

# DE TRINITATE

Newsletter of the Society of the Holy Trinity  
*Societas Trinitatis Sanctae*

## From The Senior

### A Recap of the General Chapter Retreat

With some absolutely beautiful weather to bless us, the members of the Society gathered in General Chapter retreat at the end of September at St. Mary of the Lake University and Seminary. For various reasons a number of our brethren were unable to join us and others had to cancel at the last minute because of parish or personal issues. We missed you all.

Our teaching theologian was The Rev'd Dr. Max Johnson who provided us with some wonderful insights into the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist centered on the theme of "*ecclesia semper refomanda*." Dr. Johnson was both witty and erudite and was well received. Our responders – The Rev'd Dr. Amy Schifrin, STS and The Rev'd (and soon-to-be Dr.) Thomas Drobena, STS – also did a marvelous job of encapsulating the presentations and laying out further challenges for us to consider. The questioning of all three at the joint Wednesday evening session was lively and fun.

I want to thank Pr. Erwin Roux, STS for serving as chaplain and Pr. Kenneth Elkin, STS for serving as our musician. The work that goes into preparing for worship at a gathering such as this is tremendous, and I am grateful to them and to all the others from the Susquehanna chapter who helped lead us during times of prayer.

As many of you know, I spoke about the concern I have for the malaise which I believe is infecting our Society. I expressed that concern by addressing that ancient concept of acedia and called for a spiritual renewal of our Society by considering both the address I gave to the Society at the opening mass and by an ongoing review of Chapter II of our Rule. Some Deans are already building that into their schedules for Fall retreats and I am grateful for that. But this

should not be a once-and-done-for thing. This acedia is a powerful means of distracting us from our common life and a means of discouraging us from the common witness we bear together in the life of the Society. I hope and pray that the discussions and the considerations continue and would urge each of our members to read *Acedia and Me* by Kathleen Norris if you have not already done so. Our common life of prayer lies at the heart of our very identity in the Society, so let us also recommit ourselves to that practice of praying the Daily Offices and indeed, as Dr. Johnson reminded us so well, praying the Eucharistic Prayer rather than just reciting it when we preside at the altar. Only in constant and consistent prayer will we be able to overcome this insidious evil called acedia, and in the process grow ever closer to being obedient to Jesus.

Pray for all those chapters holding retreats over the next few weeks. Pray especially for the Rocky Mountain chapter and the Great Rivers chapter as they elect a Dean. Please also continue praying for our brother Pr. Brian Evans, STS as he deals with his health issues and for our new vicar, Pr. Jim Lehman, STS. I am grateful to Brian for his service as vicar over the past year, and to Jim and his willingness to step up and take on that role for the remaining two years of this term.

I remain grateful beyond words for the work of Pr. Pari Bailey, STS as our secretary. You will find her report in this newsletter, but so much of her work is unseen and under-appreciated. Thank you also to Pr. Jay Denne, STS who has

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taken on the responsibilities as our bursar and is doing a very fine job in that role.

As was announced at the retreat, our General Chapter next year will be in October because of scheduling problems at the Center. Please put the dates of October 20-22, 2020 in your calendars now and plan to join us at that time. In 2021 we will return to our more regular September date. I am currently working now on possibilities for themes and teaching theologians for our 2020 retreat, and I will keep in touch on that front.

## From The Secretary

Dear brothers and sisters,

First, I thank you for the opportunity to serve you, my brothers and sisters, as Secretary of the Society. It is an honor and a privilege to assist our Senior, officers and deans, and deal with the details of our common life together. I also routinely say that God uses you to knock the rough edges off me and force me to learn patience, so thank you for being the instrument of my mortification. I humbly ask only that you try not to participate in that endeavor *too* willingly! Here are the updated numbers, most of which I provided in my oral report to the General Chapter.

### 1. Membership report

- We have 278 subscribed members in 21 chapters in two countries.
- 2 pastors subscribed to the Rule this year.
- 180 members paid their dues in full this year.
- 6 members asked to waive a portion of their dues .
- 3 members asked to have their 2018 dues waived entirely.
- 89 subscribed members did not pay any of their dues at all. What we are seeing is a reflection of the reality of our common life. We have fewer people committing to supporting the Society and to fulfilling these obligations. It is not unusual for organizations to encounter a period of retrenchment. Following the upheaval of our Lutheran landscape in North America, membership in the Society spiked, and since some of those judicatorial conflicts have settled or played out in varying ways, it's being reflected in our membership, too. The deans have done some work in contacting inactive members and ascertaining whether they wish to continue with the Society. Unlike other organizations, however, we understand membership here not to just be a matter of sign-

Finally, the Leadership Council will be meeting in February in South Carolina. We have much to discuss about how the Society moves ahead under God's direction. Reports and information from that meeting will be available in the future.

May God continue to bless our Society and each and every member in it.

In our common life and work,

Paddy Rooney, STS  
Senior

ing up, and then removing your name from the rolls when you're done, but being a matter of a vow made. The Senior is the one who releases from Society membership, and many of our inactive members simply have not made contact with him to ask to be released from membership. The Rule states in Chapter IX that "Neglect of the Rule will constitute resignation of membership in the Society," and the Leadership Council continues to have serious conversations about those members who have not paid their dues.

### 2. Credentials report:

- For the 2019 General Chapter Retreat, there were 159 total attendees.
- 130 members in attendance this year.
- 29 Guests, including 8 Seminarians and Vicars from 4 seminaries.
- 73 people arrived early, either on Sunday or Monday.

A continued reminder to read everything you receive carefully, and respond in a timely fashion. I appreciate your assistance in this way! I would also note that if you wish to make arrangements to pay your dues early, or if you wish to send a portion of your dues now, and a portion later, you may certainly do so. Just contact me to let me know what your plan is.

In our common life and work,

The Rev'd Pari Bailey, STS  
Secretary

## Chapter Updates

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The **Chesapeake-Potomac** Chapter will be meeting at the Trinitarian Retreat House in Baltimore, MD, December 2-2 for our Advent retreat. Our teaching theologian will be the Rev'd Rod Ronneberg, who will present on the use of the Byzantine rite among Eastern European Lutherans. For more information, please contact Chapter Dean Carl Roemer at [ceroemer@gmail.com](mailto:ceroemer@gmail.com).

The **Columbia River** Chapter recently gathered in retreat at Mt. Angel Abbey Guesthouse on October 9-10. The Rev'd Richard Johnson, STS served as teaching theologian. For information on upcoming retreats, please contact Chapter Dean Joe Hughes, at [j\\_w\\_hughes@hotmail.com](mailto:j_w_hughes@hotmail.com).

The **Great Rivers** Chapter will meet December 2-4 at Todd Hall Retreat Center, Columbia, IL. The Rev'd Tim Hubert, STS will serve as teaching theologian and will present on the Psalms, using Patrick Reardon's book, *Christ in the Psalms* as a reference. Attendees are encouraged to have the book on hand. Our Senior, Paddy Rooney, will be present to conduct the election for Chapter Dean. For more information, please contact Chapter Dean Jim Lehmann at [jtl611@hotmail.com](mailto:jtl611@hotmail.com).

The **Minnesota** Chapter's Advent retreat will take place December 2-3 at Christ the King Retreat Center, Buffalo, MN. Join us for the daily offices, time for rest and contemplation, and the Advent Hymn Sing. See our Facebook page, "Society of the Holy Trinity – Minnesota Chapter" or email Dean Trevor Bailey at [tbaile65@gmail.com](mailto:tbaile65@gmail.com) for more information.

The **New England** Chapter meets November 4-5 at St Joseph Retreat House in Milton, Mass., with teaching theologian The Rev'd Paddy Rooney presenting on "The Authority of the Priestly Office." Contact Ryan Mills, Chapter Dean, at [tlnhpastor@yahoo.com](mailto:tlnhpastor@yahoo.com) for more information.

The **Wisconsin** Chapter will next gather in retreat on November 4-5 at St. Norbert's Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. For more information contact the Rev'd Tim Duesenberg, STS at [stmaximos@aol.com](mailto:stmaximos@aol.com).

## New Signatories

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At the General Retreat this year, Pr. Wicky Barnes III (Susquehanna Chapter) and Pr. Wade Reddy (Iowa Chapter)

subscribed to the Rule—we welcome them into our common life in the Society!

## Brief Lessons

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As we look towards Advent, we offer a hearty thank-you to The Rev'd Matthew Griggs, STS (Minnesota Chapter) who has once again compiled the brief lessons that take us from

upcoming Advent through the entire Easter season. Thanks for your hard work on this, Matt!



## From The Vicar

That first Pentecost was spectacular! Not only were the disciples blessed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, but speaking in many languages, they were able to proclaim Christ so that some three thousand souls were added that day. A tremendous outpouring! Have you noticed the bookends to that event? “All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” (Acts 1:14) “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42) They were together. They prayed. They could have prayed independently. They could have gathered for other purposes. But together, they prayed.

Nearing the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, growing concerns were expressed about the direction of the Church as experienced in the Lutheran denominations. A group of clergy gathered and prayed. In September 1996, twenty people signed “A Founding Statement” and the Society of the Holy Trinity was born. Thanks be to God! The heart of the STS is clearly stated: Chapter I #1 “The Society will be bound together in common prayer.” Chapter III #1 “The Chapter Dean shall gather the chapter for retreat, ideally, no fewer than three times each year at a place suitable for prayer, worship, and study.” Gathering and praying is the lifeblood of the STS. It is the lifeblood of the Church.

In 2003, pastoral ministry was becoming ever more difficult in the congregation I serve and the community in which I live. I have always sought to be connected with colleagues, knowing I had much to learn and that they were a great resource. So when a friend invited me to a mini-retreat to introduce me to the Society of the Holy Trinity, I went. The introduction led to a Chapter retreat. I found there a group that gave me encouragement, direction, and accountability. At the first opportunity, I signed The Rule and ever since, ministry has been different. Life gets difficult; ministry gets busy; demands become hectic. It is easy to miss how much we need others. Or life is enjoyable, ministry on schedule, demands manageable. It is easy to forget how others need us. Gathering and praying are the elements of our life together. Our daily personal devotions, our weekly meeting with our worshiping community, our STS Chapter and General Retreats are woven together. Each enlivens the other. They form the fabric of our life with God. I want to thank the Society of the Holy Trinity for supporting me in ways you never know. You have made me a better pastor. I seek to contribute in any way possible so that, gathering and praying, the Church can be strengthened.

In our common work and service,

The Rev'd Jim Lehmann, 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](mailto:revsbailey@redred.com) with name, date of death, and chapter affiliation.

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Editor: The Rev'd Mrs. Katie Johnson

Editorial office: 2471 Pine Grove St, Muskegon, MI 49441 / 515-360-2381 / [iowakatie1981@gmail.com](mailto:iowakatie1981@gmail.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, 450 Ridge Road, Dillsburg, PA 17019 / 717-870-1154 / [pastorrooney@gmail.com](mailto:pastorrooney@gmail.com)

Vicar: The Rev'd Jim Lehmann, 5823 E. 1800 North Road, Fithian, IL, 61844 / 217-417-4156 / [jtl611@hotmail.com](mailto:jtl611@hotmail.com)

Secretary: The Rev'd Pari Bailey, P.O. Box 116, Belview, MN 56214 / 507-938-3285 / [revsbailey@redred.com](mailto:revsbailey@redred.com)

Bursar: The Rev'd Jay Denne, 4612 Grant St., Sioux City, IA 51108 / 712-898-1678 / [revjaydenne@gmail.com](mailto:revjaydenne@gmail.com)

Society Website: [www.societyholyltrinity.org](http://www.societyholyltrinity.org)