

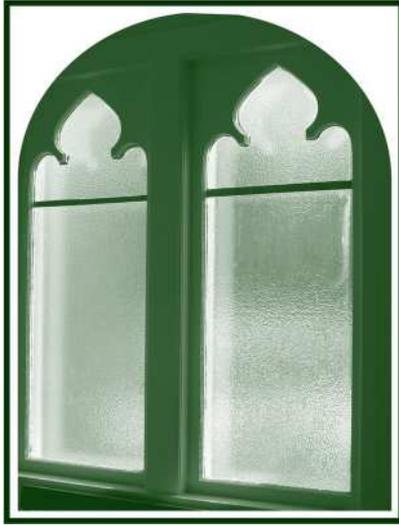
# Trinity Lutheran Church

December 24, 1948—2011

*Celebrating Sixty Plus Years  
On Western Avenue*



Everyone Is Welcome



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*Celebrating Sixty Years  
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## *Stories From the Past*

### The First Building — 1893

For 55 years, the Swedish immigrants of Brattleboro worshiped at the Swedish Lutheran Church on West Street. In 1939, the name was changed to Trinity Lutheran Church.

The Swedish neighborhood on West Street was very crowded and the street was very narrow, so the congregation decided to build a larger church — and were delighted to receive a piece of property on Western Avenue. The land was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Johnson, who lived in the adjoining house. In July of 1948, the cellar hole was dug; and the building was erected by mostly volunteer labor of the parishioner.

### Time For A New Building — 1948

The old church on West Street was razed and the lumber used in building the new structure. The cellar and land on West Street were sold and there is a home on that site today.

While the work of razing the old church and building the new church was going on, the congregation worshiped in the Swedish Covenant Church on Strand Avenue. That building is now a stained glass studio.

On Sunday afternoons, the women of the church would gather to remove nails from the boards so that the men could work on the building during the week. Someone would make coffee and they would have a fun time socializing while they worked.

*Rev. Ray and Marie Kask*



I know my dad helped to build the church. I believe he worked on the *windows* for one thing. My folks were very involved with the church. It was an exciting time for us all and many members worked hard on building the church. It still holds a special spot in my heart.

*Shirley Wright*

*1948 – Construction on Johnson lot*



*Johnson House on left  
Recycled lumber from old church in front*

## Christmas Eve — 1948

By Christmas Eve, the building was finished enough to hold the first service there at 11PM—an old Swedish tradition. Evergreen roping covered the doorways and archway because the trim had not been installed yet.

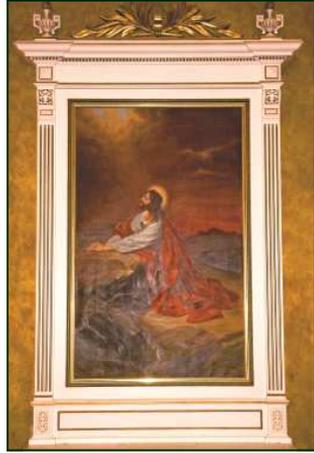
*Rev. Ray and Marie Kask*

We do remember that first service. It seemed almost magical. It was so wonderful to have our new church and to have such a beautiful worship experience—a great memory. We were the last couple to be married in the ‘old’ church; and I believe that Norma and John Leimgruber were the first couple to be married in the new sanctuary.

*Arnold and Eileen Canedy*

## The Altar Painting of Jesus

The altar painting, Christ in Gethsemane, was dedicated in 1908—a gift from the Women’s Society. The beautiful white and gold altar frame, was carved by Carl F. Peterson. Both pieces, along with the altar and communion railing, were brought from the old church and installed in the new building for the 1948 Christmas Eve Service.



## The Altar and Pulpit

“...the skillfully-carved pulpit [and altar were] fashioned by the late Carl F. Peterson and John L. Johnson [in 1898].”

*Brattleboro Reformer*  
June 30, 1948



*Christmas 2007*

Anders Andre, a student at Upsala College, also worked on this project. He spent the summer of 1898 serving in the pastorate position for the Swedish Lutheran Church. The church did not have an altar or pulpit and Anders was familiar with woodworking.

*Norman Andre,*  
*Grandson of Anders Andre*

## The Sanctuary Carrying Beams

This is the story, as best I can remember, from what my mother told me when I was a child. The congregants of Trinity designed and built the current church, located on Western Avenue — including the graceful arch over the sanctuary. After the building had been in use for several years, it was noted that the arch seemed to be separating slightly; so a professional architect was asked for his opinion.

Initially he didn't want to be involved, assuming that, since a group of amateurs had built the church, it would be a hodgepodge of construction unworthy of his efforts. However, once he viewed the actual interior of the building, he was so impressed that he agreed to act as a consultant, eventually recommending that the horizontal beams now in place be utilized as stabilizing units. This must have been done when I was quite young, as I don't have an active memory of the arch without them, so I would estimate they were in place for at least fifty years.

*Marie (Wheelock) Lawrence*

## The Steeple and Bell

I recall conversations between Mom and Dad on the way home from church during the late “50’s”. “Some day we’ll have a steeple on our church with a bell.”

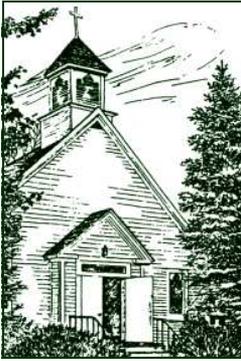
Seems as though when it was close to happening something else came up to defer the funds...an organ, need to purchase the building next door for school and office space, and so on.

Through all of this, Dad’s mission was to find a bell. So he put the word out. In town and “up-the-valley” into Londonderry he spread the message, “Looking for a bell...need one for the church.”

At one point he informed Mom that he found one and was bringing it home after work. Mom was elated and called everyone. Well, Dad came home and into the house and gave Mom a box. She opened it and inside was a bell with a handle...

”What the heck is this?” she asked. “Well, now you don’t have to yell for the kids! Just stick your hand out, ring the bell and they’ll come a ‘running!’” How right he was...she rang—and all five of us rang.

Finally God answered the prayers of so many. One of Dad’s customers up the valley had a bell and wanted to give it to Dad for the steeple that would some day be built on our church. So, Dad and I went up on a Saturday and the bell was hoisted up into the back of our pickup.



When that was done, Dad asked him, “How much for the bell!?” His answer to my father has stayed with me through all these years.

“Bill, for all the help you have given me and my family, I give this bell to you and your church.”

Then Dad asked him, “By the way, where did this bell come from?” He replied, “Came off a locomotive, from the Vermont Railroad.” Enough said. We went home and unloaded it into the barn at our home on Bonneyvale Road

in West Brattleboro, where it was stored.

Finally, when we moved from there to Orchard Street, the bell was again stored. I’m not sure who Dad entrusted with the caretaking. \*We moved to Eagle Bridge, New York and the bell stayed in Brattleboro. Then one day God looked down on Trinity Lutheran Church and there was a steeple— and in that steeple was a bell.

May God bless those who came before us for it is they who have made possible what is. And may God bless each and every one of you for it is you who make possible for what will be.

*Robert Oscarson, March 2008  
Son of Bill and Harriett Oscarson*

\*The bell was stored in the parsonage basement until 1973, when it was put into the steeple.

*Rev. Horst Bandle*

## Trinity Timeline

### Highlights About The Building 1948 — 2008

**1948** — Western Avenue church building constructed on a piece of land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Johnson. The first service in the new building was Christmas Eve, December 24, 1948, conducted by Rev. Raymond Kask.

**1950** — Dedication of the new sanctuary on June 25.



**1958** — Purchase of the adjoining church property to be used for future Sunday School addition. The house on property was later sold, but the field behind the house was retained and is presently used as an outdoor chapel.

**1959** — Two new altar pictures were painted and given to the church by Edith Kall Hertzberg; one for Christmas and one for Easter.

**1964** — Installation of new pews and carpeting in sanctuary.



**1967** — Ground breaking for the new addition on June 11th; dedication on September 22, 1968.

**1973** — 80th year of church. Festive service of celebration on September 30th with dedication of the long awaited steeple and bell.

**1978** — Dedication of the outdoor chapel in memory of Marian Speno. A time capsule was buried behind the altar.

**1975 to 1979** — Fellowship Hall renovation; Insulation added to building.

**1981** — Dedication of the small chapel to the Glory of God, in memory of John and Svea Hallgren and K. Louisa Johnson.

**1987** — The Christ candle stand was given to the church by Pastor Horst Bandle, who carved it in the likeness of the four gospels.



*Christmas 2002*

**1993** — 100th anniversary of church. The time capsule behind the outdoor altar was dug up and a new one buried.

**1994** — Dedication of the Eternal Light in honor of the 100th church anniversary.

**1997** — Dedication of the new elevator on January 19th.

**1998** — 50th Anniversary of Trinity on Western Avenue. Service of celebration on October 18th with dedication of a new processional cross.



*Christmas 2007*

**2002** — Altar re-designed to be used in the round.

**2003** — 30th anniversary of the steeple and bell on September 27th. Bob Oscarson spoke about how he and his father acquired the bell.

**2007** — Memorial fund purchase of a wrought iron Advent wreath.

## Trinity Pastors 1948 — 2011

1948 – 1950	Rev. Raymond Kask
1951 – 1954	Rev. Louis Danner
1954 – 1960	Rev. Roger Davidson
1961 – 1971	Rev. Harry S. Carlson
1971 – 1987	Rev. Horst Bandle
1988 – 1993	Rev. Philip Gustafson
1993 – 1994	Rev. Nicholas May
1994 – 2001	Rev. Peter K. Hanson
2002 – 2004	Rev. Alice Kerr Laird
2004 – 2005	Rev. Lisa Anderson
2005 – 2009	Rev. James Knowles
2009 – 2010	Rev. Kari Keyl
2010 to Present	Rev. Peggy Yingst



*Christmas 2007*

## The Congregation

Trinity Lutheran Church was organized in March of 1893 in Brattleboro, Vermont. The charter members were immigrants from Sweden with names like Anderson, Johnson, Magnuson, Fredrickson, Berg, Wennersten, Kall, Lind, Strand and Ekberg.

Now, in 2008, 115 years after first being organized, the members have names like Alexis, Anderson, Barry, Bergstrom, Boemig, Brandt, Carlton, Garbe, Gibson, Grotz-Kuch, Grow-Hanson, Haskins, Herman, Herman-May, Hill, Hitchcock, Hubert, Johnson, Knowles, Kuch, Lawrence, Lewis, Lilienthal, Long, McCauley, Omasta, Paciulli, Patno, Roberts, Roffman, Scott, Smuts, Stahl-Tyler, Stone, Therrien, Velazquez, Vinton, Wheelock, Wilder, Wolf, and Wright.

Many members do not live in Brattleboro but come to Trinity from surrounding Vermont towns and some towns in New Hampshire—a short trip over the Connecticut River. Trinity's former pastor, Peter Hanson, is currently serving with the ELCA Global Mission in Dakar, Senegal. He and his family are still members of Trinity.

Most members grew up in places other than Vermont: New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Germany, Canada, Denmark, and Guatemala.

Many members grew up in faiths other than Lutheran: Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Catholic. Trinity is part of ELCA Lutheran Synod, but quite a few members were originally from Missouri Lutheran Synod churches.

In 2004, the congregation voted to become a Reconciling In Christ Congregation, welcoming everyone regardless of sexual orientation.

This varied background gives Trinity a huge foundation to continue the mission of Christ in the Brattleboro area. There have been many changes in the past 115 years, but we look forward to welcoming others into our family. We are no longer just Swedes, but still children of Christ, one and all.



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