

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Vision Task Force

Report to Church Council

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The members of the Vision Task Force were appointed by the Church Council in the summer of 2012.

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Executive Summary

The Vision Task Force of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church prepared this report for the Church Council in response to a request from the Council to revisit the COMPASS Report that was prepared in June, 2007. That prior report describes where we were as a congregation, where we came from, and where we wanted to go. Although several years have passed since that report was compiled and a new pastor, Jay Carlson, was called to the congregation in May of 2008, the Vision Task Force commends the COMPASS Report to the congregation as a very helpful document for understanding Holy Trinity's history and ministry priorities. This report of the Vision Task Force seeks to provide a supplemental update to the COMPASS Report that reflects changes in the congregation since 2007.

Holy Trinity's ministry began in 1904, when a small number of members of another Lutheran church in South Minneapolis left to form a congregation that worshipped in English. This new church experienced significant membership growth through the years. It later saw a major loss in membership in the 1960s and 1970s with a shift of members to the suburbs and an internal division about the church's future. The church has a tradition of long pastorates.

A **current congregational profile** reveals 1,147 baptized and 897 confirmed members. The average weekly worship attendance in 2012 was 194. There are 36 children enrolled in the Sunday Church School, and 17 in the confirmation program. The congregation employs a variety of staff in the areas of office administration, worship and music, building management, and parish education. The pastoral and staff structure in recent decades has been necessarily lean, yet quite productive and prolific in initiating new programs, thanks largely to the vision, talents, and work habits of our previous pastors.

As indicated in the COMPASS Report, it is critical that we now acknowledge that Holy Trinity cannot continue to maintain the same level of program and activity using the same staffing and resource model that we have had in recent decades. While some steps have been taken in the past several years to increase staff, there is still need for a different staffing structure. A comparison of Holy Trinity with models developed by the Alban Institute reveals that Holy Trinity is a "program-sized" church that for many years has been operating with staffing more appropriate for a "pastoral-sized" congregation. This realization has important implications for the future structure of pastoral, staff, and lay resources that will be required to maintain and expand upon the ministry of Holy Trinity. Alban Institute studies show that the transition from Pastoral Church to Program Church is the most difficult transition for a congregation to make. Holy Trinity has balanced its budget every year in the last few decades. In the long term, it will most likely be necessary to increase personnel expenses to maintain our current pastor's compensation and to expand programming or pastoral staff.

Characteristics of the community surrounding Holy Trinity (Longfellow neighborhood) reveal a high level of lifestyle diversity, non-traditional family structures, and high education levels. The current population is 38,000. Sixty-eight percent of the population is single, divorced, or widowed. Ethnic diversity is increasing, with Latinos being the fastest growing group.

Holy Trinity's mission statement addresses the church's commitment to "bearing witness to God's creative and redeeming actions within the life of this community and world." In order to carry out this mission, Holy Trinity considers worship the central and integrating action of our congregation's life. Liturgies, music, and preaching form the basis for members' lives as Christians and for actions as Christ's servants in the world. Preaching is fundamental to worship at Holy Trinity. Congregants hear God's word as an active and living proclamation.

This mission commitment is also carried out through Holy Trinity's education and teaching program, which teaches the language of faith, biblical literacy, and biblical interpretation. We teach people how to think theologically. The church accomplishes this through a variety of settings and approaches including a summer program, Sunday Church School, confirmation program, adult forums, dialogue events, book studies, and study journeys.

Holy Trinity is committed to inclusiveness, including those who historically have not been welcome in other congregations. The congregation has been a Reconciling in Christ congregation for many years. At Holy Trinity we strive to welcome all people, without exception.

Holy Trinity's commitment to social justice and peace has long been a defining element of this congregation. Holy Trinity is very clearly a community that engages in the issues of our current society through dialogue, advocacy, and action. We seek to be a voice of peace and justice in our neighborhood, community, and world.

Our strong neighborhood outreach ministries involve strong partnerships with other organizations, many of whom regularly use our building for meeting space. A new addition to our local ministries is our community organizing work which was begun with the creation of a Parish Organizing Leader staff position in the spring of 2011. A congregational organizing team was formed with the primary goal of leading work on local social change that will result in concrete changes in people's lives.

During the process of gathering information for this updated report, Holy Trinity members and leaders identified several mission-related areas in which they would like to see additions, improvements, or greater emphasis. While still being committed to growth in our strength areas of worship, education, outreach, and neighborhood ministries, the two areas that emerged as deserving further consideration are 1) children, youth, and family ministries and 2) nurturing faith, life, and relationships.

Introduction

This report has several purposes:

- first, to provide a profile of the congregation and its surrounding community,
- second, to describe Holy Trinity's current priorities, mission, and values,
- third, to contribute to the congregation's ongoing journey, and to recommend changes to this journey as appropriate.

To accomplish these purposes, the report contains five major sections:

- I. a brief summary of the congregation's history,
- II. a current profile of the congregation,
- III. a profile of the surrounding community,
- IV. a description of Holy Trinity's mission and values, and
- V. recommendations for the Church Council and leaders of the congregation.

I. Remembering Our History

In 1904, a group of young members who had been active in Luther League together and had identified a need for English language worship for other young persons, left the Danish-speaking St. Peder's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood to form the Evangelical English Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity. The new church was incorporated in 1905, and held worship services and Sunday school in a rented space on Franklin Avenue in South Minneapolis. The tiny congregation of 37 persons initially could not afford to call a regular pastor, and services were conducted by seminary students and at-large missionaries. In 1908, the first regularly called pastor began serving Holy Trinity and the congregation moved into its own building — approximately three blocks from the current location. By the following year, the congregation had grown to nearly 300 members. The congregation moved to its current home in 1923.

Holy Trinity's membership increased in size with the growth of the Longfellow neighborhood from the third to sixth decades of the 20th century, and during the baby boom of the 1950s and 1960s. By 1954, Holy Trinity was the third largest church in the United Lutheran Church of America, with a baptized membership of nearly 3,500 persons. Starting in the 1960s, the congregation became divided over whether to focus its efforts into an ambitious building construction project or into outreach and community service. This debate, along with the flight to the suburbs and other societal trends, led to a significant decrease in membership and downsizing of staff. Currently, baptized membership is approximately 1,200.

Holy Trinity has a tradition of long pastorates. Just three senior pastors have served Holy Trinity for 84 of its 102 years. Pastor Carl Bartsch served the congregation for 33 years (from 1917 until his death in 1950). Pastor Paul Graf served for 19 years (1950-1969), along with Wayne Wickoren, who worked primarily with youth and visitation. Pastor Ronald Karl Johnson was called to Holy Trinity in 1974 and served for 32 years until his retirement in 2006. After a two-year period with Bruce Arnevik as interim pastor, Pastor Jay Carlson accepted a call in 2008 and is currently serving the congregation.

Holy Trinity remains a church deeply rooted in its neighborhood yet involved with the larger world and active in international endeavors. It has come full circle from its beginning as an English-speaking church spun off from a Danish-speaking congregation to currently hosting a Swahili congregation of the ELCA and hoping to expand its ministry to the local community.

II. Congregational Profile

This section summarizes the characteristics of the Holy Trinity membership, the organizational structure, and financial situation. An expanded version of this section, complete with in-depth explanation, graphs, and statistics, is included in Appendix A.

A. Membership Characteristics

Since the mid '70s, Holy Trinity membership has been relatively stable with new members of all ages replacing those members who have died or retired from active membership. The current membership estimate is shown below.

2012 Membership Statistics

Baptized	1,147
Confirmed	897
# in Sunday School (thru gr 6)	36
# in Confirmation (7-10 th gr)	17
New Members	24
Members Removed	19
Average Worship Attendance	194

Demographic Pattern: Estimates of congregation demographics indicate that Holy Trinity is:

- largely a middle-aged to older congregation with close to half of the active adult members between 40 and 59 years of age, and with almost as many active members over 60 years of age.
- more than a neighborhood congregation with less than half of its active members living in the immediate Longfellow neighborhood, a quarter living in nearby neighborhoods, and about a quarter living in more distant areas of the Twin Cities.
- experiencing growth in younger adults, both singles and couples.

B. Organization Structure

Over the last 35 years, **the pastoral structure** has varied from two full-time pastors to one full-time pastor and some combination of part-time assistant pastors or interns. Currently, we have one full-time pastor.

The **current staff structure** consists of four main areas:

- a. worship and music staff made up of a part-time choir director, part-time organist, part-time youth choir director, and two part-time accompanists.
- b. full-time church administrator, one part-time office staff, and several volunteer office workers
- c. building management and custodial staff comprised of a full-time building manager, two part-time janitors, and a number of volunteers
- d. part-time Sunday School coordinator and two part-time nursery attendants
- e. part-time Parish Organizing Leader

The **structure for lay leadership and member involvement** in the operations of the church consists primarily of the elected Church Council and a number of standing committees.

The church council consists of 12 members elected to staggered three-year terms and four additional members appointed to one-year terms, plus the pastor(s) and the treasurer.

The committees are listed in the expanded section in Appendix A.

Observations/Conclusions

Studies by the Alban Institute, which analyze congregations based on size, provide an important perspective on church structure for Holy Trinity. Most relevant for Holy Trinity are the Pastoral Church (50 to 150 active members) and the Program Church (150 to 350 active members). In the Pastoral Church, direct ministry (e.g., pastoral care, visitor follow-up) and congregational growth are primarily dependent on the pastor. This church functions like a single cell “family” where everybody knows everybody. Research indicates 150 active members is generally the limit for one pastor to know in depth. The Program Church is an organization where many cells of activity are led by lay leaders and staff in addition to the pastor. The role of the pastor shifts with the need to step back from some direct pastoral ministry in order to work with other leaders and staff to plan and develop programs.

Holy Trinity is a Program Church, which has in many ways been operating as if it were a Pastoral Church. Studies show that the transition from Pastoral Church to Program Church is the most difficult transition to make. In recent decades, Holy Trinity’s pastoral and other staffing has been lean yet extremely productive and prolific in initiating new programs and initiatives—thanks largely to the vision, talents, and work habits of our previous pastors. Simply continuing with the same number of pastoral staff is not adequate to maintain the current program level.

We can draw two conclusions from this discussion on structure:

1. To maintain, much less grow in, its life and mission, Holy Trinity will need to “act its size” as a Program Church.
2. To accomplish this requires identifying and exploring alternative pastoral and staffing structures that might be appropriate for Holy Trinity in the future, as well as how to financially leverage and sustain these alternatives.

C. Finances

1. Budget Figures and Trends

The actual budgets for the last two years and proposed for 2013 are listed in the table below:

INCOME	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Budget
Envelopes	415,533	417,703	426,000
Other giving	43,272	26,695	25,000
Use of HT	70,826	70,756	70,000
Interest/Earnings	60,263	72,760	61,000
Admin Fees	18,800	18,502	19,000
Staffing Fund	0	0	10,000
Total:	608,694	606,416	611,000

EXPENSES	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Budget
Personnel	360,856	354,342	355,000
Church Property	101,739	95,418	99,000
Benevolence	95,000	95,000	97,000
Office Expense	23,006	16,846	19,000
Committee/Other	27,895	33,302	41,000
Total:	608,496	594,908	611,000

Holy Trinity has essentially balanced its budget every year for the last few decades. And while members have continually increased their giving in response to increased need, the increase in expenditures has been very frugal.

From 2007 to 2013, **the personnel budget** increased by 7% (from 332,000 to 355,000) The personnel budget is still extremely modest for the breadth and depth of staffing talent that we are fortunate to have.

In 2007, a Future Staffing Fund was established after the church received a significant estate gift. The congregation decided to use this fund for creating the Parish Outreach Leader position. However, since the position was changed to half-time, it has not been necessary to subsidize the personnel budget with the Future Staffing Fund. The Future Staffing Fund was not used in 2012. The fund currently contains \$68,700.

III. Community Profile

The information in this section, which describes the demographics and characteristics of the neighborhood in which Holy Trinity is located, is from the COMPASS Report from 2007. It is the opinion of the VTF that this information is still basically correct. The trends identified in 2007 are continuing.

Holy Trinity has been an integral part of the surrounding Longfellow neighborhood for decades. Holy Trinity buildings occupy a beautiful campus just south of the newly renovated East Lake Street in South Minneapolis. According to Percept's Ministry Area Profile 2005, many families in Longfellow are non-traditional, with 68 percent of the population being single, divorced, or widowed. Longfellow Parish residents are also described as having a very high education level. More than one-third (34.1 percent) of adult residents hold bachelor's or graduate degrees (national average is 24.4 percent). One-third of the population is between the ages of 24 and 44 years. Children and the elderly are somewhat under-represented compared to the national average. The religious affiliation of neighborhood residents includes a higher proportion of Lutherans (18 percent) than the national average (7.2 percent).

Longfellow's population of roughly 38,000 people has decreased by 4.6% since 1990 and is projected to continue to decline slightly. Nevertheless, Longfellow has a diverse and vibrant population, with increasing ethnic diversity. Latinos are the most concentrated and fastest growing ethnic group in the area. Evidence of this trend is apparent in the many Latino-owned businesses along East Lake Street, as well as the "se habla español" signs welcoming Spanish speakers to other, mainstream businesses.

Increasing options for public and non-traditional transportation are making the area around Holy Trinity more and more livable. The Minneapolis Light Rail Transit (LRT) system runs along the western edge of Longfellow. The LRT has made it possible to travel to downtown Minneapolis and the airport quickly and inexpensively. High-density housing is being built around the Lake Street, 38th Street and 46th Street LRT stations. In addition, the Midtown Greenway – a biking and walking path connecting the western lakes of Minneapolis with Saint Paul – runs through the Longfellow and Seward neighborhoods. The Greenway has made non-motorized transport very accessible to area residents.

Several business hubs have been successfully redeveloped in recent years. These include the 27th Avenue & Lake Street area, the 38th Street & 42nd Avenue corner, and more. A mix of non-chain restaurants, ethnic businesses, and public services are contributing to this revitalization.

The neighborhood historically has had many small, community-based schools, although a few schools have been closed in recent years because of diminishing numbers of young families in the area.

IV. Holy Trinity's Mission

We, the baptized people of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, are committed to bearing witness to God's creative and redeeming actions within the life of this community and world.

We proclaim the Good News of Jesus the Christ through Word and Sacrament.

We assist and challenge people to address the issues of life and faith in the light of the biblical witness.

We respond to human need as servants and advocates.

We endeavor to be prophetic in the search for justice and peace.

We welcome, with no exception, all people to the full life of this community of faith.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's Mission Statement

In this section of the report we describe the overall nature of Holy Trinity's mission (or, as one member described it, "our DNA") and the areas of potential growth identified.

Congregational members and other interested persons repeatedly mentioned five strong areas of excellence at Holy Trinity. These included: 1) the quality of our worship, including liturgy, music, and preaching; 2) the breadth and depth of our educational programs for children and adults; 3) our sense of community identity; 4) our emphasis on social justice and service; and 5) our neighborhood outreach. While hoping to continue to deepen our ministry in those strength areas, members also indicated a desire for greater emphasis in two additional areas. These were 1) children, youth, and family ministry and 2) nurturing faith, life, and relationships.

A. WORSHIP: LITURGY, MUSIC AND PREACHING

The integrity of the worship experience at Holy Trinity, through liturgy, music, and preaching, challenges and nurtures the congregation and motivates us for further action in the world. Worship is the central and integrating action of our congregation's life together. It forms the basis for our lives as Christians and for our actions as Christ's servants in the world. It is the one thing that we do together as a congregation and it defines our identity. Whether worship occurs in the context of the Sunday morning liturgy, a Lenten Evening Prayer, or a choral concert, the act of worship attracts and keeps people at Holy Trinity. It is the hub from which all actions of the congregation radiate.

At Worship, we gather to praise God and ask for God's guidance. Through Word and Sacrament, and through people of the community of faith, God's prophetic word and God's word of grace are mediated. There are two weekly Sunday morning worship services and our building hosts a Swahili language service congregation. Nearly all services include both Word and Sacrament. Holy Trinity has a policy of Open Communion. We hold evening prayer services on Wednesdays during Advent and Lent and on other significant church days. Holy Trinity occasionally participates in worship with other Lutheran churches in the neighborhood and in ecumenical worship with other denominations.

1. Liturgy

“Liturgical” implies pattern, structure, and relatedness. Thus it is that lessons, hymns, statements of faith, sermon, intercessions, offertory, and communion occur in a developmental sequence and have a common theme. Liturgical also implies an act of the people. Therefore, each worship service at Holy Trinity involves lay persons in leadership roles and in the process of communion.

Holy Trinity is committed to having its worship liturgy be a genuine work of the people. The liturgies are traditional and Lutheran – the Word and Sacraments at their center. We use a wide variety of liturgies that reflect our values of respect for other spiritual traditions, inclusiveness and acceptance of all people, and peace and justice. We use several liturgies on a rotating basis, including the Evangelical Lutheran Worship, *Taizé*, African, Lima (World Council of Churches), Spanish, and Marty Haugen's *Now the Feast & Celebration*. We also use two liturgies composed by Holy Trinity members Robert Wetzler (*Holy Trinity Liturgy*) and Rachel Trelstad Porter (*Cup of Blessing*). Our flexible use of various liturgies keeps our worship interesting, relevant, and prophetic; and it becomes a response to the needs of our community and world.

2. Music

As liturgical implies structure, pattern, and relatedness, the music that surrounds and fills the liturgy, from prelude to postlude, supports and reinforces the themes from the day's biblical texts, always maintaining a standard of excellence. Holy Trinity worshippers generously share a wide range of musical gifts, attracting and engaging people of all ages. Children and adults participate as composers, singers, musicians, and listeners. Our worship music enriches our spiritual lives. Holy Trinity presently has a children's choir, two youth choirs, two adult choirs, and a handbell choir. The people of Holy Trinity value and enjoy singing and the music that is performed within the context of the worship service.

3. Preaching

Preaching (proclaiming the good news of Jesus' resurrection) is fundamental to worship at Holy Trinity. We hear God's word as an active and living proclamation. Lectionary texts define Sunday morning preaching, and Evening Prayer series are planned around chosen themes. Sermons are prophetic, thought provoking, and theologically grounded. They integrate the Gospel message with social justice and reflect on how we can live lives of love, service, and responsibility for God's creation.

B. EDUCATION AND TEACHING

When done properly, Christian education helps shape and define the Church and its task. Therefore Holy Trinity teaches the language of faith, biblical literacy, and biblical interpretation. We invite people to think theologically. We look at the scriptures and our tradition from a historical perspective, and critique them accordingly. We teach worship, as well as sacramental and confessional understandings of our corporate life. Holy Trinity offers Christian education for all ages, to assist baptized persons as they seek to live as faithful Christian people. The church accomplishes this using a variety of settings and approaches.

At Holy Trinity, Christian education opportunities are designed for ages 3 through adulthood. Age 3 through grade 6 uses a curriculum that follows the lectionary and ties the educational experience to worship. This material is enhanced with stories from children's literature, interpretive art projects, music, and experienced learning techniques. The confirmation curriculum for grades 7 to 9 covers five primary areas of study: 1) the Bible story, 2) Luther's Small Catechism, 3) worship life of the Church, 4) Lutheran theology and history of the church, and 5) ethical reflection and conversation with our culture. There is currently no regular educational programming for high school youth, following confirmation in the fall of 10th grade.

The Summer Program is a highlight of Holy Trinity's Christian education program. Each summer, we offer Vacation Church School for children ages 3 through grade 6. In previous years we have also offered additional summer programming, including 1) a music and drama workshop for grades 1 to 6, 2) building a shed for Habitat for Humanity for grades 6 to 8, 3) "Exploring the City" for grades 6 through 8, 4) a Youth Ensemble for grades 7 through 12 and adults, 5) a Hand Bell Workshop for youth, 6) a "Symphonia Project," and 7) a Boundary Waters canoe trip.

Adults also have a variety of educational opportunities. A Sunday morning Adult Forum provides an opportunity for people to deal with a variety of wide-ranging themes, some of which are controversial in nature. Forums usually begin with a presentation by a resource person, followed by discussion time. Themes range from biblical study to theological reflection to issues in the life of the church and the world.

A tradition of sponsoring regular dialogue events has helped establish Holy Trinity as a center for moral and ethical debate in the Twin Cities area. Dialogue events are usually offered in the context of a weekday luncheon or breakfast meeting. The format is similar to the Adult Forum, with a presentation by resource person followed by a discussion session. Themes are usually related to a moral or ethical issue before the community, state, nation, or church. We periodically host major dialogue events such as the annual Johnson Symposium where a nationally recognized resource person is invited to make a series of presentations over a period of two or three days. These events have exposed the congregation to some of the cutting-edge thinking in theology and major social and ethical issues. A fund exists to support these major events.

From time to time, study groups have formed around a theological or issue-oriented book or an ELCA social statement. These groups are an additional opportunity for Christian education and deepening interpersonal connections. Holy Trinity also organizes book-reading projects for its members.

Study journeys to various parts of the United States and the world offer other opportunities for Christian education. Study groups from Holy Trinity have traveled to Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, Chicago, Boston, the Mexican border, the Iona Community in Scotland, and Washington, D.C. Travelers usually have contact with local churches during their visits. These trips provide in-depth opportunities for participants to learn about social, economic, and political realities of other cultures, and have broadened and nourished the discussion of world issues among Holy Trinity members.

Congregational members have indicated a desire for additional small group study opportunities in the form of Bible study, introduction to Christian theology classes, discussion groups, or prayer/study groups.

C. COMMUNITY

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is a community of faith that seeks to be “a living sign of Christ alive and active in this neighborhood.” Community is a complicated term, sometimes referring to the congregation itself, and sometimes referring to the Longfellow neighborhood or the parish of Holy Trinity.

Holy Trinity is committed to inclusiveness, especially of those individuals who have sometimes not been welcome historically in other congregations. The congregation has been a Reconciling in Christ congregation for many years. While being committed to the depths of its corporate being in this area, Holy Trinity has not chosen to draw significant attention to itself for making this commitment. Instead the congregants simply live out the gospel by including and blending people into the life and ministry of the congregation.

The congregation’s commitment to the Christian education of its young people has been primarily geared toward high expectation of understanding the essential message of the gospel and the tradition. It has done this primarily through quality study and intergenerational opportunities. There are regular educational trips that include about half-and-half youth and adults, such as going to the Heifer International farm in Arkansas, the Mexican border to hear about immigration and talk with workers in *maquiladoras*, and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Holy Trinity started a theater circle in 1994, the vision of a couple of congregants. Plays are intentionally chosen to educate the actors and the public, and to include multigenerational casts. Each show deepens the connection between the adults and young people involved in the production. Shows have included *It’s a Wonderful Life*, *The Orphan Train*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *Grapes of Wrath*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The choirs similarly are activities where the generations can connect. In addition to being very strong choirs, the youth choirs have become feeder programs into the Adult Choir, making it another place of intergenerational community.

The congregation has a long-standing commitment to music and fine arts. Occasional photo exhibits come through the congregation. The artwork of the congregation is often displayed. And every couple of years all congregants are invited to share their creativity in a fine arts display. The tradition of storytelling is increasingly finding its way into the congregation's life.

In recent years progressive meals have been a very popular way for congregants to get to know each other better. Even more recently, members have hosted fellowship meals, where smaller numbers of people come together for the evening, again for relationship building. The always-popular annual Minnesota Meal is a chance to be reminded of how difficult it is to live on local agriculture in modern society.

As discussed below, one of the primary areas of growth for the Holy Trinity community is to find the ways to know members better, and to care for each other at critical moments in people's lives. The community can become a place of greater individual support without losing its commitment to be an agent of structural and systemic change.

D. SOCIAL ISSUES AND SERVICE

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's commitment to social justice and peace has long been a defining element of the congregation. Based on the belief that the church has a responsibility to engage the broader society on issues affecting the life of the community, Holy Trinity has been active in advocating for justice on a myriad of levels over the years. The congregation has been intentional about changing its focus along the way, always seeking to respond to current local and worldwide needs.

The Peace with Justice Committee is charged with coordinating research, study, programs, and advocacy with respect to social justice and peace issues for the congregation. Activities that enable the congregation to be a community of moral and ethical discourse are also encouraged. Dialogue events and adult forums featuring speakers on timely issues have been a primary means of engaging in this moral and ethical discourse. In these ways, members are educated and encouraged to both reflect and act on important issues. Involvement in social issues has also been an important means of forging connections with our neighborhood, community, and world.

In our immediate community, Holy Trinity has been especially active in housing concerns. As well as advocating for policy change, Holy Trinity has committed significant resources to providing housing options for vulnerable groups. The church campus is currently home to 144 units of housing in two separate buildings.

As part of our active involvement in broad, general community issues, Holy Trinity also has supported or provided specific direct services to persons in need in a variety of ways. Current examples include delivering Meals on Wheels to homebound persons, supporting the Minnehaha Food Shelf, serving meals for the Loaves and Fishes program and for residents at Trinity Apartments and Trinity on Lake, and sponsoring a Fare for All Express distribution site in our building.

Holy Trinity has also played an advocacy role to address critical current events and community needs. For example, the congregation regularly introduces resolutions regarding a variety of social issues for consideration by the synod assemblies, holds letter-writing offerings, and supports peace movement efforts (including vigilance at the School of the Americas).

Recognizing our part in a global community is also strongly valued by members of Holy Trinity. Issues affecting our brothers and sisters around the world have been brought home through study trips and ongoing connections to communities in such places as Tanzania, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico and Nicaragua. For example, Holy Trinity established and administers a pension fund for retired Lutheran pastors in Tanzania and was a member of Sal y Luz (in solidarity with other Christians in Colombia). In addition, Holy Trinity supports the Interchange Institute of El Salvador and other such groups, and participates in Bread for the World and Amnesty International letter-writing campaigns.

Our call to be stewards of God's creation has motivated involvement in environmental issues. Programs related to the environment have included the annual Minnesota Meal, which seeks to demonstrate and encourage the use of locally grown food and increase our awareness of the impact of our food choices on the environment. Holy Trinity serves as a drop-off site for monthly deliveries from the Pastures-A-Plenty holistically managed family farm in west central Minnesota. Members of the congregation are encouraged to educate themselves and advocate for pro-environment legislation as well as be challenged to make lifestyle changes that positively impact our environment. Environmental concerns have been incorporated into decisions about the maintenance of the church property. Examples of this include making improvements in lighting efficiency, installing energy-efficient windows, composting food waste, and constructing a rain garden. The Property Committee is currently exploring options for installing solar panels on the church roof.

For many years, social and environmental issues have often been included in the sermons preached from Holy Trinity's pulpit. Consideration of biblical texts in light of our current social context has become a hallmark of Holy Trinity's preaching. The recent congregational survey indicated that many members value this emphasis on social issues in the sermons. The theme of social justice has also been strong in the Christian education programs for adults and youth. The Holy Trinity Theatre Circle has provided another means of exploring social issues. The mission statement speaks of producing plays that exemplify thought-provoking drama highlighting important moral and social issues. Finally, information about current social issues and how we can respond is provided to the congregation regularly through the bulletin, the *Community Church* newsletter, and email alerts. Members are thus given the opportunity to advocate for change.

Holy Trinity is committed to being a leader for social change in a variety of ways, from direct service to social policy advocacy to direct action. The current campaign for justice in personal finance and "payday" lending is one example of an issue the congregation hopes to address with multiple approaches.

Holy Trinity has made intentional global connections, seeing itself as part of the broader community. It expresses its commitment to this view through its connection to the Minneapolis Area Synod and the ELCA. A significant commitment of finances (benevolence) and energy (people involved in synod committee work) arises out of Holy Trinity. Global connections, through church or secular structures, are an important element of self-identification for the congregation. Holy Trinity is very clearly a community that engages in the issues of our current society through dialogue, advocacy, and action. We seek to be a voice for peace and justice in our neighborhood, our community, and our world.

E. NEIGHBORHOOD MINISTRIES AND OUTREACH

Holy Trinity's mission statement asserts that "we welcome, with no exception, all people to the full life of this community of faith." Holy Trinity pastors and members have long participated in community activities, events, and organizations, making this a strong tool for outreach and evangelism. The congregation is one of the largest in the greater Longfellow neighborhood and is well known in the community for its contributions to community life, even among unchurched persons or persons connected to other places of worship. Examples of strong community partners include the Longfellow Community Council and its committees, the Longfellow Business Association, the Lake Street Council, the Longfellow Faith Forum, and Volunteers of America.

The church campus is a resource for the congregation and the community. Numerous issue or neighborhood groups use the congregation for regular or occasional meetings. The church is often host for dialogue events with city or state elected officials. For decades, Holy Trinity has housed Metro Work Center, a day activity for adults with special needs, and now also hosts the Bright Prospects Cooperative Preschool. The church is now a successful distribution site for the Fare for All Express program, through the leadership of the Holy Trinity Outreach Committee. The building is indeed a resource to Longfellow community, as well as to nonprofit service organizations that are metro wide.

Holy Trinity has two housing projects on its campus—a large senior citizen building and a 24-unit apartment building with 1/3 market units, 1/3 Section 8 units, and 1/3 units specially established for people with a variety of disabilities. Trinity Apartments, when first constructed, allowed people to continue living in Longfellow even as they were no longer able to maintain their home, keeping a vital resource in the neighborhood. Holy Trinity has also been involved in more than 25 Habitat for Humanity projects. Sharing the Holy Trinity campus is the East Lake Library branch of the Hennepin County Library System.

The Holy Trinity campus has also been recently improved by the construction of a beautiful new rain garden and community gathering space. It was initiated as an environmentally responsible way of dealing with excess storm water runoff from our building, protecting the river and other local waterways from harmful pollutants and erosion. Recognizing the high volume of pedestrian traffic through the area, the congregation also wanted to make it a welcoming green space for the neighborhood's use. In 2012, a stage was added for outdoor congregational events.

Following both historic tradition and a new vision for the congregation, Holy Trinity hired a Parish Organizing Leader to assist the congregation in being a leader for social change in our neighborhood. In August 2011, the Parish Outreach Leader and three members of the congregation attended a community organizing training in Chicago and came back ready to work. A congregational organizing team was formed with the primary goal of leading work on local social change that will result in concrete changes in people's lives. Throughout the fall of 2011, these leaders worked steadily to develop and explore options for a campaign for social justice. Building on congregational and community assets, as well as key learning from one-on-one conversations, these leaders began to focus on food and education issues in our wider south Minneapolis community. However, during the process of issue analysis, strategy development and communal discernment, leaders were instead led to focus on payday lending. The leadership team and church council have been energized by and supportive of this direction in our justice work. A focus on payday lending injustice has also been affirmed by other local and national organizations, including the national Center for Responsible Lending.

Many members believe the congregation could and should further develop our outreach activities and strategies. This was based on the recognition that despite saying we welcome all people, we actually are fairly homogeneous, especially racially and ethnically, while the surrounding community is becoming more diverse. Members recognize that diversity can lead to greater vitality, strength, and understanding. Some of the neighborhood's increasing diversity is racial and ethnic, but people also want us to have programming that appeals to non-traditional families and single persons.

F. AREAS FOR GROWTH

During the process of gathering information for this report, Holy Trinity members and leaders identified areas in which they would like to see additions, improvements, or greater emphasis. A variety of responses were received, and two particular areas emerged as the most common themes and merit further consideration: 1) children, youth, and family and 2) nurturing faith, life, and relationships.

1. Children, Youth, and Family

The booming years of Holy Trinity were during the 1950s. Holy Trinity reached its membership zenith in 1959, with nearly 5,000 members. In 1954, 312 students were enrolled in Sunday school. Luther League events, providing devotions, discussion, and recreation for the older youth (7th to 12th graders), were very popular with up to 30 youth attending. There were so many youth that the traditional one high-school-through-adult-aged group needed to be split up into three separate, interlinked leagues. Youth had their own space in the 4th-floor Sky Room, and seminary students and pastors were involved in activities. For many youth, church and the Luther League events "were the center of my teenaged world."

Fifty-some years later, the Holy Trinity Youth Program looks quite different. The number of Sunday school students has decreased and church life now competes with other activities for youth's time and involvement. In 2012, approximately 35 pupils attended Sunday school (K through 5th grade). In recent years, the number of 7th- to 12th-grade youth attending youth events ranged from five to 15.

The Summer Program is a very strong asset and an important ministry to children and families living in Longfellow and surrounding neighborhoods. Many families are first introduced to Holy Trinity through our Summer Program. However, the attendance at the Vacation Church School and other programs has decreased in recent years, largely due to the closing of the church Latch Key program. Along with continuing our significant advertising in the community, it has been suggested that we offer full-day programming, at least for older children, during the Vacation Church School week.

Pastor Jay Carlson and the Youth Committee have primary responsibility for activities for the older youth, particularly grades 7 through 12. Several volunteer teachers teach 7th- to 10th-grade confirmation classes. Preparation for confirmation is an integral part of the Youth Program. A Confirmation sponsor program was added in 2001. This program connects each confirmand with an adult member of the congregation who commits to taking a special interest in that youth during the four years of confirmation preparation, and hopefully afterwards as well.

In addition to educational and social activities specifically for youth, Holy Trinity encourages youth participation in other areas of church life. The Holy Trinity Theatre Circle is a wonderful place for youth and adults to connect. Plays have roles for both youth and adults. The Children's, *Cantate!*, and Justified by Faith choirs participate in worship services frequently and other youth with musical talents are encouraged and asked to perform during worship (musical instruments, canting). Acolytes tend to be younger children, and high school youth and adults serve as ushers. Intergenerational study trips are popular with the youth and are a good way for them to build connections with adults.

While the Youth Program is comprehensive and provides a range of opportunities, the program struggles with fully engaging youth in its activities. Often a critical mass of youth do not participate. This struggle is illustrated by the challenge of keeping youth involved after they are confirmed. While some youth may continue to be involved in worship, theater, and other areas of the church, there is little involvement in youth activities. Although smaller numbers of older youth and competition with other activities for youth's time account for some of this, we recognize that there are more opportunities to keep youth involved as they get older.

The Youth Committee has tried several strategies to address the decreased involvement of youth after they are confirmed. For example, we have partnered with neighboring congregations with small youth groups to gather a critical mass of participants for regular youth events. Currently, Holy Trinity does not provide consistent activities specifically for post-confirmation youth.

The youth are proud of the church's commitment to social justice and action in the community and world. The Holy Trinity Theatre Circle is a favorite activity for many, and youth like how it builds relationships with other, often older, members. The many activities that youth can be involved in—the trips, community service, and retreats—are highlights. They value the welcoming atmosphere, as well as building community and friendships with each other and other members. They like the quality of music and singing that is a part of worship.

These elements and the many things that the youth value about Holy Trinity are things upon which we need to build in order to engage youth and provide a ministry that speaks to them. Creating a community where youth feel comfortable and supported to explore questions of faith, life, and the future is critical. Holy Trinity has many strengths and resources to draw upon to enhance our ministry to youth, and we are eager to move forward and grow in this area.

2. Nurturing Faith, Life, and Relationships

Holy Trinity has a Nurturing Fellowship Committee whose members provide for the development of special groups such as seniors or young families, coordinate efforts to care for homebound persons and those in special need, and arrange special fellowship events. This provides hospitality and promotes inclusiveness of all persons, without exception (seeing Christ in everyone). Examples of programs include the small dinner fellowship project, Loaves and Fishes, prayer labyrinth, Advent conversations, and progressive dinners.

Although there is widespread support for our high level of community involvement and being “part of something bigger than ourselves,” members indicate a desire for a variety of small group activity so that they can nurture and be nurtured on a personal level. They want more opportunities to develop their personal spiritual life, the emotional side of their faith, and deeper relationships with each other. They want to be more aware of what is happening in each other’s lives during times of need and celebration.

Small group fellowship meals in members’ homes have been very much appreciated. It has been a challenge for volunteers, however, to administer such a large project. Organizing the meals in a way that includes all Holy Trinity members will involve creative use of the new church management software and staff time.

Many newcomers to Holy Trinity mention that they felt welcomed when they first started visiting, both by the friendliness of members and by personal contacts made by the pastoral staff after their visit. The congregation wishes to improve the welcome we extend and also assist visitors and new members in feeling at home in this community.

An increased emphasis on nurturing should not come at the cost of diminishing Holy Trinity’s strong emphasis on social justice work and outreach to the neighborhood and the world. Sustaining the faith community itself will strengthen its ability to work toward other goals and would be consistent with the portion of our mission statement that declares that “we assist and challenge people to address the issues of life and faith in the light of the biblical witness.”

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion #1: There is strong agreement within the congregation that we need to strengthen ministries with children, youth, and families.

Recommendations:

- Review and revise the Sunday School program.
- Develop stronger methods of recruiting, supporting, and retaining Sunday School and confirmation teachers.
- Include children and youth in worship leadership and participation in addition to involvement in choirs and handbell choir (e.g. writing prayers, reading, assisting, ushers, helping in nursery).
- Develop more ways outside of Sunday School and confirmation classes for young people to explore with their peers questions of faith, life, and the future.
- Encourage youth service opportunities in the community and the church.
- Consider starting parenting groups.

Conclusion #2: There is strong agreement within the congregation that it is important to strengthen relationships to support one another and nurture faith.

Recommendations:

- Explore ways to challenge people to address the issues of life and faith in the light of the biblical witness.
- Develop new ways of encouraging fuller participation by current members, including better use of our church management software.
- While continuing intergenerational ministry opportunities, find ways to foster relationships within peer groups.
- Continue to form groups around shared interests.
- Review and revise our new member orientation process.
- Add Bible studies and faith discussion opportunities that focus on the fundamentals of Lutheran Christian faith.
- Explore ways of communicating church activities in addition to the church newsletter and bulletin.

Conclusion #3: Given the congregation's desire to maintain current programming while also enhancing ministry in the areas of 1) children, youth, and family and 2) nurturing faith, life, and relationships, it is our conclusion that the current pastoral and lay staffing structure is insufficient to achieve these goals.

Recommendation: The VTF recommends that the Church Council explore ways to augment the staff structure, keeping in mind the two areas for growth. Among the options would be the addition of a full-time or part-time ordained pastor.

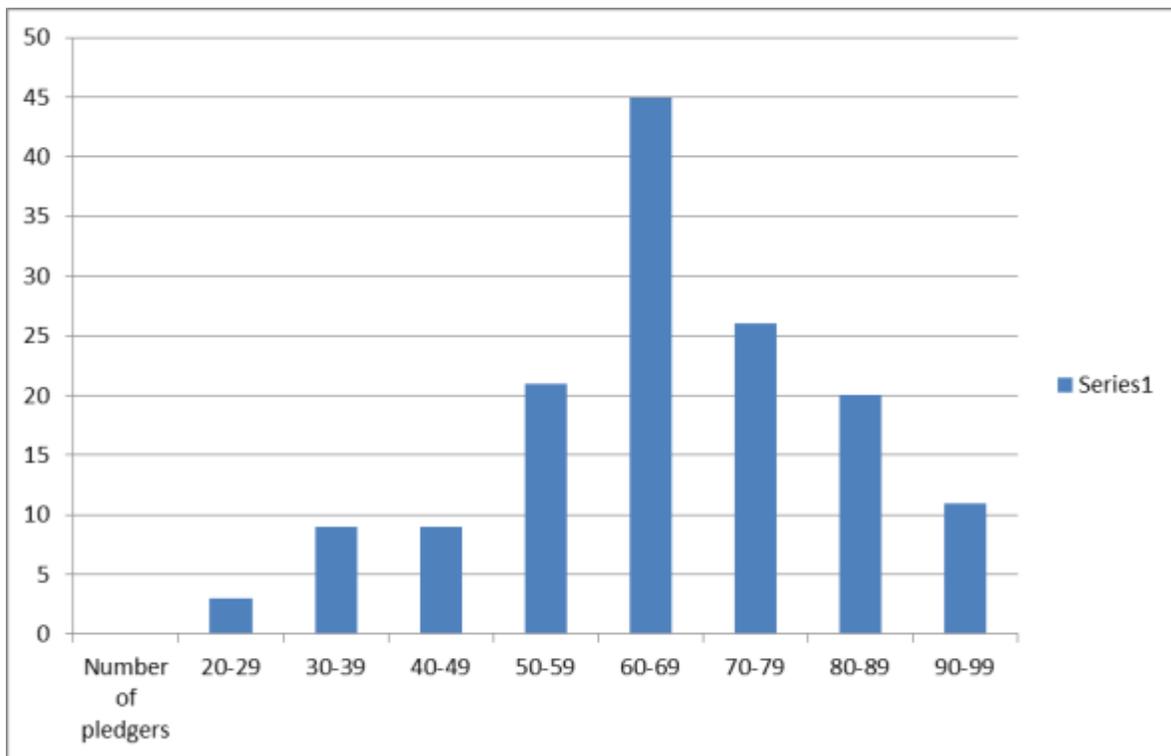
APPENDIX A Congregational Profile

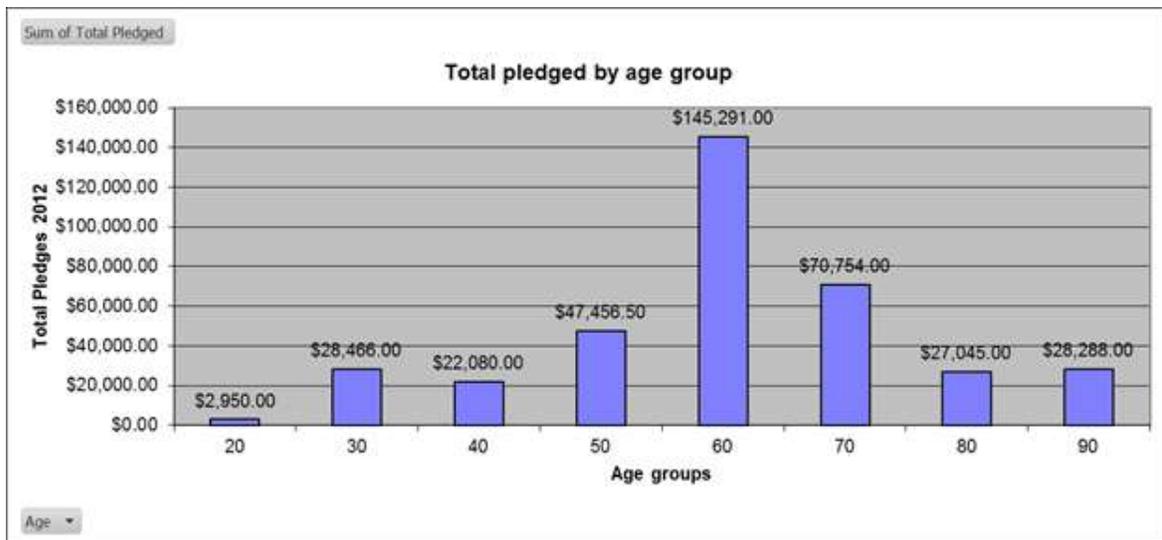
A. MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

2012 Membership Statistics

Baptized	1,147
Confirmed	897
# in Sunday School	36
# in Confirmation (7-10 th gr)	17
New Members	24
Members Removed	19

Pledging by Age Group:





B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

1. Brief history of structure

Making Your Church More Inviting (Roy Oswald, Alban Institute, 1992) describes a number of typical church organization structures related to size of active membership, which are summarized below:

Family Church

Up to 50 Active Members

Functions like a family with one or two strong lay leaders or families in parental role (patriarchs/matriarchs) at center. Pastor's primary role is to provide pastoral care as "family chaplain." High clergy turnover. Family Church learns to survive long vacancies and short pastorates of the often ineffective pastors who are sent to them by relying on their strong parental lay leaders. These leaders guard against pastor taking congregation off in new directions. Family Church needs a pastor to stay and love them for ten years, playing by the rules of the patriarchs/matriarchs for the first 3 to 5 years.

Pastoral Church (50 to 150 active members)

Pastor usually at center of congregation's life and events. Leadership circle of pastor and lay leaders replaces patriarchs/matriarchs of Family Church. Power and effectiveness of leadership circle depend on good communication with congregation and pastor's ability to delegate responsibility to and recognize others. Church still functions as a "family" where everybody knows everybody. 150 active members is limit for one pastor to know in depth. Growth depends on popularity and effectiveness of pastor. Pastor does most follow up on visitors. Pastor provides all pastoral care to members. Spiritual needs of members met through personal relationship with the pastor – e.g., the pastor-led Bible study. Highest level of "burn-out" among pastors probably in Pastoral Church.

Program Church (150-350 active members)

Both pastor *and* programs draw people to church and provide spiritual growth alternatives that supplement the pastor-centered ones. Church is no longer a single cell organism, but rather has many cells of activity run by other staff and lay leaders who also provide some pastoral care functions. Pastor still at center of congregation, but role shifts in major way. Instead of providing all the pastoral care and leading most spiritual growth opportunities, the pastor's role becomes one of program planning and development and working more with lay leaders and other staff to carry on the life and ministry of the church. Pastor involved in recruiting, training, motivating, supervising, and evaluating lay leaders and other staff. Pastor must often step back from direct ministry to support these leaders and staff.

Corporate Church (350 to 500+ active members)

A lot of resources, as well as staff and volunteer time, are invested in making Sunday worship a quality experience. Senior pastor frequently puts more time into preaching and worship preparation than other pastors on staff. In very large Corporate Church, senior pastor may not know many members by name. Other pastors may, for instance, make most hospital visits. Members sacrifice personal connection with senior pastor for variety and quality of congregation's programs. Key to success is the multiple staff and how well they work together. Senior pastor needs strong administrative skills as 'CEO' of organization. Needs to manage multiple staff and needs strong leadership skills to generate energy and momentum within the congregation. (Dynamics change further with over 1,000 active members)

2. Current pastoral and staff structure and roles

Over the last 30 years, **the pastoral structure** has evolved from two full-time pastors to one full-time pastor and some combination of part-time assistant pastors or interns. In 1998 Pastor Stacy Johnson was called to be a part-time assistant pastor whose contract was co-terminus with that of Pastor Ronald Johnson. The two pastors shared worship and pastoral care responsibilities, while Pastor Stacy Johnson took primary responsibility for youth education and curriculum. Currently we have one full-time pastor, Pastor Jay Carlson.

In order to live within our means, **the staff structure** was substantially reduced in the mid-1970s. There are currently five areas of permanent staff.

- a. Worship and music staff made up of a choir director and organist, both part-time positions, and a third part-time position working with youth choirs.
- b. Office and financial staff are made up of a full-time church administrator position, which includes the treasurer's responsibilities, a part-time office staff position, and a number of volunteers.

- c. Building management and custodial staff comprised by a full-time building manager, two part-time janitors, and a number of volunteers.
- d. A part-time Sunday School coordinator position was created following Pastor Johnson's retirement.
- e. A part-time Parish Organizer.

3. Council and committee structure and roles

The structure for lay leadership and member involvement in the operations and running of the church (and its programs and initiatives) consists primarily of the elected Church Council and a number of volunteer committees.

The Church Council consists of 12 members elected to staggered three-year terms, four additional members appointed to one-year terms, the pastor(s), and the treasurer. A four-member executive committee is elected by the council members at the first meeting following the annual election of new council members.

The committees and work groups are listed below:

Committees	Boards or Work Groups
Christian Education	Trinity Housing Corporation
Church Property	Trinity Apartments Corporation
Nurturing Fellowship	Trinity Apartments Food/Social Program
Outreach	Parish Organizing Team
Peace with Justice	Holy Trinity Theatre Circle
Financial Stewardship	Writers' Circle
Worship and Fine Arts	Creation Care Team
Housing Social Services	Parish Organizing Team
Personnel	
Youth	

Membership on any of the committees and work groups (except for Personnel) is open to anyone who wishes to volunteer, though members are usually directly recruited by the pastor or sometimes by other committee members. Membership on the Trinity Housing and Trinity Apartments Corporations are usually by appointment or direct recruitment by the pastor. Committees elect their own chairs.

Most of the current programs and initiatives have been originated and maintained by the committees and the council. The council and the pastor have oversight and coordination responsibility for all of the committee work.

4. Communications

Holy Trinity uses a variety of ways to communicate with members and the community, which include:

- *The Community Church*, a weekly newsletter mailed to over 500 homes of members and other people, as requested. It includes a column usually written by the pastor, information on the upcoming Sunday worship services, and other church and community events and information.
- Holy Trinity website which provides background information on the congregation, a calendar of current events, and contact information. It also includes information and resources on related topics, the church, and other related organizations.
- Occasional mailings for special fund appeals, announcements, or invitations to events.
- Church phone directory and, periodically, a church pictorial directory.
- Email communication is used increasingly between staff, church members, and the community.

For those attending church or visiting the building, communications include:

- Announcements in the church bulletin and during the services.
- Information tables and displays in the Community Room, including a sign-up table for participation in upcoming events or programs.
- Bulletin boards and signs in the hallways and Community Room.

In addition, the office staff maintains a master calendar of all meetings and events, and is available to answer questions by phone, email, or in person during working hours.

Personnel budget:

The table below indicates the estimated proportion of the personnel budget spent for each staffing segment:

2012 Personnel Budget

Staff	% of Budget
Worship and Music	20.9%
Adult Education	2.7%
Peace and Justice	8.2%
Outreach	8.3%
Youth	2.6%
Children	7.5%
Nurturing/Pastoral Care	5.4%
Administration	25.0%
Building/grounds	19.4%

APPENDIX B

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Community Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's Vision Task Force. Your responses will be used for future church planning as we work to create an updated mission plan document.

This survey should take 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

If you have filled out the electronic version of this survey, please do not complete this paper version.

Age

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19 or under | <input type="checkbox"/> 40 to 49 | <input type="checkbox"/> 70 to 79 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20 to 29 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 59 | <input type="checkbox"/> 80 to 89 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30 to 39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 to 69 | <input type="checkbox"/> 90 or over |

Holy Trinity Affiliation (check one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not a member | <input type="checkbox"/> Member 5 to 9 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> Member 10 to 19 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member 1 to 4 years | <input type="checkbox"/> Member 20 or more years |

How often do you participate in the following at Holy Trinity?

Almost
Always Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never

Worship
Adult Forum
Bible Study
Dialogue breakfasts/lunches
Committee or congregational meetings
Other congregational activities (specify below)

Specific activities _____

How did you first hear of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church?

What do you value most about Holy Trinity's ministry and congregational life (e.g. specific programs, characteristics, values, facilities, etc.)?

In what areas of ministry and congregational life would you like to see improvement or greater emphasis? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Children (up to 6 th grade) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education and Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (grades 6-12) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Ministries | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurturing the internal life of the Congregation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Justice and Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach to witness to the congregation's faith |

Please share specific reasons for the areas you chose in the previous question, as well as any ideas you have for new ministries you would like to see at Holy Trinity.

Do you use the internet?

- Yes
 No

If yes, how often do you use the internet for the following?

Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never

- Holy Trinity's website
- Email
- Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Banking/bill payments
- Calendar
- Phone or video calls
- News
- Entertainment (music, movies, etc.)
- Shopping
- Photo sharing

Please enter your zip code so we can get a sense of where our respondents live.
If you are willing to further discuss your survey responses, please enter your name and email address or phone number below.

Zip code _____

Name (optional) _____

Email (optional) _____

Phone (optional) _____