DE TRINITATE

Newsletter of the Society of the Holy Trinity

Societas Trinitatis Sanctae

From The Senior

The Office of Holy Ministry

Our Founding Statement, which preceded the development of our Rule by about 1 year, delineates several issues which were of concern to those who helped establish our Society. And of all these concerns, I believe that it was the one regarding the Office of the Holy Ministry which was central in establishing our Ministerium.

The Founding Statement puts this matter so very clearly "When the distinctiveness of the ministry of the Word and sacraments is obscured by a culture-bound egalitarianism, by anti-clericalism, or by pastoral loss of nerve, then the training and work of pastors loses its focus and center. The ordained Ministry becomes a "helping profession" or pastors become merely denominational shopkeepers. Amid such confusion, we affirm the God-given distinctiveness of the pastor's call and state of life." And that "God-given distinctiveness" is, of course, found in Augustana V which states so clearly "To obtain such faith (referring back to article IV) God instituted the office of the ministry, that is provided the Gospel and the sacraments."

Yet today, even faced with the clear wording found in Augustana V, we find that in too many of our ecclesial bodies, the very heart of the office of priest or pastor continues to be undermined, set aside as of little importance, challenged as to its necessity, impugned as to its validity and overridden by quota systems that dilute the teaching authority of the office and reduce that office to irrelevancy. One of the essential foundations of our evangelical catholic identity, therefore, must be a recovery of, or the strongest continuing emphasis upon, the holy office of ministry.

This year the theme of our General Chapter will be the Office of Ministry. Bishop Will Willimon (UMC) who has written extensively on this topic, taught at Duke Divinity and served as Dean of the Chapel there, will share with us some of his perspectives on where we stand today. Dr. John Pless from Concordia, Fort Wayne will examine Augustana V as the key to our office. On Wednesday evening the Rev'd Dr. Nathan Yoder STS and the Rev'd Dr. Tom Drobena STS, will constitute a panel to reflect on the practical implications of our office within our Lutheran traditions.

In preparation for our gathering, there are two books that I would like to recommend. The first is "*On the Priesthood*" by St. John Chrysostom (best edition is from St. Vladimir's seminary press). The second is "*The Priestly Office*" by Avery Dulles SJ. (Paulist Press) Both of these are fairly brief works but provide some wonderful insights into the holy office.

One of the essential foundations of our evangelical catholic identity, therefore, must be a recovery of, or the strongest continuing emphasis upon, the holy office of ministry.

Do plan to join us and we look forward to seeing you there.

Chapter Elections

The first half of the year has been filled with several chapters holding elections for Dean. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the following persons were elected:

The Rev'd Carl Voges, STS – Carolinas chapter

The Rev'd Rod Ronneberg, STS – Chesapeake/Potomac chapter

The Rev'd Larry Recla, STS – Florida chapter

The Rev'd Kenneth Tegtmeier, STS – Great Rivers chapter

The Rev'd Jared Stillions, STS – Guadalupe River chapter

The Rev'd Norman Dew, STS – Indiana chapter

The Rev'd Ryan Mills, STS – New England chapter

The Rev'd Keith Forni, STS – Northern Illinois chapter

The Rev'd Joyce Dix-Weiers, STS – Passavant chapter

The Rev'd A.J. Domines, STS – Susquehanna chapter

Our thanks to all those who are willing to serve our Society as chapter deans and members of our Leadership Council. Thanks be to God.

Mark Your Calendars

As most of you know by now, we will be moving our General Chapter location from St. Mary of the Lake in Chicago to Saint Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana in 2026.

The dates for our gatherings in 2026 and 2027 are as follows:

June 16-18, 2026, and July 13-15, 2027, with early arrival available as before.

Please mark your calendars accordingly.

Theme for General Chapter 2025 Announced

Our 2025 General Chapter retreat for the Society will take place at St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein from 23-25 September. Since it is the anniversary year of the Council of Nicaea, our theme will be "Nicaea at 1700. An Ecumenical Examination." We will have three presenters from three traditions – Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran. Plan to join us for what should be a wonderful opportunity to ponder some of the important aspects of this critical Council in the history of the Church.

In Christ

~ The Rev'd Senior Paddy Rooney, STS

Chapter Updates

Carolinas Chapter

The Carolinas Chapter recently met in retreat over May 20-21 to study the 3rd Mark of The Church: The Sacrament of Holy Communion, doing so in a book study of St. Germanus of Constantinople's *"On The Holy Liturgy."* The Rev'd Pierson Shaw, STS served a teaching theologian. The Advent Retreat will be devoted to a study of the conduct of The Service.

The Rev'd Steve Saxe, STS dean

Central Plains Chapter

The Central Plains Chapter met for it's first 44 hour retreat at the St. Benedict Christ the King Retreat Center in Schuyler NE April 15-17. Consensus was that the longer retreat time was much better, especially considering the lengthy travel distances for some. Five members and a fellow traveler were in attendance. A discussion over two plenary sessions was conducted on *"Understanding Our Times"* by the Rev'd Dr. Del Tackett.

The Rev'd Jeff Cottingham, STS dean

Chesapeake-Potomac Chapter

Chesapeake-Potomac Chapter met in Retreat on May 13-14 at the Claggett Conference Center in Adamstown, MD, with eight people in attendance. The Rev'd Patrick Rooney, STS Senior, served as teaching theologian on the topic, *"Christ the One Mediator, the Saints and Mary"*; and served as the elector as the Chapter elected a Dean. Since it was the eve of St Matthias Day, the "lot fell" on the Rev'd Rod Ronneberg, STS. In addition the Chapter prayed the Offices and celebrated the Eucharist. We were honored to have two guests who wish to sign The Rule at the upcoming General Retreat in Mundelein this Fall.

The Rev'd Rod Ronneberg, STS dean

Great Rivers/Indiana/Northern Illinois chapters

A tri-chapter STS retreat was held at Valparaiso University, May 1-2 for the Feast of St Philip & St James, Apostles and Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. Presenters were The Rev'd Jim Wetzstein, Campus Pastor, who led a tour of the Chapel of the Resurrection, The Rev'd Dr. Matthew Becker, STS, on his book "*Fundamental Theology*" and Deacon Nicholas Denysenko, on the Ukrainian Orthodox vis à vis Russian Orthodox Church. In attendance were 17 Society members including The Rev'd Paddy Rooney, STS Senior, who led the election of Deans for each chapter. Elected were: The Rev'd Ken Teigtmeyer, STS, (Great Rivers), The Rev'd Norm Dew, STS (Indiana) and The Rev'd Keith Forni, STS, (Northern Illinois). The Rev'd Rodney Juell, STS, preached at the Thursday Eucharist. The Rev'd Keith Forni, STS, served as chaplain.

Iowa Chapter

The Iowa-Nebraska Chapter of the Society of the Holy Trinity met at the Creighton University Retreat Center, Griswold, IA, from May 6 to May 8, 2024.

The Rev'd Christopher Staley, STS served as our chaplain for

the retreat and led our worship. We were privileged to join the community on Tuesday morning at their regular Mass and appreciated their welcome.

Our theological study centered on St. John Chrysostom's book *"On the Priesthood"*. The overwhelming consensus among the members of the Chapter was that the edition from the Popular Patristics Series available from St. Vladimir Press is the most useful for study. We also discussed an article written by Marc Kolden, "*A Lutheran Understanding of Pastoral Ministry: Implications for Pastors and Congregations."* (Word and World, Vol 13.1 1993)

Our Chapter agreed by consensus to hold our annual 48-hour retreat at Creighton University Retreat Center and our November 24-hour Retreat at the Stone Center, Camp EWALU, Strawberry Point, Iowa.

We agreed to change the Chapter name to the Iowa Chapter as we have no members from Nebraska. The perfectly reasonable suggestion by the Dean that we adopt Iowa State University colors, cardinal and gold, as our official Chapter colors did not achieve consensus.

The Rev'd Gary Hatcher, STS dean

Metro New York Chapter

The Metro New York Chapter was unable to host our Spring retreat this year, but has begun planning our schedule for next year. We continue to seek members for our Chapter as many of our active members have retired and moved out of the area, or joined the Church Triumphant. We are optimistic about this. Several of our members have attended the Florida Chapter retreats over the past year at the invitation of Fr. Larry Recla, STS. Continued prayers for our growth are welcomed.

The Rev'd Dr. John G. Fleischmann STS dean

Susquehanna Chapter

The Susquehanna Chapter met in retreat on Monday and Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Easter, April 22 and 23 at Camp Hebron in Halifax, Pennsylvania. The Rev'd Paddy Rooney, STS Senior, was our Society visitor and conducted the election of a dean. The Rev'd A.J. Domines, STS was elected as dean and installed during the closing Eucharist. The next retreat of the Susquehanna Chapter will be Monday and Tuesday in the First Week of Advent, December 2 and 3 at the Ave Maria Retreat House at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

The Rev'd A.J. Domines, STS dean

Wisconsin Chapter

The Wisconsin Chapter met at St. Anthony Spirituality Center in Marathon, Wisconsin, on April 29-30. We reviewed *"Letter to the American Church"* by Eric Metaxas. Guest ministers from the Wisconsin Mission District of the North American Lutheran Church attended the retreat alongside our chapter. Upcoming retreat: October 28-29, 2024 at St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. Contact: Rev'd Andrew Zoerb, STS, pastorandy@oursaviorsdenmark.org.

The Rev'd Andrew Zoerb, STS dean

From The Secretary

Dear friends, Please remember to send your annual dues, in the amount of $330.00. The dues were due on Holy Trinity Sunday (May 26), but at this publication, I have received payment from only 102 people.

The General Chapter Retreat will take place September 24-26 at the University of St. Mary of the Lake Conference Center in Mundelein, Illinois. More information will be sent in mid-June via the Deans, and will also be on the website. An important note for this year: we do not have access to Joseph and Mary House in 2024. It "has been ordered closed to undergo essential safety renovations." All of us will fit in the Main Lodge, as we did last year, but with this year being an election year, it may be a bit cozier.

Please note that not all requests for single rooms will be able to be accommodated, though I will try—preference will go toward those with a medical necessity for a single room. While not ideal, retreatants are able to book their own housing at local hotels, if preferred.

Deans will contact their chapter members and friends with directions on how to register for the retreat. Those who are not members nor affiliated with any chapter will be able to register with me after July 1. The deadline for registration this year is August 28, and cancellations must be received before September 6th. Last-minute additions are always welcome.

Now is a good time for members to be certain their chapter dean has their updated email and other contact information so as not to miss out on important details!

The Rev'd Pari R. Bailey, STS Secretary

From The Vicar

Having grown up and served in farming communities, I have often heard the comment, “Farmers are the biggest gamblers in the world. They invest many resources of capital, time, and energy and are completely dependant on the weather.” I usually respond, “No, they are not gamblers. God promises seedtime and harvest. He doesn’t promise good prices.”

A kernel of corn is planted approximately two inches deep in the soil. It looks like nothing is happening. But what is taking place in the plant during germination? The seed absorbs 30% of its weight in water for the embryo to start growing. A root starts to grow downward. Four days after the root begins to descend, a shoot starts to elongate toward the surface. This is what will become the plant. It commonly breaks the surface of the soil 6-10 days after planting. When the visible shoot is approximately one inch long, the first five leaves are already developing within it. Below ground, the root is already five to seven inches long and a network of roots are developing. So much is taking place though not visible to the casual observer.

On Pentecost, the Church is born in spectacular fashion – rushing wind, flames of fire, people hearing in their own language, three thousand baptized. That must have been something to behold. Thanks be to God! How has it gone since then? Although there have been “outbreaks” of the Spirit, both locally and globally, it really is not the norm. Faith has usually been the results of consistent work of planting and nourishing the seed of God’s word. The results are often not seen for a long time, perhaps not ever by the worker.

We are in a time where the Church seems to be in decline. We are tempted to look for some program, some project, some unique event that could deliver spectacular results. Perhaps if we jumped off the pinnacle of the temple expecting an angel to catch us, that would bring the desired effect.

The Augsburg Confession offers a different perspective. Article VI confesses that the Church will remain forever. Consider the sweep of what we confess: Article V, the Office of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments; Article VI, faith is bound to bring forth good fruit; Article VII, gathering of the saints where Gospel and Sacraments are received; Article VIII, faithful and unfaithful are mingled, therefore: Article IX, Baptism, Article X, Lord’s Supper; Article XI, Confession & Absolution.

Like corn growing below the surface, the Holy Spirit works in spectacular, though often in unseen ways. So we stay the course. Obviously, there will be variations. Different music speaks to different people. Some ministries focus on milk and others on meat. Some are more reflective and others more active. But the Church is in for the long haul. We stay focused on those basic, distinctive characteristics of what the Augustana confesses.

The Rev’d Jim Lehmann, STS

Vicar

2025 Liturgical Calendars

Order now to reserve the quantity you desire. Distribution will take place at the General Chapter Retreat in September. Donation remains the same as in past years: $5.00 per copy/ $25.00 for six. Please submit checks -- at the retreat -- payable to "Society of the Holy Trinity." Deans are asked to assist in distributing calendar orders made by those unable to attend the Mundelein retreat in person. Place orders by June 24th (The Nativity of John the Baptist) with the Rev’d Keith Forni, STS, Dean Northern Illinois Chapter, contacting him at keithlforni@gmail.com or 815 600 3030. The quantity of orders received will inform the publication order to be sent to Ashby Company at midsummer.

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Editor: The Rev’d Jeff Cottingham, STS
Editorial office: c/o Trinity Lutheran Church, 2102 Ave. G, Gothenburg Nebraska, 69138 - email: PastorJeff@trinitylutherangothenburg.com
To be placed on the De Trinitate *mailing list or to report a change of address, please contact the Secretary, below.*
Senior: The Rev’d Patrick Rooney, STS 11300 Saddleview Court, Raleigh, NC 27613 / 717-870-1154 / pastorrooney@gmail.com
Vicar: The Rev’d Jim Lehmann, STS 5823 E. 1800 North Road, Fithian, IL, 61844 / 217-417-4156 / jtl611@hotmail.com
Secretary: The Rev’d Pari Bailey, STS P.O. Box 116, Belview, MN 56214 / 507-938-3285 / revsbailey@redred.com
Bursar: The Rev’d Jay Denne, STS 4612 Grant St., Sioux City, IA 51108 / 712-898-1678 / revjaydenne@gmail.com
Society Website: www.societyholytrinity.org