DE TRINITATE

Newsletter of the Society of the Holy Trinity

Societas Trinitatis Sanctae

From The Senior

Communication is simultaneously one of the most important and one of the most difficult exercises in which we can engage. I know. Some people can talk endlessly without ever taking a breath. But a high word count is not synonymous with great communication. To be effective, the first person has to have an idea, then decide which words will clearly communicate. The second person has to hear the words, and accurately interpret what the words mean. There are many opportunities for the line of communication to be broken.

The Society of the Holy Trinity believes that communication with its members is really important. Therefore, Chapter IX, Point 16 states "The Editor shall publish the regular newsletter of the Society." It's not a "may" rubric; it is a "shall" rubric. The fact that you are reading this article is an indication that we must publish it. But we also want to do it. This is one way that we communicate with one another. We have other means as well.

We have chapters which regularly meet in retreat. We must gather in retreat. All of Chapter III is devoted to retreats. But we also want to retreat together. We worship. We pray. We learn. And we build relationship with one another. That is communication. If you notice that someone is absent from your chapter, reach out and encourage them to become more active. If you know someone who would benefit from regular retreats, invite them. A person can retreat with a chapter or at the General Retreat without becoming members. (However, we wish they would.)

We have a website filled with much useful information. Thanks to Ted Carnahan STS, Iowa Chapter, the website is being updated and expanded. We expect that by the time you receive this newsletter, it will be live. One addition is a map which indicate the location of where each chapter regularly meets. Not all chapters have a "home" retreat center, so the map gives a general area. If someone is perusing the website, they may discover that there is a chapter near them and can reach out to the appropriate dean. This is a form of communication which our forebearers could only dream about.

The Society has developed a series of five videos, each approximately ten minutes in length.

How do we communicate in worship? Obviously, spoken and sung texts are forms of communication. But our bodies communicate as well. The Society has developed a series of five

videos, each approximately ten minutes in length. They move us through the parts of the mass with demonstrations and commentary to help teach us a reverent way of leading worship. Note that I said "a" way, not "the" way. Some forms of leadership distract from worship, other engage in worship. Realizing that few seminaries have full time professors of worship and liturgy, it is hoped that these videos will help students or recently ordained pastors to learn helpful leadership styles which will engage people in worship. And even this old dog learned a few new things as we filmed the various parts. The hours of video are being edited into a first draft. After review and possible revision, they will be available soon. They are free for anyone to use. If you have contacts with instructors at a seminary, encourage them to check them out. Perhaps you will use them in your own chapter and a teaching time.

Our triune God wants to communicate with us. Through prophets, apostles, and Christ himself, God comes to us. Having received in faith, we now share the good news of God's abiding grace.

In Christ,
The Rev'd Jim Lehmann, STS
Senior of the Society

Calendar Campaign

"Day by Day we Magnify Thee…"

2027 Society of the Holy Trinity calendars are available while supplies last. Orders placed through the General Chapter Retreat are now being shipped by USPS Priority Mail (please note: cost has increased for shipping). Donation for calendars: $5.00 per single copy, or $25.00 for a pack of six. Checks are to be made to "Society of the Holy Trinity."

To order, please contact the Rev'd Keith Forni, STS, at 815-600-3030, or email Keithlforni@gmail.com. Complimentary copies are available for campus ministry centers.

From The Secretary

Dear friends,

Dues are now due on Transfiguration Sunday. In 2027, that's February 7th. Your dean will send you a notice about them shortly after St. Andrew's Day this month, and the form will also be on the website at that time. The new timeline worked pretty well for 2026, so I hope that will continue.

The dates for the upcoming General Retreat are July 13-15, 2027. Registration will open May 1. As before, members and chapter guests will register through their deans. At-Large members and guests, and inquirers not affiliated with a chapter, will register directly with me.

In Christ,

The Rev'd Pari R. Bailey, STS, Secretary

A Reflection on the Feast of St. Andrew

A reading from a sermon of Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux

Today we celebrate the feast of St. Andrew. [November 30] If we attentively meditate upon it, we shall find in it much food for our spirit.

You must have noted that St. Andrew, when he came to the place where the cross was prepared, was strengthened in the Lord and started uttering fiery words, being inspired by the Spirit whom he had received together with the other apostles, in the form of tongues of fire. His mouth spoke from the abundance of the heart, and the charity that burned in him gave ardor to his voice.

And what did St. Andrew say when he saw the cross that had been put up for him?

"O cross," he said, "long desired and now offered to my soul's desires! I come to you full of joy and assurance. Receive me then with gladness, for I am the disciple of him who hung from your arms."

Whence then came to that man such astonishing joy and exultation? Where did he, so frail a creature, get so much constancy? Where did he get so spiritual a soul, so fervent a charity, and so strong a will? Let us not imagine he got that great courage from himself. It was the perfect gift issued from the Father of lights, from him who alone produces marvels. It was the Holy Spirit who came to help his weakness and filled his soul with the charity strong as death, and even stronger than death.

May it please God to make us share in that Spirit! For if now the effort of conversion is painful to us, and if we are vexed by watchings, the only reason is our spiritual indigence. If the Spirit were present to us, he surely would come to help our weakness. What he has done for St. Andrew when he faced the cross and death, he would do also for us: removing from the labor of our conversion its painful character, he would render it desirable and even delicious. "My Spirit," says the Lord, "is sweeter than honey," so much so that the most bitter death could not lessen its sweetness.

We must take up our cross with St. Andrew, or rather with him whom he himself has followed, the Lord, our Savior. The cause of his joy and his exultation was that he died not only with him, but like him, and that he was so intimately united to his death and to his sufferings that he would also reign with him.

Let us too listen, with the ears of our heart, to the voice of the Lord who invites us to share his cross: "If any wish to be my followers, they must deny themselves and take up their cross, and follow in my steps." For our salvation is found on the cross, provided we courageously are attached to it. "The message of the cross," the Apostle tells us, "is complete absurdity to those who are headed for ruin, but to us, who are experiencing salvation, it is the power of God."

A Reminder

De Trinitate prints notices of members who have recently entered the church triumphant. If you are aware of a Society Member's death, please contact our Necrologist The Rev'd Christopher Staley, STS, at cbstaley@netins.net with the name, date of death, and chapter affiliation.

From The Vicar

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Rule,

During the season of Advent, you will more than likely be asked the question, "Pastor, are you ready for Christmas?" Honestly, I never know how to respond to that inquiry. I don't usually feel ready and I am usually tweaking my sermon right up to Christmas Eve.

I believe such a question is an easy and safe cover-up that avoids the deeper spiritual matter. Perhaps the better question that needs to be asked is "Are we prepared for the arrival of the Bridegroom?"

One of the points of the parable about the ten bridesmaids in Matthew 25, is that Christ's coming will be in His time, not ours. The five foolish bridesmaids had enough oil for the time they thought it would take him to arrive. They were not prepared for a delay. The five wise bridesmaids were prepared with enough oil to keep their lamps burning even through his delay.

Many of us will be so busy this Advent season with all that needs to be prepared for Christmas liturgies, while still performing the daily and extra-ordinary tasks of ministry as they come up. Those preparations are important because the Liturgical Year is the Church's discipline which gives us the oil needed to keep our lamps of faith burning brightly, until His arrival at the end of history. But it is all too easy to get caught up in the holiday and to see it as a deadline and goal. We like to know the day and time so we can put it on our calendar and be prepared for a particular event. But Jesus doesn't give us a date or a time. The parable is an invitation to be ready for His arrival at whatever time He chooses.

Through faithful worship, prayer, study and service, we will greet Him at His many arrivals before we see him in his unveiled glory—in cleansing water, words of forgiveness, broken bread and poured out cup and even the beggar at the Church door.

My parish has an 11:00 PM service on Christmas Eve. It is our least attended of our Christmas liturgies. Modern sensibilities require convenience and comfort and few want to be out past midnight on a cold December night, especially when one has been busy with all the external preparations that make a holiday. Nevertheless, there will be worshipers and our lights will be on. Most of the time we worship when the light is shining from the outside into our beautiful stained-glass windows. But on this night the light will shine outward and pierce the darkness of the darkest hour. And usually, it is just a few minutes after midnight when the broken bread and chalice are lifted high and as a faithful watchman, I get to announce the Good News: "Behold, the Bridegroom has arrived, come to the wedding feast."

I know each of you reading this believes and understands this truth, but I also know how difficult, frustrating and tiring being a herald of the Gospel can be. As the Vicar of the Society, I will be praying for you this Advent season and throughout the year, that through your faithful

obedience and service your lamp of faith will burn brightly that others may see your good works and give glory to our Heavenly Father.

In obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

The Rev'd AJ Domines, STS, Vicar

DE TRINITATE
News and Reflection from the Society of the Holy Trinity
Volume 29, Number 4, Advent 2026
Editor: The Rev'd Jeff Cottingham, STS
Editorial office: c/o Trinity Lutheran Church, 2306 E 38th St, Kearney NE 68847 - 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 Jim Lehmann, STS 5823 E. 1800 North Road, Fithian, IL, 61844 / 217-417-4156 / jtl611@hotmail.com
Vicar: The Rev'd AJ Domines, STS, 125 East High Street, Elizabethtown, PA 17022 / 717-449-0811 / pastordomines@christlutheran-etown.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