DE TRINITATE

Newsletter of the Society of the Holy Trinity

Societas Trinitatis Sanctae

From The Senior

A Report from the Leadership Council

As many of our members know, the Leadership Council of the Society of the Holy Trinity is that body which is comprised of the Dean of each chapter and the Officers and which, according to our By-Laws, meets each year to discuss the business of the Society and to determine any future direction. The Council is specifically charged with a review of the previous year's General Chapter and making recommendations for future chapters. The Leadership Council met in South Carolina February 26-28. What follows is a brief summary of the major issues addressed at that gathering.

In regard to the General Chapter retreat, the consensus was that our speaker, Dr. Mickey Mattox, did a fine job, and that we would keep the same format for this coming General Chapter retreat. Therefore, The Rev'd Dr. Max Johnson from Notre Dame, will give two presentations – one on Baptism and one on the Eucharist - and will then be available on Wednesday evening for the response panel. The dates for the General Chapter retreat this year will be September 24-26.

A report was given about the possibility of moving the General Chapter to another site, this one in Texas, but an analysis of the costs compared to our current situation made this unfeasible.

However, we will see some changes in the next years as we stay at St. Mary of the Lake. Procedures will be tightened and the use of the Stritch Center will become more difficult as they are now completely separate entities. Indeed ,it is because of this last issue that **our General Chapter retreat for 2020 will be held** not in September but rather **October 6-8**. Please mark your calendars now for those dates!

There are two other changes regarding the General Chapter. First, while the cost of General Chapter is covered in the dues that members pay each year, the actual cost is significantly different from that which we have been tracking in the past. This is particularly true for our visitors, whose fee of $200 has not changed in many years. Therefore, the Council voted to raise that fee to cover actual costs and our Secretary will be putting that notice out in due course. Second, this past year we began our retreat with Mass, partly in preparation for the election process, similar to that which we did in 2015. However, it was so well received by the members attending that it was agreed to begin each and every General Chapter with Mass. This means that those who may have to leave early on Thursday because of flights will be able to join us in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. That said, this means that folks should also plan to arrive on time for the start of the retreat which begins at 2pm on Tuesday afternoon.

What follows is a brief summary of the major issues addressed at that gathering.

Regarding our budget, the Council approved an operating budget for the year, approved some changes to our withdrawal policy from our investment fund, and changed the name of our Endowment Fund to the Founders' Fund.

The year of Our Lord 2022 will be the 25th anniversary of the Society's founding. To mark that occasion it is our hope to provide some special events, especially something musical, at our General Chapter retreat. We hope to have an especially large turnout that year so we will work on getting the dates out to you as soon as possible. The Rev'd Dr. Richard Johnson STS is also planning to write a brief history of the Society which we hope to publish in booklet form for all our members.

Over the next few months, I hope to revise our Pastoral Statement on "Gift and Service." Basically, this speaks to our charism in the Society, but it was done some years ago and I want to see how things have changed and what needs to be refined in that document. It will then go to the Council for approval. I am also

planning on a Pastoral Statement on Formation which, as you know from my articles in the last two newsletters, continues to be a major area of interest for me in the life of our Society.

One other item from the Council meeting was the approval of the Annual Gift campaign which will begin later this year. Clearly with both congregational gifts and individual gifts declining over the past few years, the budget of the Society has felt some strain. We hope to counter this with an Annual Gifts proposal encouraging others to support the Society and the important ministry we undertake for the life of our pastors.

There was much more discussion about the life of the Society when the Council met. The general consensus is that the Society is in good health with between 180 and 200 active members. Our Chapters are supporting the work of the Society as a whole with their regular retreats and care of pastors in those areas. We continue to attract a number of visitors to our retreats and our support of seminarians remains strong. For all of this, and for our life together, I continue to give thanks to God each and every day. May that same God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, continue to bless our work and our life together.

In Christ,

Paddy Rooney, STS
Senior

From The Secretary

Dues in the amount of $330 are due to me by June 16. If you use PayPal to pay them online, you must pay $342 to cover the fees PayPal imposes on us.. Please remember to fill out the form and send it with your dues, especially if you have address, email or phone number changes. If you have not yet received the dues letter and form, please contact your chapter dean.

The General Chapter Retreat will be held September 24-26 at University of St. Mary of the Lake Conference Center, Mundelein, IL. For members, registration will be through your chapter dean. More information on the General Chapter will be sent in July.

In our common service and life,

Pari Bailey, STS
Secretary

Reflections on the Rule

THOUGHTS ON CONSENSUS

[Pr. Ron Bagnall, STS is one of the founding members of the Society and a drafter of the Rule. From the very beginning Pr. Bagnall spoke strongly in favor of this need for consensus among us, a principle that has now become dear to us in our living out of the Rule. -PJR]

What is consensus?

Consensus is not strictly mentioned in the Rule of the Society, but alluded to in the phrase "a pure *ecclesiastical ballot*" that is "preceded by Scripture reading, a hymn and prayer for the Holy Spirit" (Chapter IX.5, 10 concerning the election of a Senior of the Society and of a Dean of a Chapter).

How does consensus work?

Consensus works only when all voting members, whether in elections or policies or amendments to the Rule, take on for themselves a discipline of *listening* to one another.

Why consensus?

Achieving consensus within any community of faith has the intent of adhering to the apostolic principle, "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28).

Consequently each vote or ballot is preceded by a brief lesson from the New Testament, followed by a hymn and prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit.

Whether in voting or casting a ballot, each member of the Society needs to lay aside personal preferences and instead be intent on achieving a consensus within the Society.

Consensus is best achieved when, whether in discussion of policies or balloting in an election, members ought not continue to argue their individual point of view or continue to insist in voting for one's own favorite candidate when it is obvious that the matter at hand is moving toward a consensus of the whole body.

Unanimous consensus simply means the agreed-upon common consent of the whole — not a majority opinion or general agreement.

Private or public campaigning for or conversing about candidates for office in the Society is inappropriate and unacceptable whether before, during, or after the balloting.

On the other hand, public and civil conversation about matters of policy is necessary to achieve a consensus of the whole body. Members should restrain themselves from continuing to argue their own point of view, but rather put forward only what serves the best interest of the whole and what reflects the developing or already agreed-upon common consent of the whole.

The discipline and practice of listening to others is crucial to achieving consensus — one's ears do work best when one's mouth is at rest.

In our common service and life,

The Rev'd Ronald B. Bagnall, STS

Chapter Deans

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the following chapters have elected Deans since the last newsletter was published:

- The Rev'd Ralph Reitmeyer STS – Guadalupe River Chapter
- The Rev'd Kenneth Elkin STS – Susquehanna Chapter
- The Rev'd Joyce Dix-Weiers STS – Passavant Chapter
- The Rev'd Terrence Weber STS – Metro New York Chapter
- The Rev'd Trevor Bailey STS – Minnesota Chapter
- The Rev'd Peter Jacobson STS – Sangre de Cristo Chapter

With thanks to God and with deep gratitude for their willingness to serve our Society, I ask for prayers for these leaders as they serve their chapters over the next three years.

Paddy Rooney, STS
Senior

Chapter Updates

The **Carolinas Chapter** will hold an Easter Retreat May 21-22 at the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory, NC. Pr. Gil Gilbert, STS will serve as teaching theologian and lead a book study of Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option*. For more information, please contact chapter dean Steve Saxe at lcgs1601@aol.com. The **Central Plains Chapter** will next retreat June 10-11 at the Benedictine Center/Christ the King Priory in Schuyler, Nebraska. Our Senior plans to attend this retreat, and we will join the monks of the center for Vespers on Monday evening. For more information, or to register, contact the chapter dean, The Rev. Jeff Cottingham, STS, at 308-529-0550. The **Chesapeake-Potomac Chapter** plans to retreat next at Shalom House, Montpelier, Virginia, May 20-21. Teaching theologian will be the Rev. Joyce Dix-Weiers, STS, dean of the Passavant chapter. Please contact chapter dean Carl Roemer at ceroemer@gmail.com. In lieu of a Spring retreat, the **Columbia River Chapter** co-sponsored the March 21 Jaech Symposium in Bible, Theology, and Mission along with Peace Lutheran Church in Salem, Oregon. The Rev. Dr. Douglas E. Oakman, Professor of Religion at Pacific Lutheran University, presented on "The New Humanity in Paul." The chapter plans a retreat October 9-10 at Mt. Angel Benedictine Abbey. The **Guadalupe River Chapter** plans a retreat May 20-22, 2019 at Cedarbrake. Teaching theologian for the retreat will be the Rev'd Dr. Jeffray Greene, presenting on our vows of ordination. For more information, please contact chapter dean Ralph Reitmeyer at rwreit@aol.com. The **Iowa-Nebraska Chapter** will meet in retreat on May 6-7 with Senior Paddy Rooney serving as teaching theologian. He will also guide the chapter in the election of a dean. Your prayers for the discernment of the Holy Spirit are requested. For more information or to register, please contact chapter dean Gary Hatcher at ggh5297@icloud.com. At its most recent retreat, the **Metro New York Chapter** elected Terrence Weber chapter dean. The Rev'd Donald McCoid, Interim Bishop of the (ELCA) Metro New York Synod presented on the status of various ecumenical dialogues. The chapter plans a spring retreat in early May. For more information, please contact chapter dean Terrence Weber at TWeber1978@aol.com. Senior Paddy Rooney presented on Aiden Kavanaugh's *Elements of Rite,* preached, presided at Eucharist, and oversaw a dean election at the **Minnesota Chapter's** Lenten retreat. The Rev'd Trevor Bailey, STS, was elected chapter dean. The chapter plans a July 22-23 retreat at Christ the King Retreat House, Buffalo, MN. The Rev'd David Hanssen, STS, will present on ritual and youth ministry. See the "Society of the Holy Trinity — Minnesota Chapter" Facebook page for or email the Rev'd Trevor Bailey at tbail65@gmail.com for more details. The **New England Chapter** gathered for its Lenten retreat March 19-20. Plans are being made for the annual summer Eucharist and picnic this July. Please contact chapter dean Ryan Mills at tlnhpastor@yahoo.com for more information. The **Sangre De Cristo Chapter** met for a Lenten retreat April 1-2 in Wichita, KS. Senior Paddy Rooney visited and Peter Jacobson was elected chapter dean. The **Susquehanna Chapter** will meet in retreat May 20-21 at SS Cyril &Methodius in Danville, Pennsylvania. They plan to discuss the prophet Daniel as well as the book *God's Trombones* by James Weldon Johnson. Please contact the chapter dean, Kenneth Elkin, at kennethelkin@gmail.com for more information. The **Wisconsin Chapter's** most recent retreat was March 11-12, and featured a paper by Pastor Tim Dusenberg on entitled "Office of Word and Sacrament: A Lutheran Understanding of the Calling to the Ordained Ministry." They next retreat May 13-14 at St. Norbert's Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. For more information contact the Rev'd Tim Duesenberg, STS at stmaximos@aol.com.

Seminarian Support Update

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Late last year our Senior appointed me to serve as Coordinator for Seminarian Support, which primarily involves overseeing allocations from the Scholarship Fund. I am happy to inform you that we have been able to award 17 scholarships of $2000 each to seminarians from 7 seminaries or schools of theology/ministry, representing 3 different ecclesial Lutheran bodies.

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I have also received a number of thank you notes expressing great appreciation and humble gratitude for the Society's support. Reflected in these notes is the significance of tangible support but also the importance of your pastoral and chapter support for those who have had opportunity to attend chapter retreats as well as General Chapter. This encouragement from the Society also reflects positively for the recipients on their sense of the support of the larger Church as they prepare for ministry. In addition to appreciation from the students, I have also received words of thanks from two program administrators.

As we continue to live out the charism of our ministry, the importance of identifying, caring for and supporting the formation of pastors for the whole church is crucial. This ministry within and for the one holy catholic and apostolic church is another contribution that we make for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as part of our particular Lutheran witness. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

The Rev'd Greg Harbaugh, STS
Coordinator of Seminarian Support

From The Vicar

The early days of the Society of the Holy Trinity were also the early days of my discernment for the Holy Ministry. As a freshman at Thiel College, an ELCA school in Greenville, Pa., I remember a pre-seminary upperclassman presenting me with a copy of the Rule, hot off the press. He was exuberant about this new order of pastors. For him it meant that as he found his way through seminary and, God willing, upon his ordination, he would have a ministerium to support him in his vows as well as in his living.

I was a bit of an evangelical catholic junkie in those days, never allowing my studies to get in the way of devouring the latest works of my real passion. Lutheranism, it seemed, appeared to be headed in the right direction, and it was indeed an exciting time to be the Church.

In October of 1999, to commemorate the signing of the Joint Declaration with Rome, Thiel students and Greenville townsfolk organized a mile-long human chain from the high altar of the Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity to the altar of St. Michael Roman Catholic Church, passing between them and right down Main Street those parish's respective Paschal candles. In 2001, Thiel brought to campus Edward Cardinal Cassidy, largely responsible for and a signer of the Joint Declaration. Some of us traveled to Washington to celebrate Called to Common Mission and the restoration of the historic episcopate (sort of)!

The Society of the Holy Trinity represented not the church's past, but an evangelical catholic future that seemed to be becoming a reality. In my discernment, the Rule was something I kept close to my heart. It was for me a standard of ecclesial clarity, and a guide for collegiality and prayer, without which, I probably never would have made it as a pastor.

Yet, in the succeeding years we all watched the western Church's regressions and re-entrenchments over many distractions. The Society then suddenly represented less of a place a the forefront of the Church's progress and more of a holdout of the hope that had been and remains for many.

I am grateful to serve First Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, a parish whose leadership understands that what the Rule prescribes for pastors is what I need *and* what *they* need: a servant who is grounded in Scripture, the Confessions, and a life of prayer and repentance; one who is held accountable by his or her peers and teaches as the one holy catholic and apostolic Church has always taught.

There will be seasons when we signers of this Rule are perceived as those at the forefront of the Church's future, and there will be times when we are seen as sticks in the mud. The gift that the Society brings to Christ's Church, however, must not ever been hidden away, but, rather, nurtured and shared. For who is to know when the seeds we seek to plant will find themselves in fertile soil.

In Christ,

The Rev. Brian A. Evans, STS
Vicar

In Memoriam

De Trinitate prints notice of members who have recently entered the Church Triumphant. If you are aware of a Society member's death, please contact our Secretary, Pari Bailey, at revsbailey@redred.com with name, date of death, and chapter affiliation.

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