

The first 50 years of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

April 1949 - April 1999

1340 Eleventh Street
Manhattan Beach CA 90266-6038

Pastor George L. Ulrich, Pittsburgh Synod, conducted an intensive house-to-house survey of the Manhattan Beach community in 1948. The first worship service he held was February 6, 1949, with 85 persons in attendance. The congregation was organized two months later on Palm Sunday, April 10th. Sixty-six persons were received as charter members. Pastor Ulrich was installed as Trinity's first pastor on September 11, 1949. Within a week's time approximately two lots were purchased at the corner of Rowell Avenue and 10th Street for use by the congregation. Groundbreaking for the Chapel and Church School was held April 8, 1951. The buildings were dedicated November 25, 1951.

On August 15, 1953, Rev. Richard Scherch became Trinity's second pastor. During the next three years, the surrounding area developed rapidly as did the strong emphasis placed upon the Church's community service. The Church School grew from an enrollment of 196 to 454 students. With an average Sunday School (Church School) attendance of over 200 children per week, the church now stood at its second crucial stage of growth. The future of these young people and the congregation depended on what Trinity was willing to do to address the inadequate facilities of the church.

Though Rev. Scherch left Trinity's community on Easter Sunday, 1957, the congregation forged ahead. Reverend Wayne Wickoren arrived the following September, and Sister Grace Boehling, Deaconess, was hired as "Church Secretary" in December.

With Pastor Wickoren's resignation in October 1958, Dr. Andreas Bard served as Interim Pastor until June 1959, when Rev. Dale Hultgren became Trinity's 4th duly called Pastor. During the January 14, 1962, Annual Congregational Meeting a Note Burning Ceremony was held signifying the church was debt free. Under Council Vice-President John Roe, the congregation took three major steps: They 1) adopted the new constitution in accordance with the newly merged Lutheran Church in America, 2) compiled Trinity's first Pictorial Directory, and 3) made plans to meet the physical needs of the still growing congregation.

A three year campaign to raise the \$75,000 needed for building a new two-story education wing and administration building began May 20th, 1962. The Education Wing's Service of Entry was celebrated January 12, 1964, with the Dedication Service for Bethany Hall (Administration-Fellowship Building), Luther Hall (Christian Education Wing), and the re-dedication of George L. Ulrich Fellowship Hall being held January 26th, 1964. In 1964 Trinity's congregation consisted of 730 baptized members and 418 confirmed members.

Two months after Pastor Hultgren's leaving on July 1, 1966, Rev. Werner P. Welchert, his wife, Marcella, and their children Stanley, Mary and Alice were welcomed by Trinity members. With one eye constantly on the budget, Pastor Welchert, Council Members and committee Chairpersons strived through the late 1960s to mid-70s to keep Trinity's doors open. During 1966, communing adult membership climaxed at 327 persons. By 1970, child membership ballooned to 323 children.

In 1968 the Adult Forum was established as a place where people could freely air their views on controversial social issues and not be labeled as dissidents. With an ever-growing congregation, Rev. Roger Rogahn was hired in June of 1969 as Associate Pastor to work with and build a program for Trinity's youth.

Pastor Hartley Lee joined Trinity as Associate Pastor in September 1972. With observation and evaluation as his tools, he began redefining the Youth Programs, building a Youth Choir, and working with the Adult Choir.

In the Spring of 1972, Martin and Michelle Memmott discovered a treat called a Pepperbelly while at a swap meet in Lancaster. Consisting of a bag of Fritos topped with bean-free chili, they decided this would be a profitable treat to sell at the Manhattan Beach Home Town Fair. Over the years, Trinity has shared the booth's profits with various social ministry programs, and the Organ Fund. Today a Pepperbelly consists of a 1.25 ounce bag of Fritos Corn Chips topped with any combination of the following items: Chili, cheese, salsa, onions, guacamole and sour cream. Jalapeno peppers and/or Tabasco sauce are added at the buyer's discretion.

September 1972 the Christian Pre-School began operating on Thursday mornings as a co-operative experience for pre-schoolers and their mothers. While the children learned and played, the mothers attended a child care class with the pastor, worked yard duty, and helped maintain the classroom and its supplies. Sandra Wachter was hired in 1977 to serve as the Director of the Christian Education. While at Trinity Sandra served the congregation as Director of the Christian Pre-School, taught Confirmation classes, became involved with the Youth programs, taught various Adult classes and helped in various ways during worship.

With Barbara Johnson as Director-Teacher, and Deidre Steeves as Co-Teacher, Trinity Lutheran Church Pre-School opened its doors September 14, 1981, to 17 students. Only one child from the congregation was enrolled, designating the school as a community-outreach program. The Pre-School had their first booth at the Manhattan Beach Hometown Fair in October 1984. In 1985, they won First Place for their booth's design, and raised enough money to purchase and install playground equipment.

The year 1974 saw many personnel changes at Trinity: Rev. Lee resigned to accept a call to Shepherd Lutheran Church in Redding, California; Deaconess Jocelyn Sproule was hired as part time Youth Director; Keith Peters accepted Trinity's call as the new Adult Choir Director; church member Dick May led the Fall Stewardship Program; and member Roberta Gerds, Church School Superintendent, initiated Church School (i.e. Sunday School) classes on Thursday afternoons.

In 1976, Pacific Lutheran University (Tacoma, Washington) sculptor, Dr. Ernest Schwidder, was hired to make the "Winged Cross" for the Sanctuary. This cross was dedicated Christmas Eve, 1976. In 1978 he was commissioned to carve two panels for a new Altar and one panel for a new pulpit.

Beginning in May 1977, the Senior Citizens group known as the "Keen-Agers" began meeting. Due to their tireless efforts, the addition of a pearless pear tree, a brick planter around the tree, and a wrought iron gate to enclose the Sunday School patio area became a reality. The Dedication Service of these items, in Memory of LeRoy Dettman, was held April 1981.

Rev. J. David Brostrom and family arrived at Trinity during the summer of 1979. His installation was held September 16, 1979. Under Rev. Brostrom's leadership, Trinity opened a state certified pre-school, began plans for a new Sanctuary, and remodeled Ulrich Hall.

The Summer of 1984, with the help of the Ward, Dreshman & Reinhart fund-raising firm, a total of \$310,000 was pledged for a new sanctuary and remodeling project. Pastor and Sharon Brostrom retired to their dream home - a Bed and Breakfast in Vermont - on August 19, 1984, and Rev. John Lundblad answered Trinity's call the following month. Construction on the new sanctuary began November 12, 1984. On April 14, 1985, the cornerstone for the Sanctuary seating 176 people and a Choir area seating up to 40 people was laid. December 15, 1985, saw the dream of a larger Sanctuary come true for many generations of Trinity members, with the dedication of the new Sanctuary. Pastor Brostrom, and his family, returned to Trinity to deliver the sermon for this very special occasion.

On June 9th, 1985, Pastor Lundblad officiated at the Rite of Consecration into the Lutheran Deaconess Association for Trinity's very own Brenda A. Jaffe. She was consecrated as a Deaconess and called to serve at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Palos Verdes. Brenda was the first recipient of the Trinity Scholarship begun the previous year.

The loss of Pastor David Brostrom to cancer was strongly felt by Trinity's family. In his memory, the Brostrom Scholarship was established in 1986, and the remodeled fellowship hall was dedicated as Brostrom Hall in 1990. Stacey Freier received the first Brostrom Scholarship in December of 1987.

From 1987-1989 changes in membership, leadership and the impact of a large number of congregational leaders moving away left room for the emergence of new leaders and new energy. Pastor Lynn Bruer was installed January 10, 1988. The position of Director of Evangelism began December 1, 1989, with the hiring of Pastor Craig Beeker. By June 1991 the congregation had grown by 22% and Pastor Beeker's Children's Ministry included a growing Youth Group, Children's Church on Sunday mornings, and a Children's Choir with 24 members. The Seekers in Sneakers program (2nd-6th graders) began in September 1991.

With the completion of the remodeling of the old sanctuary and Ulrich Hall, and the addition of the new kitchen, Doug Bernabo decommissioned the Building Committee during the Service of Re-Dedication of Ulrich Hall, and the Dedication of Brostrom Hall and the Memorial Garden on September 23, 1990.

On Sunday, August 23, 1992, the Opus 56 Organ, with its 914 pipes, created and built by Lynn Dobson, made its public debut. Years of fund-raisers, food sales, plus a \$60,000 mortgage on the church building turned this \$165,000 dream into a reality. With the Organ Dedication Service held November 22, 1992, a new means of reaching out to the community was created. Since then, a Bach's Lunch Recital (held the first Friday of every month, except in the summer) and 3-4 major Organ Recitals have been held annually.

Coming with a youth-camping background, Aaron Tidwell arrived in March 1993. Continuing to build on the youth programs begun by Pastor Beeker, Aaron began involving the Youth Group (7th-12th graders) and Seekers in Sneakers (3rd-6th graders) in service projects, fund-raisers and summer trips. The following September TNT (Thursday Night at Trinity) began. The program involved children aged pre-school through 8th graders. Younger students participated in movement classes, arts and crafts, Bible study and Choir. Sixth, seventh and eighth graders attended Confirmation classes and Choir.

Since its beginning, the Pre-School has been financially self-sufficient. A waiting list to enroll has always existed. In 1994, under the guidance and determination of Michelle Voeller and pre-school parent, Jan Pipkin, enough money was raised to build and pay for an additional classroom adjacent to Ulrich Hall. In the Pre-school's 18 year history, Barbara Johnson (1981-85), Karen Kohn (1985-1989) and Michelle Voeller (1989 to present) have served as Directors.

Trinity's summer Vacation Bible School (VBS) program has never stopped growing. In June of 1999, VBS had over 104 children and 65 volunteer teachers/aides. Children enjoyed Bible class, arts and crafts, snack time, recreation, and choir over a five day period. Along with the VBS program, the afternoon Day Camp program run by Aaron Tidwell and volunteers continues to grow also. This program explores all kinds of Los Angeles County "discoveries", works on a service project, and helps those involved get to know each other better as individuals and as Christians.

July 1998 celebrated the 12th year for Music Rhapsody's *Summer Music Camp* conducted on Trinity's campus. Students attended music classes on dancing, lessons for and the making of various instruments, singing, drama, rhythm, art, and attending performances given by professional musicians as well as performing themselves. Pre-kindergarten children through ninth graders attend this program held over a four week time period. Trinity's Pre-School, Vacation Bible School, Day Camp, TNT and the *Summer Music Camp* are great educational outreach programs to our community. The greater portion of these students and parents involved are non-Trinity members, and continue to return year after year.

In conclusion, the history of our church is not accurately described on these few pages. Our growing faith and trust in God, our dedication to building a strong community, campus and life for ourselves and those we touch; and the many names of those who have helped to build Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church can only be discovered by reading Annual Reports, Council Meeting Minutes, Committee Minutes, *Trinity Tidings* newsletters and listening to stories told by others.

Many saints have marched through the history of Trinity Lutheran Church, Manhattan Beach. Beginning in 1948 with an empty plot of ground and focusing on their mission, believers raised and established the House of Worship we have today. Today Trinity Lutheran Church is located at 1340 Eleventh Street (formerly 1001 Rowell Avenue), Manhattan Beach, California. Eleven of the surrounding South Bay cities are home to our members. As a congregation we own 12 acres of land, a Sanctuary, a small fellowship hall with kitchen facilities (Ulrich Hall), a large fellowship hall with a stage (Brostrom Hall), a two story Education Building (Luther Hall), and an Administration Building (Bethany Hall). More than this we hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ to live by, and the daily opportunity to share His wealth and wisdom with each and every person we meet.

Now it is our turn to continue with the same spirit, dedication and focus on our mission as those who came before us, so 50 years from now Trinity will continue to be a beloved community of Christian disciples proclaiming and sharing the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beth Fox and Jean Meinholtz
April 1999 Church Historians

Trinity's Clergy

Sep. 11, 1949	May 8, 1953	Rev. George L. Ulrich, Pastor
Jul. 1953	Apr. 21, 1957	Rev. Richard O. Scherch, Pastor
Oct. 6, 1957	Oct. 12, 1958	Rev. Wayne Wickoren, Pastor
Oct. 1958	June 1959	Rev. Andreas Bard, Interim Pastor
Jun. 4, 1959	May 21, 1966	Rev. Dale W. Hultgren, Pastor
Jun. 16, 1966		Rev. Robert C. Janes, Vice-Pastor
Sep. 8, 1966	Jul. 1, 1979	Rev. Werner P. Welchert, Pastor
Jun. 1, 1969	Oct. 4, 1970	Rev. Roger Rogahn, Associate Pastor
Sep. 1, 1972	Jun. 16, 1974	Rev. Hartley F. Lee, Associate Pastor
Jun. 1979	Sep. 1979	Rev. Claudius Jensen, Interim Pastor
Sep. 16, 1979	Sep. 1, 1984	Rev. J. David Brostrom, Pastor
Sep. 23, 1984	Jun. 30, 1987	Rev. John Lundblad, Pastor
Jun. 7, 1987	Jan. 1, 1988	Rev. Lynn Bruer, Interim Pastor
Jan. 10, 1988	Jan. 9, 2005	Rev. Lynn Bruer, Pastor
Jun. 1, 1990	Dec. 30, 1992	Rev. Craig Beeker, Associate Pastor
Feb. 6, 2005	May 28, 2006	Rev. Floyd Lawson, Interim Pastor
Jun. 4, 2006	to present	Rev. Luther Martel, Senior Pastor
Nov. 14, 2010	Jan. 29, 2012	Rev. Darryl Kozak, Assistant Pastor

Additional Church Leaders

Dec. 1957	Apr. 30, 1960	Sister Grace Boehling, Deaconess
Jul. 15, 1974	Jun. 1977	Jocelyn K. Sproule, Deaconess
Sep. 1981 **	Aug. 1982	Bryan LeBlanc, Seminary Intern
Sep. 1982	Aug. 1983	Brian Hughes, Seminary Intern
Oct. 23, 1977	Aug. 11, 1980	Sandra Wachter, Director of Christian Education
Mar. 1993	Dec. 31, 2010	Aaron Tidwell, Director of Family Ministry

**During 1981-82 an Intern Program existed. In January 1981, Ron Hunt, a Gustavus Adolphus College student, worked with us via a learning experience, and worked with the youth. During the summer, seminary student Roxann (Roxy) Metz filled in for Pastor Brostrom during his vacation and extended studies at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Pre-School Directors

September 1972	Christian Pre-School opens	
Oct. 23, 1977	Christian Pre-School	Sandra Wachter, Director
Sep. 14, 1981 to 1985	Trinity Lutheran Church Pre-School	Barbara Johnson, Director
1985 - 1989	Trinity Lutheran Church Pre-School	Karen Kohn, Director
1989 - 2007	Trinity Lutheran Church Pre-School	Michelle Voeller, Director
2007 - 2011	Trinity Lutheran Church and Pre-School	Becky Hicks, Director
2011 - present	Trinity Lutheran Church and Pre-School	Beverly Charsha, Director