of various ages, large choirs and yearly confirmation programs gave way to demographics in the 1990s of single adults, gay and lesbian couples, and younger married couples with no or very small children.

Following a period of decline, in the 2000s Holy Trinity entered a time of rapid growth as many young adults and others from the neighborhood and others from Chicago North Side's responded to its unique emphasis on liturgy, music, spirituality, and social justice. Following its radical welcome to gays and lesbians in the 1990s, Holy Trinity also began attracting young straight singles and married couples, and eventually the church had 100 babies, children, and teens in its membership.



Grace Place, 2013

In 2013 Holy Trinity expanded its mission by launching a second site, HTLoop, in the South Loop. Between 2010 and 2024 the congregation embarked on two capital campaigns, and two periods of strategic planning. The pandemic brought many changes which led to worship and many other congregational events offered both in person and online.

We give thanks for our forebears who have brought us to this place as we mark Holy Trinity's 150 years of ministry in Chicago, and trust that God will lead us faithfully into the future.

Side by Side: Holy Trinity and World History

1853 General Synod Plans for English Language Mission in Chicago
1856 First English-language Mission in Chicago Established in Frame Church at Monroe/Clark Streets

1861 Mission Disbanded and Property Sold
1864 Mission Begins Again in Passavant Hospital
1867 Congregation Builds Church of Mercy at Dearborn/Ontario

1871 Church of Mercy Destroyed in Great Chicago Fire
1872 Congregation Moves to Dearborn/Erie Streets
1874 Congregation Organizes as The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity

1883 First Worship Service Held in Lecture Room of New Church at LaSalle/Elm Streets
1886 Church at LaSalle/Elm Streets Dedicated
1896 Mission at Addison/Clark organizes as St. Mark's English Evangelical Lutheran Church

1912 Holy Trinity Merges With St. Mark's Lutheran Church at Addison/Magnolia Streets
1918 Holy Trinity Becomes Part of the ULCA

1945 Holy Trinity Featured on WGN-TV's "Faith of our Fathers"

1958 Congregation Begins Using Service Book and Hymnal
1961 Refurbished Organ Dedicated
1962 Holy Trinity Becomes Part of the LCA

1966 Fellowship Hall Named "Nelson Hall"
1969 Endowment Fund Established
1973 Sanctuary Painted
1978 Lutheran Book of Worship Introduced
1980 Kitchen Improvements Completed

1981 Congregation Votes to Celebrate Communion Weekly
1990 Holy Trinity Becomes Reconciled In Christ Congregation
1993 Free-Standing Altar Installed

1997 Proposal to Merge with Lake View Lutheran Church Defeated
1999 Sanctuary Painted and Refurbished for 125th Anniversary
1999 Rev. Craig Mueller is called as lead pastor

1840 **1837** City of Chicago Incorporated
1843 First St. Paul's Lutheran Church (German) Organized
1848 First Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church Organized
1853 Swedish Emanuel Lutheran Church Organized

1860 **1861** Civil War Begins
1865 Civil War Ends; Abraham Lincoln Assassinated

1870 **1871** Great Chicago Fire

1880 **1884** First Skyscraper Built in Chicago

1890 **1892** Ellis Island Opens
1893 Columbian Exposition
1898 Spanish American War
1906 San Francisco Earthquake
1914 Wrigley Field Is Built
1917 U.S. enters World War I
1918 World War I Ends; ULCA formed

1920 **1920** Prohibition Begins
1929 Stock Market Crashes

1930 **1933** Prohibition Repealed
1945 World War II Ends
1950 Korean War Begins
1954 Polio Vaccine Tested on U.S. Children
1962 Lutheran Church of America Formed
1963 President John F. Kennedy Assassinated
1964 U.S. Civil Rights Act Passed; Gulf of Tonkin Resolution Passed

1969 First Man on the Moon
1974 President Richard Nixon Resigns

1989 Berlin Wall Comes Down
1990 Tim Berners-Lee invents first web server
1991 Gulf War; USSR Dissolved

2000 Holy Trinity began mentoring seminary students (totaling 50 through 2024)

2002 Rev. Michelle (Miller) Sevig became pastoral associate, and later associate pastor

2004 An early Sunday morning liturgy is added

2006 Evangelical Lutheran Worship is introduced

2006 – 2008 Expansive Faith capital campaign for new/renovated/expanded organ, and accessibility improvements

2009 ELCA affirms the rostering of gay and lesbian leaders churchwide

2011 Voices strategic planning

2013 HTLoop begins holding services in the South Loop

2016 Rev. Ben Adams is called as associate pastor and mission developer for HTLoop

2019 – 2022 Toward 100 capital campaign for stained glass window repair, air-conditioning for the sanctuary, a lift and accessible restroom in Passavant Hall, tuckpointing, and renovated offices and Gathering Space on the first floor

2020 Lakeview Lutheran Parish (Holy Trinity, Lake View, Resurrection, and Saint Luke) is formed

2021 Rev. Ben Adams resigns as associate pastor

2021 Livestreaming equipment installed

2023 Reparations and strategic planning task forces are formed

2024 Rev. Sharai Jacob is called as associate pastor for HTLoop and South Loop Campus Ministry

2000

2000 Celebrations around the world usher in the turn of the 21st Century.

2003 The Human Genome Project is completed.

2004 Massachusetts becomes the first U.S. state to legalize same-sex marriage.

2005 Hurricane Katrina kills 1,836 people across the Gulf of Mexico Coast.

2007 Introduction of the iPhone

2008 Barack Obama is elected the first African-American President of the United States

2010

2010 B.P. oil spill occurs in the Gulf of Mexico

2014 The shooting of Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri leads to protests and civil unrest across the country

2015 The U.S. Supreme Court case Obergefell v. Hodges rules in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage in all fifty states

2016 U.S. troops withdraw from Afghanistan after 15 years

2020

2020 The COVID-19 pandemic begins

2021 The Pandora Papers are leaked, revealing criminal activities involving multiple world leaders

2022 Russia invades Ukraine, escalating the Russo-Ukrainian War

2022 Elizabeth II dies at the age of 96

2023 Israel-Gaza war begins; South Africa presents genocide case against Israel before the International Court of Justice

2024 Total solar eclipse stretches from Mexico to Newfoundland, the last to cross North America until 2044.

“When you celebrate an anniversary, you ought not to just speak of the past, but of the future as well. It is not only a time of thanksgiving, but a time of reconsecration.”
Rev. Walter C. Davis at a Holy Trinity anniversary dinner on October 24, 1961.

Pastor Dean Bard (1981 - 1986)



I am delighted to share a few thoughts about my first call as pastor of this historic, vibrant congregation on this august occasion. It was 15 degrees below zero the evening I was ordained at Augustana Lutheran Church in Hyde Park, Chicago, and the next week, I plunged into ministry at Holy Trinity with a warm welcome. The Lakeview community was on the cusp of regentrification. The upside: neighborhoods were being renewed and the Cubs were pressing for lights at Wrigley Field for night games, to the chagrin of the neighborhood group called "Citizens United for Baseball in Sunshine" (CUBS). The downside: many longtime residents and people of modest means were gradually forced out by "yuppies" and more prosperous folks.

In the parish, it also was time for renewal. A dedicated core of leaders was ready for change and they gave their trust to this new pastor, for which I am grateful. Parish renewal began with worship and liturgical renewal. Weekly eucharist was instituted, baptismal identity, preaching, lay liturgical leadership, music and choir all were freshly emphasized. At the same time, stewardship and evangelism received renewed impetus. Calling on visitors, recruiting volunteers, emphasis on community ministry—helping to launch the Lincoln-Belmont Pantry, for example—all became clear priorities. More importantly, the spirit of the congregation was lifted by new younger members, even as longtime members opened their way.

These were years of grace and blessing for Holy Trinity and those of us who served Christ through her. It is gratifying to know that Holy Trinity has continued to grow and prosper in the Lord's service throughout these past 40 years. May God continue to bless her ministers and ministries far into God's future.

Read the full version at:
htchicago.org/anniversaryreflections



Pastor Dan Schwick (1987 - 1998)



I began my ministry at Holy Trinity in May of 1987. One of the principles of ministry that Bishop Sherman Hicks instilled in me was that location matters. No two congregations should be the same because every congregation must be engaged with its own local community. That included the notion of cooperative ministries, where possible as well as ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

Early in my tenure at Holy Trinity, I and a number of other clergy and lay leaders in Lakeview attended a series of trainings in community organizing. Out of those encounters grew Lakeview Action Coalition (LAC) which eventually became an important organization in the neighborhood. Lakeview at the time was experiencing rapid gentrification. Our congregation and many others experienced the displacement of numerous long-time members who could no longer afford to live in their homes.

At the beginning of my tenure at Holy Trinity, AIDS was just emerging around the world and around our community. Members of Holy Trinity, Resurrection (led by Assistant Pastor Craig Mueller!) and Lakeview Lutheran churches connected with the AIDS Pastoral Care Network and began visits with patients at Bonaventure House, a hospice for persons dying of AIDS.

Fairly early in my ministry at Holy Trinity, I was contacted by a lesbian couple who were interested in "getting married." I consulted with my colleague and friend, Pastor Craig Mueller, at Resurrection where they were already celebrating same-sex unions.

He advised me to inform our bishop, Sherman Hicks, and he offered me some models for a meaningful celebration. After meeting with the couple several more times, I agreed to celebrate their union at Holy Trinity. Only the organist and church administrative assistant were "in on" the celebration. After the Saturday evening service, we made sure there was no "evidence" left for Sunday worshipers to find. Over time, and especially when we became a Reconciling in Christ congregation in 1990, we received more requests for unions and we became more open about them. Eventually it was routine to note the Sunday flowers were in honor of the blessed union of a same sex couple.

In the early 1990s, with an increasing number of single professionals and couples without children, our Sunday School dwindled to two very small classes. At that time, the Night Ministry, one of the leading social service organizations in our community, was in need of affordable space for their administrative office. Holy Trinity invited the Night Ministry to make its home here.

Early in 1998 I received a call from Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) to serve as their Director of Government Relations and Advocacy. A year after leaving Holy Trinity, when I heard that the congregation had called Pastor Craig Mueller to be its pastor, I could not have been more delighted.

Read the full version at:
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Pastor Craig Mueller (1999 -)

When I began serving in 1999, leaders of the congregation were preparing to celebrate Holy Trinity 125th anniversary in October of that year. During that first summer, the sanctuary was painted and refurbished. We hoped that some freshening up our space would be a sign of hospitality to those seeking a church home in Lakeview. A failed merger with Lake View Lutheran occurred two years earlier, and the congregation desired to grow in numbers and sustainability.

Holy Trinity has grown into a vibrant, thriving, and dynamic congregation, well known in our synod, and to some, around the country. Lakeview has been known as an edgy neighborhood, and we have sometimes prided ourselves that we are not like our parent's church, and that we seek to do church differently. To some, we are an anomaly: traditional liturgy with progressive, open-minded theology. One of the earlier tag lines was: Reverent, relevant, real. We are a community that values meaningful worship, a timely message, and authenticity.

Without a parking lot and with most of our events on Sundays (Saturday nights at HTLoop), it may seem like we are a "Sunday church," which is sometimes used negatively. I am quick to point out that our mission is to gather around word and sacrament on the Lord's Day, and to serve God in our daily lives throughout the week. Worship forms us to live our baptism as we work for justice and peace in the world, and embody God's never-ending mercy for all those in any kind of need.



Pr. Mueller, Bishop Landahl, and Pr. Sevig at Pr. Sevig's installation as Associate Pastor in 2006.

PEOPLE

Lakeview is and has been a transient neighborhood for many decades. Many of our young adults are with us for several years and then relocate because of a job change, marriage, or the desire to raise their children in the suburbs. Because of this, I often say that I have served many congregations in my 25 years at Holy Trinity. Only six members from 1999 are still active today! Each year, the faces change, and even regular attendees do not recognize the others sitting near them. We welcomed 780 new members between 1999 and 2024, yet only 195 of them are still among us.



Pet Blessing, HTLakeview, 2006

CHILDREN, SUNDAY SCHOOL, YOUTH

When I started in 1999, there were two children in the congregation. The demographics were mostly middle-aged gay men and older women. I often joke that we decided to intentionally welcome young straight adults to increase diversity. Several young single women took a chance on Holy Trinity! A couple of years later they found husbands, and soon had children, and our demographics began to change dramatically. We became a young church with many adults in their 20s and 30s, many babies and children, and of course, quite a few LGBTQ folks.

OUR BUILDING

In May of 2023, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of our Lakeview building. Since 1999 there have been two capital campaigns. In 2007 – 2009 we expanded and enhanced our organ and made several accessibility improvements. In 2021 – 2022 we repaired our stained glass, added air-conditioning in the sanctuary, installed a lift elevator, and renovated Passavant Hall and much of the first floor.

SEMINARIANS

Since 1999, Holy Trinity has welcomed fifty seminarians as part of their fieldwork at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. Sometimes four at a time, and more recently one per year, we have mentored future pastors while also receiving their unique gifts. In addition, we have sponsored ten members of Holy Trinity who went on to attend seminary. It has been a joy and delight to have these many seminary students among us!



Pr. Mueller and Seminiarian Liz Kuster, 2021

HTLOOP

In 2012 I realized there was not an ELCA congregation in downtown Chicago. I thought about our ELCA full communion partners in the Loop, and which might be willing to be good partners for space sharing. We landed on Grace Episcopal Church in the South Loop. With financial support from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, we ventured forth in faith, embracing this exciting new mission opportunity. Holy Trinity members, some living downtown, formed several working groups, and the first service was held at Grace Place in December 2013. We are grateful for our ecumenical partnership with Grace Episcopal Church and look forward to a revitalized South Loop Campus Ministry, under the leadership of our new HTLoop pastor, Sharai Jacob.

MUSIC

Holy Trinity has had excellent music programs, dating back decades. We are known for our organ and choral music and our strong congregational singing, and it is a great joy each Sunday to have our liturgy enriched and led by talented musicians. In the 2010s we were blessed to have a children's choir and a string ensemble made up of our own members.

SPIRITUALITY

There have been multiple spirituality retreats, forums, book studies, and other special events over the years. A meditation bell calls us to periods of silence during worship. Our Spiritual Life Center has offered counseling and spiritual direction for some members and others from outside our congregation. In 2016 a catechumenal program was introduced called Life Together. This is a process of formation for adults preparing for baptism, and others who would like to explore their faith and renew their baptism at the Easter Vigil.



Pr. Mueller and members of Holy Trinity walk in the Chicago Pride Parade, 2023

TAKING STANDS

Since 1990 Holy Trinity has been a leader in working for LGBTQ equality in the Church. During the 2000s we faced ups and downs as our denomination wrestled with the divisive issue of human sexuality. 2009 was a year of jubilant celebration as the ELCA officially made it possible for partnered gay clergy to serve openly. Holy Trinity was featured in the Chicago Tribune several times during those years.

To have two gay pastors sets Holy Trinity apart. Both Pastor Sevig and I had "blessing of relationship" liturgies (before marriage equality), in 2011 and 2012, respectively. As marriage equality came to Illinois, Holy Trinity had a unique celebration in 2014. Presided over by Bishop Wayne Miller, a gay couple was married, and fifteen straight and gay/lesbian couples renewed their wedding vows.

For over 20 years Holy Trinity has also been committed to dismantling racism in church and society. An active antiracism team has led the efforts. There have been book studies, surveys, forums, a Black Lives Matter rally near Wrigley Field, and most recently, a commitment to explore reparations.

THE PANDEMIC AND ONLINE MINISTRY

In March 2020 all our services, meetings, classes, and other events went online as we faced a global pandemic. During these challenging days, we were grateful for the community that was formed during Zoom liturgies. Since then, live-streaming equipment has been installed at HTLakeview, and the Sunday services are available on Facebook Live and YouTube. Zoom continues to be used for our Saturday evening services.

Many of our events are now held hybrid, both in-person and online. However, most of our evening events are online which allows more persons to participate than in previous years. With no parking lot, busy schedules, and some members living a good distance away, these online meetings have infused new life into our various committees, teams, and task forces.



Pr. Ben Adams during online liturgy at HTLoop, 2020

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Holy Trinity has been faithful in preparing for the future, and there have been two periods of strategic planning in the past twenty-five years: 2010-2011 and 2023-2024. The current strategic planning team will unveil their proposals later this spring.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND GENEROSITY

Because of Holy Trinity's generosity and faithful stewardship of its resources, we continue to be financially strong. In addition to our annual operating fund, we currently have an endowment fund, reserve fund, and Elvina Moen social justice fund.

STAFF

Holy Trinity thrives for many reasons, one being its talented and dedicated staff. While Pastor Sevig, David Brackley, and I have provided stability over the past twenty-plus years, the addition of new and younger staff members over the years has brought new energy and vitality to our ministry.

Since 1999 I have served with five administrators: Bob Buzzard, Josh Judd-Herzfeldt, Beau Surratt, Claire Schoepp, and Raneem Salem. Pastor Michelle Sevig began as a pastoral associate in 2002, her role then defined as ten hours a month. Since then, her role and call have varied, sometimes part-time and most recently full-time during the interim period at HTLoop. Ben Adams served as the first HTLoop pastor from 2015 – 2021, and Sharai Jacob began a new call in 2024. Ministers of Music have included Doug Williams, Donald Meineke, and since 2003, David Brackley. Katie Mineck served as Community Life Coordinator from 2012-2017. Lynn Horn was bookkeeper from 2008 – 2017, and Paul Strome served as Building and Finance Administrator from 2017 – 2021. I am deeply thankful for the gifts that each of these persons has brought to Holy Trinity's ministry.



Pr. Sevig, Pr. Jacob, and Pr. Mueller at Pr. Jacob's Installation, 2024

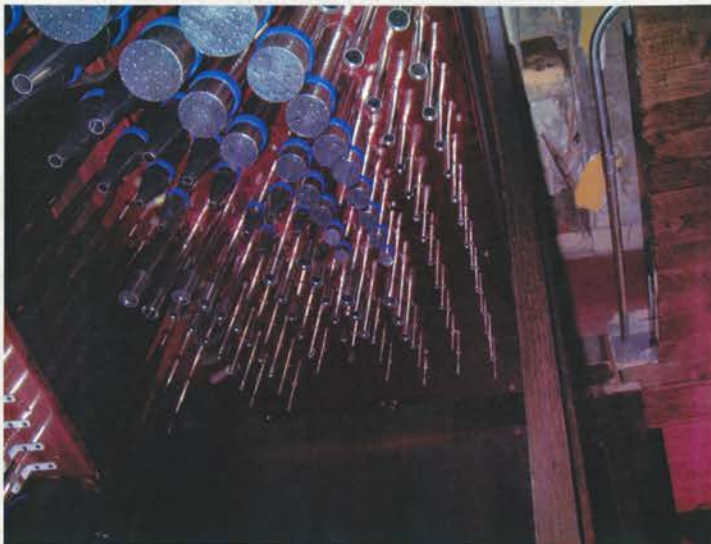
SO MUCH MORE

There is so much more that could be said, and so many people to thank. Holy Trinity is a treasure, and it has been my deepest joy to serve as pastor these past twenty-five years. As we move past our anniversary and begin implementing our strategic plan, we trust that God will lead us forward in faith, open to all that is yet to come in mission and in ministry. Thanks be to God!

Organists and Choir Directors (1944 - 2024)

Elizabeth Bain	1944 - 1958
Martin Argall	1949 - 1979
Michael Shawgo	1981 - 1983
Walt Horn	1983 - 1991
Douglas Williams	1991 - 2001
Donald Meineke	2002 - 2003
David Brackley	2003 -

Rev. Zenan Corbet and another man stand with the choir at St. Mark's around 1900. St. Mark's was started in a frame chapel in 1890 at Clark and Addison Streets (now Wrigley Field) by Rev. W.A. Passavant, a prominent Lutheran. Passavant also founded Passavant Memorial Hospital (now part of Northwestern Memorial Hospital) and other Lutheran institutions. (From *Lake View (Images of America)* by Matthew Nickerson)



The original pipe organ at Addison/Magnolia was installed in 1923 and had been in use for over 80 years. Unfortunately, there were extensive problems, and it was rebuilt.

The organ refurbishing and expansion was designed and completed by Triune Music of Elmhurst, Illinois. The vision for this instrument was driven by its need to serve the church as an integral part of the musical fabric of the liturgy. It brings together technology and art, creating a concept which combines the wonder of electronics with the magic of windblown pipes.

"At the present time the Music Committee of Holy Trinity Church owe to me as their Director of Music \$133 and as far as I can see there has been no attempt of any magnitude on their part to make a payment of any size that would warrant my continuing with Holy Trinity in my present capacity."

Director of Music Charles E. Riddel in a letter to D.M. Schueren, May 18, 1908.

Anniversary Reflections



MICHELLE SEVIG, Associate Pastor

Holy Trinity has been a community of grace and welcome for me since the first time we visited on Easter Sunday, 2000. Julie and I knew immediately that we had found our new church home.

My highlight reel from those early years through the present is filled with delight, gratitude, and a deep love for the people and ministry of this congregation. Baptisms of infants, children, and teens are too numerous to count. Trips with the youth group to the ELCA Gathering, Holden Village, and Lutherdale Bible Camp. Service opportunities with the Night Ministry, Lakeview Pantry, and South Loop Community Table. Potlucks, picnics, new member dinners, Easter Vigil receptions, Easter breakfasts, and parties galore. So many babies and children have graced our worship and learning together. Pride parades and Crop Walks. A plethora of weddings both in church and in parks, and even one on a boat. Preaching and presiding in this community has been my greatest honor.

Thank you for all the wonderful memories and the shared ministry of the past 24 years. I look forward to many more.



DOROTHY SAND, Former member and retired pastor

I grew up in what is now called the Lakeview area of Chicago on Racine Avenue around the corner from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. In the 1950s and 1960s, this church formed me, nurtured me, and was my sanctuary from a chaotic home life. I was confirmed at Holy Trinity along with my very best friends. We were a tight-knit group of teens, who . . . well, we figured out how to get into the church after school. We located the coal shoot which led into the basement, and just hung out.

I give thanks to Holy Trinity for developing my faith in God, my trust, and most importantly, my hope. Hope in God, hope in life, hope in a future—this hope, learned and rehearsed, under the guidance of HTLC, led me then and continues to lead me. Without this church, I would not be the person I am today.

During the pandemic Dorothy reconnected with Holy Trinity and since then has attended worship and other online events, including the Wednesday morning study.



BEN ADAMS, Former pastor to HTLoop

Even though it doesn't feel like my steps are ordered in any prescribed way, I have fallen back on the time-tested rhythms of life that I learned while serving Holy Trinity. From the sacred rituals of prayer and worship to the holy pauses and silence, the rhythm of my life is more centered in the real, embodied, and mysterious dance of the Trinity.

Rev. Ben Adams, former Associate Pastor of HTLoop

A Legacy of Justice and Inclusion

RECONCILING IN CHRIST

In May 1990 Holy Trinity became the second Lutheran parish in Chicago to vote to become a Reconciled in Christ congregation, welcoming gays and lesbians as members and all areas of leadership. In the 1990s Holy Trinity members reached out to those living with AIDS, especially those residing at Bonaventure House.

CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

In June 2014 Holy Trinity hosted a Celebration of Marriage service at Holy Trinity, led by Wayne Miller, the Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. Giving thanks for marriage equality in Illinois, we witnessed the vows of Sean and A.J. Diller while 17 other couples—straight and gay—renewed vows from previous services or occasions.



ELVINA MOEN SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND

Elvina touched countless people through her service, both at church and in the community. At church she went right up to people and welcomed them. She hugged you before you knew what came over you. Sometimes she told first-time guests: "look no further, you've found your church home." She volunteered with the Night Ministry Outreach Bus, Bonaventure House (a residence for persons living with AIDS) and other organizations. In her honor, the Elvina Moen Social Justice Fund supports causes of advocacy and compassion that reflect Elvina's inclusive and open spirit.



MINISTRY PARTNERS

Holy Trinity has partnered with, either financially or as volunteers, with these organizations in recent years:

- One Northside (formerly Lakeview Action Coalition)
- Hot Soup Ministry (Lakeview Lutheran Parish)
- Night Ministry
- Nourishing Hope (formerly Lakeview Pantry)
- Refugee One
- Lighthouse Foundation
- Prison Book Ministry
- South Loop Community Table
- Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches
- Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries
- Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
- South Loop Campus Ministry
- Arise Chicago Ministries
- Holy Family
- Christian Peacemaker Teams

Holy Trinity in the News



Couples get married at Holy Trinity. Photo by Tracy Bain

Holy Trinity holds mass wedding service

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Capping off a month of pride festivities, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church hosted its first marriage-equality service for a number of couples June 27.

AJ Yoeckel and Sean Diller exchanged vows for the first time and 17 other couples, both gay and straight, renewed their vows from earlier marriages, civil unions or commitment ceremonies in front of about 200 family, friends and well wishers.

Holy Trinity's two gay pastors, Craig Mueller and Michelle Sevig, were among the couples renewing their vows—Mueller with Ernest Vasquez and Sevig with Julie Sevig.

Karen Anderson Moran and Rich Moran, Richard Bough and David Easterbrook, Kenneth Jon Duckmann and James Anthony Perez, Patty and Mark Erickson, Andy Halvorson and Scott Nelson, Colleen (Fleming) Hanna and Christopher Hanna, Dana Johnson and Thomas (Schneider) Johnson, Brian Jones and Jeremiah Peterson, Beth (Borst) and Steve Mankowski, Benjamin L. Nichols and Brian A. von Rueden, Erika Robeck and Martin Baber, Carol and Robert Schickel, Kyle Severson and Clyde Andrew Walter, Alison Strickler and Aana Maria Vigen, and David and Karol Stahl also renewed their vows.

Bishop Wayne Miller of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America presided over the service along with Assistant Minister Joel Cruz and Crucifier Joshi Evans.

The Morans' daughters, Cassie and Megan, were the torchbearers for the service; their other daughter, Molly, welcomed each guest alongside the Sevigs' daughter, Annika, and John Flowers. The first reading was performed by the Sevigs' son, Peder.

Miller noted the special nature of this ceremony, adding that Holy Trinity Lutheran Church has fought for greater inclusivity for the past 25 years. Miller also spoke about the bonds that bring two people together as a couple and called on the congregation to be witnesses to each couple's commitment of marriage to each other.

In addition, he spoke about the importance of this occasion and thanked everyone for the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful celebration.

Sevig officiated Yoeckel and Diller's wedding immediately following Miller's sermon. Four women served as the groom's attendants during the ceremony. Cheers and applause erupted as Yoeckel and Diller kissed each other for the first time as a married couple.

After the sign of peace, the couples renewing their vows gathered at the altar to affirm their commitment to each other with Miller serving

as their officiant.

Minister of Music David R. Brackley trumpeters Thomas Madeja and Sylvia Carl provided musical arrangements throughout service. Pastor Sevig, Patty Erickson, and Jan Eichhorn served as reception coordinators for the event.

Yoeckel and Diller said that when this came up they jumped at the chance because this day was about community and the idea of sharing this special day with their church family was very appealing. They also made use of the church's long history of social-justice activism.

"My husband and I were excited about opportunity for our own marriage but also share in the joy of all the other couples that can finally legally get married," said Borst at the ceremony.

Married for 43 years, the Schickels decided to take part in the ceremony because they were already looking to renew their vows. They found what better way there was than to celebrate their love and commitment with the couples who can finally legally wed.

A reception featuring hors d'oeuvres from Inspiration Kitchens, champagne and wedding cake took place in the church hall following the service.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has allowed partnered gay and lesbian clergy to serve in ELCA congregations since 2009 and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church has welcomed LGBT people in all areas of participation and leadership in the church since 1990, a year it became a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

See www.holytrinitychicago.org.



Associate Pastor Michelle Sevig, who also renewed her vows to her partner Julie at the event, performed the service for Sean Diller (left) and AJ Yoeckel. Photo by Hal Bain

IN THIS WEEK'S PAPER

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Task force's findings divide Evangelical Lutherans

In this case, it's about not talking about sex in the church.

The Rev. Margaret Harris, Bishop of the ELCA New England Area, said she was surprised by the findings of a task force she chaired last year. She said she was not surprised by the findings, but she was surprised by the way the church handled them.

The ELCA's national task force, which reported its findings in a 14-page report last month, said that 85 percent of respondents said they were in committed relationships, but only 21 percent said they were in committed relationships that were open to public discussion.

The task force's findings were reported in a report titled "The ELCA's National Task Force on Human Sexuality: A Report to the ELCA Synod." The report was released last month.



The Rev. Craig W. Mueller, pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Lake View, sings a processional hymn at the end of services Sunday morning, Jan. 16. (Photo by Alan Kagan)

The report also found that 77 percent of respondents said they were in committed relationships, but only 21 percent said they were in committed relationships that were open to public discussion.



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Feature on Holy Trinity following the release of a sexuality report conducted by a 14-member task force in the ELCA. (Pioneer Press, 2005)

Lutherans divided on the Sunday after

Church members face recent change in policy on homosexual leaders

By Georgia Carvey
Chicago Area Tribune reporter

Golden light filtered through the stained-glass windows of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on Sunday, illuminating a congregation on its way to church.

Everyone in the pews of the Wrigleyville church had, some with their eyes closed, some with their eyes open, some with a look of anguish. "These people, we come to you with heavy hearts because our church is in turmoil," he prayed.



The Rev. Craig Mueller on Sunday leads the first service at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chicago's Wrigleyville neighborhood since the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America decided Friday to lift a ban on allowing non-celibate gay men and women to serve as leaders. Many strong reactions were seen.

On Friday, the nation's largest Lutheran denomination rescinded a ban on the approval of non-celibate gay men and women to leadership positions. Individual congregations now have the ability to select pastors or lay leaders in partnerships and life-long same-sex relationships. Last month, the Episcopal Church lifted a similar ban on non-celibate gay bishops.

At Holy Trinity, members celebrated the historic change but also expressed hope for unity with those on the other side of the issue.

"Congregants using hymnals such as 'All Are Welcome' and in his sermon, Rev. Craig Mueller acknowledged a distinction between equality and equal compassion for those who disagree with us."

At St. Mark, parishioners closed their service singing the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers." Shields remarked that the Scripture reading for the day, which urged Christians to "take up the shield of faith," was particularly appropriate.



Rev. Terry Breum of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Lincoln Park said his congregation will discuss options over the next year. "We're going to have to evaluate our place in the ELCA," he said. "I don't go into this church to have it. We stand for a biblical view of marriage. It's dangerous to take a stand against the word of God's agency because we're going to lose our place in the ELCA," he said.

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EARLY STRUGGLES

From an address in 1898, welcoming their new pastor:

It may be fitting on this occasion, when we meet to greet our Pastor, to recount some of the memories of our struggles as a Congregation. . . This is not the occasion to recite history, nor criticize men in the present, or in the past; nor should we mourn over our lot in life. . . Those of us who are of the first organization, and have lived to witness and take part in what has transpired since that time, have no cause to regret our services to the Master. Rather, we do not regret we have not been able to accomplish more than we have done. We meet this evening, not with a feeling of exultation at what has been done, but rather to declare a dividend of the benefits of the results, and with prayerful hearts for peace and good will toward all mankind.

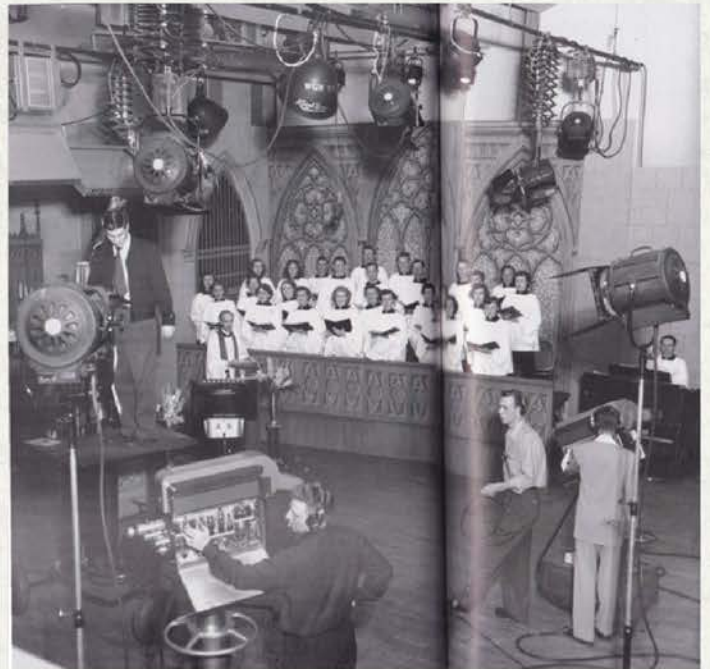
In early 1868 . . . we had a pleasant little church, nicely furnished, and we all felt that this was truly a church home for us. . . We continued to worship in this church until October 9th, 1871, when the great Chicago fire of that date swept away our little church, and nearly all of the members lost their homes by this catastrophe. Those were dark days for the little flock of Lutherans. They had not only lost their church but we then first realized that as a congregation we had no title to the ground; so that we were left absolutely penniless. Great sympathy was extended to us by the good Lutherans of the East, and much was done for us by these people. St. Mark's Lutheran of Philadelphia especially deserves our love and kind remembrance for the readily assistance they gave us. . . We had little money at that time but love for the work, and faith, and some of the grit, with which the Chicago people are most or less justly credited.

St. Mark's in Philadelphia is now a predominantly African American congregation.

FROM A 1952 SERMON

Sermon excerpt from an WGN television broadcast feature on the Holy Trinity choir (April 1952)

There is a sense of fear and uncertainty all over the world. The Newspaper headlines inform us of strikes and riots. Among the nations there is neither peace nor war. Science has shown us how to split the atom with devastating results, and we may not be on the verge of creating a weapon of greater destructiveness. Are you worried about the darkness on the horizon? There have been other days when it was the same. It was dark down in the brickyards, but Moses was beholding the burning bush. It was dark on that first Easter morn as the two women made their way to the tomb, but an angel of light was standing in the open doorway. . . It was dark in the sixteenth century, but a candle was burning in a dusty library and God was leading a Luther to relight the lamp of his truth. God isn't asleep; get on the ladder of prayer and climb up into a life of trust, knowing that God will redeem mankind from hopelessness. The dark clouds may pass across the sky, but they will never stain it.



Holy Trinity, including Pastor Clyde Steele and organist Martin Argall, appeared on WGN-TV's *Faith of Our Fathers* program in 1952. Note the backdrop, replicating a church's stained glass and the "WGN" letters on one of the cameras up above. The congregation of that era was vigorous, supporting a Bible school, three Luther Leagues, a men's brotherhood, a women's missionary society, and an altar society, not to mention regular services. (From *Lake View (Images of America)* by Matthew Nickerson)



LaSalle Street Church, where Holy Trinity worshipped from 1886 - 1912

Renovations through the years

The annual statement of the trustees, March 29, 1875, contains the following:

Cost of the finished portion of church, about	\$5,600.00
Fixtures and furniture	1,293.00
Total	\$6,893.00
Collected by Mr. Belfour in the east	\$2,650.00
" " " at home	2,127.00
" " " Materials and Fixtures	800.00
Total collected	\$5,577.00
Leaving a deficit of about	1,316.00

The lot is here estimated at \$13,000, on which was an incumbrance of about \$5,500. Shortly afterwards this loan was refunded and made \$6,000.

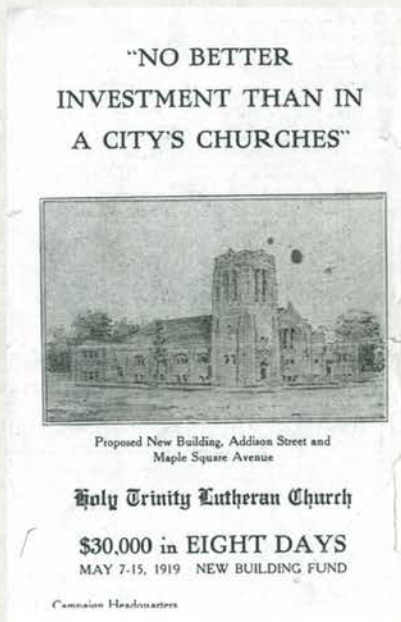
Excerpt from a historical monograph of Holy Trinity published in 1906, detailing the cost breakdown of renovations preceding 1875.



Expansive FAITH

The Expansive Faith campaign (2007 - 2009) featured expansion/renovation of the organ, and accessibility improvements (pew cuts, an accessible restroom in the narthex, and exterior ramps)

The sanctuary at Addison and Magnolia was refurbished in 1999 in preparation for the 125th Anniversary of the Congregation



New building campaign proposal, published 1919

The "Toward 100" Campaign (1019 - 2021) funded renovations including stained glass window repair, air-conditioning for the sanctuary, renovated offices, and an ADA-accessible restroom and lift. (Featured are members of Holy Trinity "breaking ground" on the new lift).

Pastors of Holy Trinity (1867 - 2024)



Frank Richards (1867 - 1873)



Edmund Belfour (1874 - 1880)



Charles Koerner (1881 - 1897)



William Evans (1898 - 1900)



William L. Hunton (1901 - 1906)



Joseph Allen Leas (1916 - 1945)



Clyde G. Steele (1945 - 1953)



Ernest Habig (1954 - 1960)



Eric R. Weber (1960 - 1966)



Paul L. Hegstrom (1966 - 1980)



Dean Bard (1981 - 1986)



Dan Schwick (1987 - 1998)



Craig Mueller (1999)



Michelle Sevig (2002)



Ben Adams (2015 - 2021)



Sharai Jacob (2024)



HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

HOLY TRINITY'S WELCOME STATEMENT (2021): Whoever we are, whatever our religious or spiritual background or how we feel about church, whatever the color of our skin, our sexual or gender identities, God welcomes us here. God's acceptance of all compels us to stand against racism, sexism, heterosexism, xenophobia, classism, ageism, ableism and all forms of hate and prejudice.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

