

Christ Trinity Church

Annual Report 2019 for Annual Meeting January 26, 2020

AGENDA

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD JANUARY 27, 2019	
REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE	
RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (OVERVIEW FOR 2019)	
THANKSGIVINGS	
PRESENTATION OF THE SAIREY GAMP MUG	

REPORTS

VESTRY COUNCIL	
2019 EPISCOPAL DIOCESAN CONVENTION	
2019 LUTHERAN SYNOD ASSEMBLY	
MUSIC MINISTRY	
FLOWER MINISTRY	
THE GARDEN COMMITTEE	
ANNUAL PARISH FAIR	
HOLIDAY BAKE SALE	
OLDER WISER LUTHERANS & EPISCOPALIANS	
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	
WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY	
STEWARDSHIP	
OUTREACH OVERVIEW	
THRIVENT	
PAROCHIAL STATISTICS	
BERKSHIRE INTERFAITH ORGANIZING	
BREAKING BREAD KITCHEN	
SHEFFIELD FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	
TREASURER'S REPORT	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	

**CHRIST TRINITY CHURCH
ANNUAL MEETING of 2018
January 27, 2019**

Following our worship at 9am on Sunday, January 27, 2019, we gathered in the Parish Hall for our 2018 Annual Meeting.

We began with an opening prayer by Pastor Erik. David Spidal, Co-Chair of the Vestry Council, called the meeting to order. A sheet of paper was sent around for everyone to sign the Church Registry and it was established that we had a quorum. Trudy weaver Miller was elected Secretary/Clerk for the meeting.

The 2018 Vestry Council members were recognized and thanked for their service, in particular, David Spidal, who was concluding his one-year term.

Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee Report was reviewed, and the following Vestry Council members and Officers were elected for 2019:

MEMBER	POSITION	TERM	INFORMATION
Don Scherling	Co-Chair	2019-2022	First 3-year Term
Steve Willig	Co-Chair	2017-2020	First 3-year Term
Jack Bellinger	Buildings & Grounds	2017-2020	Second 3-year Term
Trudy Miller	Secretary/Clerk	2018-2021	Second 3-year Term
Bob Mercurio	Treasurer	2018-2019	Third 1-year Term
Doris Scherling	Financial Secretary	2017-2020	Second 3-year Term
Bob Brigham	Member at Large	2017-2020	Second 3-year Term
Imelda Muller	Member at Large	2018-2021	First 3-year Term
Jean Chapin	Member at Large	2018-2021	First 3-year Term
Joe Kolodziej	Member at Large	2016-2019	Second 3-year Term
Nancy King	Member at Large	2018-2021	Second 3-year Term

Election of Delegates:

For the **Episcopal Diocesan Convention** (2 Delegates, 1 Alternate), David Campbell and Martha King were elected, with Bob Mercurio as Alternate.

For the **Lutheran Synod Assembly** (2 Delegates, 2 Alternates), Karen and David Spidal were elected, with Kelly Karas as Alternate 1 and Dennis Sears as Alternate 2.

Commissioning of All Elected Members:

All members of the Vestry Council, Officers and Delegates were commissioned with a prayer.

Minutes of 2017 Annual Meeting:

The Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting, on January 28, 2018 were approved.

Published Annual Reports for 2018:

The Published Annual Reports for 2018 were not voted upon, since people had not had the chance to review them prior to the meeting. They will need to be approved at the next Annual Meeting.

Federation Vote:

The act of becoming federated was explained by Bob Mercurio as a legal process where the two non-profit churches, Christ Episcopal Church and Trinity Lutheran Church, are merging and becoming one legal entity and one non-profit church. There were three votes taken:

1. Authorization to take all steps to restate articles of incorporation of Christ Episcopal Church, unanimously approved;
2. The merging of Christ Episcopal Church and Trinity Lutheran Church, unanimously approved;
3. The official and legal changing of the names to Christ Trinity Church, unanimously approved.

WALI Report:

Kelly Karas read aloud the final version of the Welcoming Statement (copy attached herewith), which was unanimously approved by the congregation. Kelly said that we had already been “recognized as a Welcoming Church” by one of the two entities for which we applied. The other is in the process.

Open Thanks and Recognitions:

Vestry Council: Trudy Miller thanked outgoing member, David Spidal, for his service as Co-Chair. David was given a gift certificate to the Old Inn on the Green restaurant from the Vestry Council.

Jean Chapin thanked Linda McKelvey for saddle-stitching (stapling) the Sunday bulletins each week. Martha King thanked Imelda Muller for being head of the Women’s Bible Study program. Cynthia Pease thanked Nancy King and Annie Ryder for being the original conduits to the Episcopal/Lutheran merge. Bob Mercurio thanked everyone involved in Breaking Bread. Kelly Karas thanked Linda McKelvey for provisioning our paper products. Joe Kolodziej thanked both Jean Chapin and Trudy Miller for their organizational work for the church. Martha King thanked Nancy King for her work as organist. Bishop Jack McKelvey gave thanks for our Episcopal/Lutheran merging, as it has brought us Pastor Erik, Kelly, and their two daughters. Dennis Sears thanked Pia and Jack Bellinger for all they do. Pia, in turn, thanked Jack for all he does.

Don Scherling thanked David Spidal for his Vestry Council work; Joe Kolodziej and Bob Mercurio for their work in food, lawyering, and choir, saying that they enrich our lives; John-Arthur Miller for helping Don to go from making a noise to making a joyful noise; Dennis Sears for his leadership through the conjoining; Pastor Erik for the richness of mystical traditions; Bob Brigham for mystical and theological discussions; and Bishop Jack McKelvey for his “constant mischief.”

Pastor Erik started a new thanking tradition of an annual trophy (a Sairey Gamp ceramic mug) given to a member who did some out-of-the-way, unheralded thing for our congregation. This year’s recipient of the “Sairey Gamp Prize” was Linda McKelvey. Next year it will go to a new person.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer's Report for 2018 was reviewed and unanimously approved. The summary of Endowment Funds (\$402,266) was as of September 30, 2018, prior to the market fluctuations of the late fall. It is actually ca. \$375,000 because of those losses. Bob Mercurio thanked Dennis Sears for his years of service and for helping him with the transition.

As a congregation, we celebrated Dennis's many, many years of service (something like 17?) with a rousing rendition of Sullivan's "I am the Very Model of a Modern Major General," with new, clever lyrics created by Nancy King for the occasion. The congregation gave Dennis a generous gift certificate from the LLBean Company, after consultation with his wife as to what he would most enjoy. All enjoyed a delicious cake made by the MarketPlace.

The 2018 Annual Meeting ended with a closing prayer by Pastor Erik, followed by a pot-luck luncheon.

Respectfully submitted,

Trudy Miller
Clerk

Report of the Nominating Committee

Awaiting Final Report

Rector's Annual Report for 2019

"Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" Ephesians 3:20

"Abundantly far more that we could ask or imagine" seems to me to be the perfect descriptor of this past year at Christ Trinity. In what continues to be a difficult and often dark world around us, we have done more to bring light into the world from our little "corner of kindness" than I could have ever asked for or imagined. Laughter and joy accompany all of what we do here, never taking ourselves too seriously and constantly being open to accept the gifts of new people, new opportunities and new ideas. In this past year that spirit has begun to work its way even deeper into our community with growing partnerships from near and far. Whatever 2020 brings with it I am certain that the Holy Spirit will continue to lift up our congregation's joyful, bright and light-hearted spirit.

I continue to be thankful for the care that you have shown to me and my family and to one another. Your support of Kelly in her new job and our children when they are here is a huge part of why this continues to feel like "home" for us. Your generosity, compassion and care of us is something for which I am thankful beyond measure.

So many HUGE things have happened this past year. Below are what I consider the "highlights" of 2019:

- **Federation** - Through research that helped us discover the roots of our church go back further than our 1866 church founding with the Protestant Episcopal Society of Sheffield, to a resolution needed at Diocesan Convention to all the rest of the legal wrangling needed, Don Sherling and Bob Mercurio have brought us to this "official" moment. After our annual meeting we will officially be Christ Trinity Church in the eyes of the Synod, Diocese, and State of Massachusetts. We continue to be a leader in the country on this kind of partnership and continue to be requested for congregations exploring ministry in this new way.
- **Church Administration** - Tremendous thanks to Jean Chapin, our Parish Administrator, whose passion for our ministry shows through in every e-newsletter and bulletin. This year Jean, along with Kelly have grown our social media presence to include Instagram and Twitter and behind the scenes Jean continues to evolve the administrative parts of our church, making things like funeral planning both more efficient and more compassionate.
- **Welcoming Rainbow Chairs** - At last year's annual meeting we unanimously approved our official welcome statement and then, on a beautiful Spring day celebrated on the front lawn with lobster rolls and our new rainbow chairs. The chairs soon became a sign that was again, "more than we could have asked or imagined" being used to great success at the Sheffield Fair throughout the summer by the Special Evangelism Chair Team or SECT. This self named group gathered on the lawn with summer snacks and drinks and welcomed people to join them, making new friendships and strengthening old ones. Let us know if you want to join the SECT!

- **Outreach** - I continue to be thankful for the commitment to service and caring we have as a congregation. Breaking Bread, the Food Pantry, the Good Samaritan Fund and so many other organizations receive our sweat equity in the community. Our twice annual Beer and Hymns events raised money for Greenagers and the Appalachian Trail Project. This year we held an encore of our popular “Put Your Money Where Your Heart Is” event where everyone in the congregation helped us distribute our congregation’s outreach dollars to local, national and international organizations to support their work on our behalf.
- **Stewardship** - Our annual pledge drive saw another significant increase in both numbers of pledgers and in the amount pledged. Thank you all!!! While often viewed as the less-exciting part of our church activities, your commitment to support in this way makes up the financial core of our church. This past year was the middle year of our three year Capital Campaign initiated to repay the money we borrowed to update the Rectory and to finish that work. We are continually thankful for your continued commitments to those pledges as well! This past Spring we hosted Jim Shuttleworth from Thrivent Financial to talk to us about Planned Giving. Some of you contacted Jim to learn more and to take advantage of ways that can basically gift the church with what otherwise would be the IRS’s portion of your estate. Jim will be back in March to talk to us again about Thrivent Action Teams but I’m sure he would be happy to answer any questions you might have. I will continue to encourage everyone to talk with their financial planner and plan a legacy gift to our church.
- **Appalachian Trail Ministry** - Our second year was bigger and better than the first year with a new shelter straight from the mind of Jim Kelley and an extra day every week! We had people visiting from around the area, checking out the idea of bringing their own group to host a day on the trail and we hope that will come to fruition this coming season. At the Diocesan Convention we had a booth promoting those “Mini Mission Trips” to our trail site and we will have a similar set up at the Synod Assembly. Our Lady of the Valley has also expressed an interest in “getting in on” this ministry and we’ll be glad to have them with us as well. This year we’re adding an extra week onto each side of the season and we’ve applied for a grant for a trail intern. Stay tuned!
- **Worship** - We continued the pattern of having both an 8 a.m. spoken service and a 10 a.m. service with music this past year. That remains our intention for this next year and years to come. We will continue to change the patterns of worship with the changing of the Church year, drawing from Episcopal sources and Lutheran sources throughout the year. We enjoyed several opportunities for worship collaboration with Old Parish this past year and I am sure we will continue our friendship and collaborations in the year to come.
- **We Went Solar!** - From an offhand crazy idea thrown out, to four incredibly generous families combining their memorial gifts for their loved ones and a congregation willing to take the leap and borrow the rest of what was needed, this past August, our church went solar! We were the first church in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts to go solar. Then this fall, we got the additional good news that we had been awarded a \$15,000 grant to pay off the rest of the system!

- **Fair, Bazaar and Bake Sale** - A restructuring of our epic August Parish Fair was a great success with income greater than ever before. It is a TON of work and we're not getting any younger, but we pulled it off and I'm thankful for all your hard work. Our Holiday Bazaar and Bake Sale too was jazzed up and it too was more successful than ever! Thanks to that amazing team and all our bakers!
- **Thrivent Action Grants** - We have done a great job capitalizing on the \$250 Thrivent Action Grants available to Thrivent members and associate members in our congregation. Did you know that in 2020 you will have at least \$11,500 of Thrivent's money to spend in this way? Let's put our heads together and think about how we can help Thrivent spend their money!

In amongst all of the BIG things that happened this past year, we also continued to walk together through the regular rhythms of life as well. We laughed together, cried together, mourned together and prayed together. A phone call, a note, some flowers, a visit, some pruning, some cleaning, polishing and dusting. These little things don't often get the glory but they are the backbone of who and Whose we are. We notice and try to say thank you but it is never enough. People in our community notice too and that light shines out from here to who knows where. Thank you for all the BIG little things you do.

Last year I ended this report by saying that the world around us continues to be a strange and disturbing place and that hasn't changed in a year. The world needs places of welcome, kindness, love, and healing. It need places where people can find a welcome chair and an honest embrace to rest from the storms around us. Christ Trinity, I am so thankful to say, continues to be a place like that. You have created a place of welcome, love and healing; a corner of kindness, a shaded place of rest where everyone is welcome to stop and notice the blessings of our lives and remember that God is with us always. I am so thankful to be a part of this community and humbled by your confidence and trust in me as your Rector and Pastor. I look forward to our next year ahead together!

Pastor Erik+

Vestry Council Report of 2019 - January 2020 Annual Meeting

God's Work Our Hands! With deep joy and gratitude for God's love and grace, the CTC Vestry Council (Steve Willig, Don Scherling, Bob Brigham, Joe Kolodziej, Bob Mercurio, Trudy Miller, Jean Chapin, Nancy King, Jack Bellinger, and Imelda Muller) celebrates the amazing ways that Pastor Erik Karas continues to lead and inspire us to deepen and broaden our ministry and mission in our community and in the wider world. Thank you to all of our volunteers, worshippers, members, and friends for sharing your gifts of time, talents, and money that embody God's Love and serve as a beacon in our Sheffield community and far beyond. At this January 2020 annual meeting, we will be taking the final step in our Federation as Christ Trinity Church, with full membership in both the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts **and** The New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Relying on Pastor Erik's detailed report for additional details of our congregational life in **2019 - We Celebrate:**

- **CTC's Community Service:** Memorial Day Picnic after Parade, Church Fair, Breaking Bread Kitchen, People's Pantry, Construct Walk, Veterans' Memorials, and Donations to Local Organizations.
- **Appalachian Trail Ministry** with Old Parish - First Congregational Church expanded to more days and added a large seasonal shelter.
- **Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO)** – Nancy King and others worked on Supports for Immigrants as a primary focus. Dennis Sears recognized at the annual recognition event for his many years of community service.
- **Rise Against Hunger (RAH):** 20,000 nutritious meals packed at Zion Lutheran Pittsfield on Pentecost Sunday.
- **Solar Panels** – Solar-bration Dedication event in August. Thanks to Pastor Erik for his passion that started this project, inspired funding from families to dedicate memorial and matching funds, and obtaining a grant to take us to Paid in Full.
- **Capital Campaign** – Year 2 of 3 – now fully pledged at \$150,000.
- **Beer and Hymns Events** – attendance and fund-raising exploded.
- **Pastor Erik's Creative Projects:** Bird Houses & Bird Churches, Events with Pulled Pork & Chicken, Beer & Hymns, Bake Sale Cheese Cakes.
- **Live Generously - Thrivent Grants** from hundreds to thousands in seed money (Backpacks for Incarcerated Women; Stewardship/Mission Discernment Outreach event; Beer and Hymns; New Grill – Pulled Pork/Chicken; Padre's Cheesecakes; Life-Share Movie Nights; Photovoltaic Solar System Dedication; Shrove Tuesday Pancakes; Church Fair Delicacies; and other projects) – Thank you Thrivent Members who graciously obtained grants and led the teams to complete projects.
- **Social Media** - Facebook, Instagram, G-Mail, YouTube (Photos, videos, streaming, writing – Thank you Jean Chapin, Joe Kolodziej, Pastor Erik Karas, Kelly Karas for this amazing outreach.
- **Rainbow Chairs** in our front lawn and traveling to other venues and the steady message to all – **"You are Welcome Here"**
- Record **Church Fair** Event with Food Stations Thanks to Nelda McGraw & many volunteers.
- **Joe Kolodziej's The Hungry Hen** - amazing culinary artistry for our celebration events.

To Catherine Miller, Jack Bellinger, Trudy Weaver Miller, Jean Chapin, Pastor Erik Karas, Kelly Karas, Doris Scherling, many others for their leadership in caring for our buildings, leading our stewardship, making and keeping our records, social media and electronic communications, and to Bob Mercurio for his attentive financial management as our Treasurer, we offer our sincere gratitude. Thank you to our staff, Jean Chapin, John Arthur Miller, Mari Enoch, and Pastor Erik Karas. To all those named and to the many whose names did not appear here, we say thank you for making Christ Trinity a church of love, action, outreach, caring, and sharing as we **live generously** in the abundance of God's love and grace.

With respect and joy,

The Vestry Council Leadership Team—Don Scherling and Stephen Willig.

2019 Episcopal Diocesan Convention

Awaiting Final Report

Report of the New England Synod Assembly

The Assembly was held in Worcester, Massachusetts on June 7-8, 2019. Session started and ended with a worship service.

Usual organizational reports were given, such as Treasure's report, Budget proposal and vote, Compensation report, and the Bishop's report on happenings around the Synod. The Bishop reported there are 178 congregations with 12 new mission starts in the Synod this year.

Thrivent reported that there were \$1,473,694 Choice Dollars distributed. Action teams numbered 4470 generating \$4.7 million dollars and involving 500,000 volunteer hours.

Two resolutions were introduced. The first was to endorse the poor People campaign which was passed and sent to the ELCA national convention. The second was the endorsement of the protection/safety for the Palestine children program using the money allocated for hospitals, education and so forth. The President has withheld money as punishment against the Palestinians.

The Keynote speaker Margo Leitman emphasized the theme of the Assembly, "What's Your Story." She stated that story telling unites us and shows how similar we really are. Stories are told that are true from our life with a beginning, middle and an end. They are not a rant, list, therapy or substitute for a political platform. They are not documents. One story told related to Jubilee 2020 (see below).

There were many workshops to choose from including the areas of financial issues, partnerships amongst churches and storytelling.

Jubilee 2020

Pastor Heidi Johnson from Faith Lutheran in Quincy MA told her story of faith and need. She still has \$94,588 in student loans. This has had great negative impact on her family and her health. Her husband works in jobs for which he is not happy just to be able to be with her in her passion for the ministry. They have two small children. They cannot buy a house and so forth because of this debt. She, like many others, gave up a life income to go to school to become a pastor.

Because of such stories the Synod established Jubilee 2020 . . . to help pastors pay for their debt from seminary. Prior to 1990 and after 2018 seminary was free or very minimally costly. Between 1990 and 2018 seminarians had to pay their own way, many borrowing to pay for their call to serve the church and the Lord. Today that loan debt is 1.75 million dollars, with the average about 40K per pastor or deacon. Congregations and individuals are urged to participate in Jubilee 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave and Karen Spidal

Music Ministry Report

2019 has been another satisfying year for me as the Choir Director. Many thanks go to all our volunteer singers who have participated as leaders of worship throughout the year. My thanks especially to Mari, our Organist, who is always willing to try different things and to add other ideas to our work at Christ Trinity Church.

On average our choir numbers remain at around 12-15 when we are at full participation. Because of the light number of men – about 4 or 5 – we could use another 1 or 2 if there was interest. We have added a couple of women as well, for 2020.

Rehearsals have generally been kept to an hour or so on Sunday mornings before the service, with those available for that service. I try as Choir Director to keep the difficulty level apropos of our participants in order for them to have a good corporate experience as well as having a satisfying individual sacred time without the need for too many performance details or pressures.

Highlights of 2019 was the participation from guest artists, including clarinetists Bill and Catherine Hudgins, flautist Hanna Karas, and harpist Theresa Mango. And, of course, organist Nancy King has been so gracious to cover for Mari and do some extra ivory tickling at Beer & Hymns, bake sale/holiday celebrations, etc.

Two other highlights for 2019 were the increased participation of our Christmas Caroling outing with a post gathering at the Rectory, and the increased participation of a women's choir with harp at the 10PM Christmas Eve service.

2020 looks to be another year of keeping the music program as an important part of worship with the choir in the leadership role for a congregation that seems to enjoy singing and does it well!

Thanks for all of the input from participants and non-participants. Keep those ideas coming. Forgive us for not following through with all of them, primarily because of time limitations.

Respectfully submitted,

John Arthur Miller, Choir Director

Flower Ministry

In 2019 the generous people in our congregation, once again gave more than enough to cover the cost of flowers for the year. Thank you to those who signed up for a week (or more) and a special thank you to those who give a bit more than the flowers cost which allows us to get flowers for other special occasions and make the church always look bright and welcoming!

As you notify Jean in the office with your preferred dates this year, please be aware that the cost of the two vases for Sunday has gone to \$60.00 including delivery. We use the "honor system" depending on you to send in the money for the days you select and that has worked for many years. We hope that will continue for years to come. We're also very thankful for those of you who joyfully shift your preferred dates or share a Sunday with someone else in the congregation. We do our very best to accommodate everyone's desires for particular dates but with only 52 Sundays in a year, special dates inevitably overlap and so we appreciate your flexibility! Please take a look at the 2020 calendar and let us know if we need to change anything or if you would like to add a donation.

Thanks to Jean in the church office for managing the ever shifting puzzle that is the flower calendar and thanks to the altar guild who beautifully wraps the flowers after the 10 a.m. service. As always, you are welcome to take your flowers home or you may ask for them to be delivered to someone who needs a little brightness at home or in the hospital.

The Garden Committee

We need more members to help with the flower beds in front of the church and rectory, including planting annuals and maintaining them. It is a joy to see the church yard healthy and attractive for all of us and for the community to enjoy. Continued to weed, mulch, and work on eliminating poison ivy. Kept the walks and parking area free of weeds. Catherine Miller helped to keep all the hedges trimmed. Pastor Erik and Kelly helped with watering and plantings at the rectory. Molly Curletti planted flowers in the blue pots next to the front door. Thanks to Cross Horticultural Services for tree pruning, lawn care, etc.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Garretson and Gay Tucker

Report of the Parish Fair 2019

One of the miracles of life at Christ Trinity is that for more years than most are able to remember a Saturday early in August sees the transformation of the church grounds and parish hall into a bustle of activity. This year was no exception. However, there was one difference and that was the range of activity. Included in the offerings were the "Merchandise Under the Tent" (\$4,400), Silent Auction (\$1,800), Raffle (\$1,500), Finer Things (\$1,600), Gourmet Tacos and Salads (\$1,400), Luscious Baked Goods (\$1,300), Tasty Treats (\$800), Books of Every Sort (\$600), Clams & Hats (\$600), Frozen Food (\$200), Craft Persons (\$200), Beverages (\$100) The grand total for all this effort was \$13,000 net.

It is a tremendous undertaking and requires many willing folks to set up, manage and take down. For reasons best known to our Maker it seems always to come together. 2019 was no exception. It was a wonderful day; countless number of attendees enjoyed themselves; parishioners worked tirelessly and the end result was another successful Parish Fair.

The expectation is that the event will continue to repeat itself. However, given the age of many members of the parish and the physical demands the Fair places on the workers, it may be worth exploring other opportunities for friend and fund raising. The Fair is an important part of the life of Christ Trinity, but life changes and the church would do well to explore other venues.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine B. Miller
For Nelda McGraw

20th Annual Bake Sale & Holiday Bazaar

The 20th Annual Holiday Bake Sale and its partner the Holiday Bazaar was a resounding success. On Saturday, December 14 the Parish Hall was alive: a plethora of beautifully presented baked goods of every variety and a bountiful array of wares at the Bazaar attracted many friends and visitors. Parishioners provided cakes, cookies, fruitcakes, candy, jams, pickles, breads, stolen, peanut and almond brittle, peppermint bark, gluten free items and cupcakes with a cookie on top prepared by our newest and perhaps youngest member. Nancy King tickled the ivories for much of the event and that added a very festive air.

At the end of the day one table of baked goods, of the initial nine remained. And a special sale on bazaar items resulted in many of those finding new homes too.

All in all it was a great success, netting about \$3,400.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine B. Miller
Rene C. Wood

OWLES 2019 REPORT

The OWLES (Older, Wiser Lutherans and Episcopalians), Christ Trinity's senior outing group, have had some interesting trips this year, taking place mostly on the first Wednesday of each month from February to June and from October to December. We began in February with our annual service project: brunch at Nancy's house, followed by the packing of Valentine goodie bags for the 20 or so Sheffield-area Meals on Wheels folks. These were much enjoyed by the recipients.

Other excursion highlights included a spring visit to Thorncrest Farm in Goshen, CT, where we visited the dairy barn and saw the world's most pampered cows, each cow providing the perfect milk for making different varieties of chocolates. Of course, we sampled those mouth-watering chocolates as part of the tour, and then many of us purchased some for Easter gifts (and for ourselves!)

In the spring, we drove to the Berkshire Museum, taking part in a hands-on display of Leonardo Da Vinci's inventions, brought to life from his drawings. Then on an early summer's day, we had a healthy lunch at Kripalu, followed by a walk downhill to the new labyrinth, with the less able-bodied simply sitting and enjoying the gorgeous views of Stockbridge Bowl from the patio. In October, we had a lovely fall foliage drive on the Mohawk Trail to Shelburne Falls village with its Bridge of Flowers and the glacial potholes. En route, we stopped at the Wigwam overlook above the hairpin turn, for freshly made coffee and a breath-taking view over the Housatonic Valley. We heard a short concert of Christmas organ music played by me at St. Paul's Church in Stockbridge in December, then walked across the street for lunch at the Red Lion Inn.

Plans are already underway for 2020, so watch your weekly Seeds for updates. The OWLES will meet at my home on the SECOND Wednesday of February, so the cookie bags can go out the next day, which will be Valentine's Day. Other possible outings are a trip to a winery in Connecticut, a visit to the Thomas Cole house in New York, a walk through the Big Y with a dietician, and a visit to the Harriet Beecher Stowe house in Hartford. (A tour of Theory Wellness was suggested, but that one seems to be a no-go!)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy King (chair)

Elizabeth Wells (associate chair)

Christian Education

Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study met monthly from January through May of 2019, with a joint luncheon with the OWLES group in June before taking a break for the summer. We resumed in September, and met monthly through December.

We followed the book Bible Women All Their Words and Why They Matter by Lindsay Hardin Freeman as a guide. The book looks specifically at the stories of the few women who had their words recorded in the Bible. We studied what exactly was said, the significance of each woman's words, and what we might learn from them. The Old Testament women we studied were Eve, Hannah, Esther, Delilah, and Jezebel. From the New Testament we studied Mary, the mother of Jesus, Elizabeth, Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman (the woman at the well with Jesus), and Lydia.

Our plan is to continue using this guide through the winter and spring of 2020, and then choose a new theme when we resume after the summer break. There were on average 7-13 women attending each month. We welcomed guests and a few new members. We have had some members who were able to join us more regularly than in the past.

We mourned the loss of 2 members in 2019: Hope Swanson and Marjorie Deitz, (who wasn't able to be with us in 2019, but she had been the founder of our group)

To quote from the book, "Stories don't tell us what is true, they tell us what must be true." author unknown.

Respectfully submitted,
Imelda Muller

Confirmation

Confirmation classes continue with three students. We are working our way through a review of the Bible and in Lent we hope to begin an intensive study of doctrine before Confirmation with Bishop Fisher at the Easter Vigil.

Adult Study

Several adult study options including book studies, collaborative times with other congregations and a video class were offered this past year. In the coming year we hope to continue this pattern and also have a study in partnership with our neighbors at Hevreh. In the future we would like to investigate a Vacation Bible School for adults. If you are interested in helping to organize that project, talk with Pastor Erik.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

January 6, 2020

On November 7, packets (Stewardship Letter, pledge form, return envelope) were mailed to 71 parishioners/families.

As of this date (1/6/20):

of Pledges received: 45

Total Amount: \$148,089

Total of Increased: 17, totaling \$9,883

Total of Static: 13

Total of Decreased: 5, totaling \$3,504

Total of NEW: 9, totaling \$17,682 (of the NEW, 6 are really new over the course of the past year, 4 have not pledged before, or not last year)

At A Glance Comparisons:

2020	#	Amount		2019	#	Amount
# of Pledges received:	45			# of Pledges received:	43	
Total Amount:		\$148,089		Total Amount:		\$135,052
Total of Increased:	17	\$9,883		Total of Increased:	22	\$10,140
Total of Static:	13			Total of Static:	13	
Total of Decreased:	5	\$3,504		Total of Decreased:	3	\$336
Total of NEW:	9	\$17,682		Total of NEW:	5	\$2,928

- We still expect to receive pledges from 9 people who have pledged in the past but have not yet returned their pledge form this year. This represents about \$9,800 of additional giving expected.
- We are thankful for the way our congregation has fulfilled their 2019 pledges. When you receive your annual report of giving, if you still have an outstanding portion of your 2019 pledge left to give, we would appreciate you fulfilling that commitment before we close out the year.

Outreach Overview

Awaiting Final Report

Thrivent

In 2019, we were awarded 21 grants from Thrivent Financial totaling \$5,500. With these Action Team Projects, which we used as seed money, we were able to generate more life in our church and raise over \$10,270 in ministry and outreach funds. See the [Outreach Overview](#) to learn where those funds were dispersed.

In 2020, there will be at least 45 grants available to us from Thrivent Financial, totaling \$11,250 in seed money. Using the same proportions, we could raise over \$21,500 for outreach and ministries. Think of all the light that we could shine with those funds.

If you need help becoming a Thrivent member or creating a Thrivent Action Team application, we are here for you. All you have to do is ask. Jim Shuttleworth, from Thrivent, will hold a Thrivent Action Team workshop after worship on March 29th. If you attend, your eyes will be opened to all kinds of possibilities and you will probably get lunch. We need someone to coordinate this event – it cannot happen all by itself.

Parochial Statistics

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
Average Sunday Attendance	60	63
Funerals	7	3
Easter Attendance	139	144
Christmas Eve Attendance	140	150

BIO 2019 REPORT

BIO, or Berkshire Interfaith Organizing, is comprised of a group of 20-something congregations in the Berkshires, including our own Christ Trinity, working for social justice in our county. As your representative, I attend Executive Council monthly meetings, usually held in the Pittsfield area on the second Thursday of each month. This year's projects have focused on three main areas, immigrant justice, Afro-American history and racial justice education, and a county-wide transportation network to transport the needy to doctor appointments and hospitals.

One successful immigrant justice program is BIO's accompaniment program, that of driving undocumented immigrants to their I.C.E. check-ins in Hartford. (I have been active in this, being part of a team that drives a Hispanic man in Great Barrington to Hartford monthly. He is so grateful!) A work-in-progress involves recruiting churches and temples to be Sanctuary One Level congregations, to actually house an immigrant family in danger of deportation, and to sign on Level Two congregations for support. Our church is holding back on that one, till we see more involvement from other South County groups.

Working with Multicultural BRIDGE, BIO approached the superintendent of schools in Pittsfield about the possibility of starting a black history course in the Pittsfield high schools. This has been achieved! The transportation project is in its final planning stage, and should be realized soon.

BIO's annual largest fundraiser, the MICAH celebration, was held at the Stationery Factory in Dalton. It honors someone from each of the member congregations who has lived Micah's call to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." Our chosen honoree this year was our beloved Dennis Sears.

Dave Campbell has agreed to be my co-representative to BIO in 2020, and I am happy to have him aboard, as driving to Pittsfield alone at night is getting to be less and less desirable as I age!

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy King

Breaking Bread Kitchen

Awaiting Final Report

Sheffield Food Assistance Program

MISSION: The Sheffield Food Assistance Program is a community effort that helps residents in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District supplement their food budgets.

It takes a community. Volunteers, stores, food drives, donors, recipients. The program continues to flourish thanks to the energy and good will of everyone involved.

Volunteers: Pick-up—Brian Levinsohn, Don Freedman, Dennis Staropoli, Brian Gilligan

Kitchen—Becky Schopp, Lois Levinsohn, Marcia Brolli, Barbara Carr, Rose Cronk, Elsie Gilligan, Margaret Joseph, Kathy Posey, Gail and Tom Tighe, Joan Powers, Chris Scott, Mary Philbrick, Sandy Alden, Paulette Graber, Anne Chase. Substitutes—Claudia Ziobro, Stephan Gerard

Stores: Guido's, Big Y, Great Barrington Bagel, Price Chopper, and until they closed, Sweet Home Donut Shoppe

Drives: Kiwanis Stuff a Truck, USPS postal carriers, Boy Scouts, Nadia Makuc in Monterey, Salisbury Bank, Berkshire Bank barrel (all year)

Churches: Ashley Falls Methodist, Egremont Congregational, Greenwoods Community Church, Christ Trinity, Old Parish, Our Lady of the Valley, Southfield Church, St. Mary of the Lakes in Otis

Farmers: Dominik Palumbo, Moon in the Pond Farm; Bruce Howden, Howden Farm; Jan Johnson, Mill River Farm; local family farms

Financial support: churches, individuals, Catholic Charities, Berkshire Taconic Foundation,

Services: monthly visits from Fallon Health NaviCare and Berkshire Health Systems for blood pressure and health advice

We continue to get weekly delivery through the growing season of cases of fresh produce from the Farmers' Markets through Backyard Bounty—an incredible addition of fresh produce. And we end the year with turkeys, potatoes, and carrots for everyone's Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners from Kiwanis brought by Dave Smith and friends. Thanks to our Giving Tree, we are able to give four gifts to each child in the program.

Highlights of our year: In May a fund-raising concert was organized and performed by the food program's good friend, Joe Kolodziej. He and his Bigtime Small Town Band brought down the house with his rollicking humor and beautiful voice and their great music. In the late summer, thanks to a generous grant from the Berkshire Taconic Foundation we were able to purchase a commercial cooler and freezer, more than doubling our capacity for storage.

Thank you all for caring for each other.

Marcia Brolli

Lois Levinsohn

Becky Schopp

Barbara Carr

2019 TREASURER'S REPORT

Financially, this was an extraordinary year for the Church. As the financial data below indicates, income was up and expenses were down, a Treasurer's dream scenario. But the data mask the full story. 2019 saw the installation of a solar array that will reduce our energy costs for many years to come. More significantly, thanks to the generosity of parish families who made memorial gifts and our receipt of an unexpected grant, it is fully paid for—even though it was not in our 2019 budget or even on our radar as we began the year. And, thanks to a healthy Building Repair Fund, we were able to absorb the costs of significant repairs to the roof and stonework at the church and a partial new roof for the Parish Hall. Our extraordinary community outreach continued, funded in part by Thrivent grants that allowed us to take on projects that created even more outreach funds than we had in our budget and kept us all working together for the common good. Of course, this all speaks to the remarkable generosity of the congregation, whose donations of time, talent and money kept us vibrant and growing. We will necessarily continue to rely on that generosity as we now seek to replenish our reserves and continue our work in the community, and we should all take time to thank God for our myriad blessings.

2019 FINANCIAL SUPPORT TEAM

TREASURER:	BOB MERCURIO
FINANCIAL SECRETARY:	DORIS SCHERLING
FINANCE COMMITTEE:	BILL KORMANIK BOB MERCURIO CATHERINE MILLER DENNIS SEARS
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE:	PASTOR ERIK KARAS JOE KOLODZIEJ JACK MCKELVEY BOB MERCURIO CATHERINE MILLER JOHN-ARTHUR MILLER TRUDY WEAVER MILLER DAVID SPIDAL KAREN SPIDAL
TREASURER'S ASSISTANTS:	BOB BRIGHAM ED HUNT BOB MERCURIO CATHERINE MILLER JOHN-ARTHUR MILLER TRUDY WEAVER MILLER DON SCHERLING DORIS SCHERLING HOWARD SWANSON DENNIS SEARS DAVE TULLY

**CHRIST TRINITY CHURCH
2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

AVAILABLE CASH	YE 2019	YE 2018	DIFFERENCE
CHECKING ACCOUNT	\$26,151	\$11,877	\$14,274
MONEY MARKET	<u>\$16,356</u>	<u>30,781</u>	(\$14,425)
	\$42,507	\$42,658	
LIQUID ASSETS			
ENDOWMENT FUNDS	\$399,295*	\$375,998	\$23,297
DEBT			
LINE OF CREDIT	\$650	\$30,000	(\$30,650)

SOURCES AND USES

INCOME			
PLEDGE/PLATE	\$159,279	\$157,838	\$1,441
ENDOWMENT DIST.	\$19,183	\$18,845	\$338
DONATIONS/GRANTS/FLOWERS	\$19,065	\$15,552	\$3,513
FUND RAISING	\$19,481	\$10,257	\$9,224
PARISH HALL	\$2,900	\$3,189	(\$289)
GREY COTTAGE	\$8,481	\$10,323	(\$1,842)
MISCELLANEOUS	<u>\$3,509</u>	<u>\$4,732</u>	(\$1,223)
	\$231,898	\$220,736	\$11,162
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	\$52,944	\$67,524	

Note: Total: \$120,468; Still to come: \$29,532

EXPENSE			
STAFF	\$118,426	\$111,576	\$6,850
RECTORY	\$12,840	\$38,098	(\$25,258)
PROPERTY & MAINTENANCE	\$30,836	\$25,837	\$4,999
DIOCESE/SYNOD	\$20,266	\$11,514	\$8,752
UTILITIES/INSURANCE	\$21,864	\$17,889	\$3,975
MISSION/OUTREACH	\$9,411	\$12,351	\$1,775
OFFICE/TREASURER/STEWARDSHIP	\$6,995	\$7,636	(\$641)
SERVICES (ALTAR, CHOIR, ETC)	\$6,263	\$7,321	(\$1,058)
MISCELLANEOUS	<u>\$232</u>	<u>\$2,692</u>	(\$2,460)
	\$227,133	\$234,914	(\$3,066)

* As of 9/30/19