

Trinity Ecumenical Parish's Pursuit of Mission and Ministry during the COVID-19 Pandemic

March 13, 2020, to _____ (as of November 9, 2020)

Overview

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Trinity Ecumenical Parish has been pro-active and innovative on many fronts in pursuing the Parish's mission and ministry, while trying to keep safe and healthy the parishioners, pastors and staff, Trinity Preschool, and others who use Trinity's facilities.

After closing the Trinity building on March 13, much of the effort has been to recreate community virtually. The Parish has developed ways to use the internet to offer recorded and, later, live Sunday worship services; to e-mail daily prayers and weekly news; to convene meetings and classes via live video-audio chats; to offer spiritual and health support and information on the Trinity website; and to provide an opportunity for fellowship on Sunday mornings via video-audio chats.

In late August, Trinity resumed in-person Sunday worship services at 10:30 a.m. under strict health and safety protocols while continuing to offer the worship services on line. Trinity also began to offer in-person "Wednesday Mornings" meetings for prayer, devotions, and conversations held outdoors under a tent and under strict health and safety protocols. Trinity also conducted a "Trinity Treasures" outdoor yard sale under health and safety protocols.

During the pandemic, Trinity has worked to provide financial and other material assistance to those in need in the area community, while sustaining parishioners' financial support of the Parish.

Pre-pandemic Background

For years, Trinity has worked to keep parishioners and other visitors safe and healthy. The church has abided by safety codes and kept the building and restrooms clean and sanitary. Trinity for many years has had on its staff a Parish nurse, who, among other things, has provided health advice on a broad range of subjects. More recently, the Parish has organized a Medical Response Team and a Safety Team, composed of volunteer parishioners. To help prevent the spread of contagions, devices dispensing hand-sanitizing liquid have been installed at both main entrances. During flu seasons, including the 2019-2020 season, the Parish has suspended the practice during Sunday worship services of sharing the peace with handshakes or hugs.

Government and Judiciary Guidance and Direction for the Pandemic

During the COVID-19 crisis, Trinity's pastors, Parish Council, staff, and parishioners, have been responsive to guidance and directives from elected officials and advice and guidance from church judicatories, while at the same time being proactive and inventive in pursuing the Parish's mission and ministry.

The President on January 31 declared a public health emergency in response to COVID-19. On March 7, the first case of COVID-19 in Virginia was announced. On March 12, the

Governor of Virginia declared a state of emergency for Virginia from March 12 to June 10 to prepare for the crisis, and on March 13 he ordered all K-12 schools in Virginia closed for two weeks. Also on March 13, the President issued two national emergency declarations, and on March 17 he asked Americans to work at home if possible, avoid unnecessary travel, limit social gatherings to 10 individuals, and practice good hygiene. Also on March 17, Virginia's Governor ordered limiting to 10 the number of patrons in restaurants, fitness centers, and theaters.

Details on these initial and subsequent federal and state guidance and directions can be found in Attachment 1 to this document.

Advice and guidance from the judicatories are reflected in the Trinity decisions and actions described in this paper.

Trinity Decisions and Actions During the Pandemic

What follows are descriptions of decisions and actions taken by Trinity during the pandemic, starting on March 13, 2020.

First, under Section I, these decisions and actions are described in a series of categories – (A) worship services; (B) prayers, spiritual uplifting, devotions, faith ideas, and celebrations of life; (C) communications, meetings, fellowship, and finances; (D) support for individual parishioners; (E) financial or material support for those in need; and (F) church office management and building oversight.

Secondly, under Section II, the decisions and actions are discussed in chronological order, by month.

I. Trinity Decisions and Actions During the Pandemic—by Category

A. Worship Services

1. Cancelation of Sunday Worship Services and Access to the Church Building:

After the Virginia Governor on Friday, March 13, ordered all K-12 Virginia schools to close for two weeks because of the coronavirus, Trinity's pastors and Parish Council members consulted later that day and decided to cancel worship services and close the church building. Trinity office staff later that evening acted to inform parishioners of this decision by sending a special e-mail, writing posts on the church website and Facebook page, creating a phone announcement, and placing notices on all church building entry doors.

On March 16, Trinity informed parishioners by e-mail and other means that the church building was closed until further notice; this e-mail also briefly spoke of the future. (See the following Section A 2.)

With Governor Northam's March 23 directive ceasing in-person instruction at K-12 schools for the remainder of the academic year, closing non-essential businesses, and banning gatherings of more than 10 people for the indefinite future, and with the Lutheran Bishop's closing his office until May 17, Parish Council met later on March 23 on-line via the ZOOM video/audio conferencing program and decided to extend the closure of worship services, the office, and the church building to May 17. Parish Council informed parishioners of this decision via e-mail later on March 23 and said plans were underway to have some on-line events and that parishioners would be informed.

With Governor Northam's March 30 order that Virginians stay at home, continue not to gather in public or private groups of more than 10 people, and maintain 6-foot social distancing,

all until June 10, Trinity in April extended its building closure date to June 10 and so informed parishioners via e-mail.

Trinity took initiatives in March to provide worship services on-line while subsequently deciding to keep the building closed indefinitely beyond the June 10 date.

2. Offering Sunday Worship Services On-line:

On Sunday, March 15, the first Sunday that Trinity was closed, Trinity sent an e-mail to parishioners informing them that Vicar Christopher Girardeau, Trinity's intern, had posted a video worship on the Trinity website. On March 16, Trinity sent another e-mail stating that further communications would be sent via e-mail, that staff was working on logistics for meetings, and that parishioners should check the Parish website and look for an inspirational message on Facebook on the coming Sunday, March 22.

On March 17, Trinity sent parishioners an e-mail with suggestions for putting into practice the six faith practices while at home, including participating in church services via Facebook; this e-mail included internet links to daily devotional sites.

On March 21, Trinity sent an e-mail on how parishioners could view live video Sunday services on Facebook. Pastor Bouknight led worship via Facebook Live, but the video stream was insufficient due to the volume of internet traffic. The Pastors and Vicar began considering other internet platforms to use for worship services.

On March 26, Trinity announced via e-mail that it had established a Trinity Ecumenical YouTube channel on which the Parish would post worship services and information. This e-mail also announced a "Church Online" platform at <https://trinityecumenical.church.online.church/>.

On March 29, Pastors Bouknight and Miller and Vicar Girardeau began offering together a 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship service using the two aforementioned internet platforms.

For initial services, the pastors and vicar pre-recorded the worship services from their individual homes, and later they pre-recorded from the church's sanctuary. Vicar Girardeau pre-recorded him playing the guitar and singing from local sites with the lake in the background. Volunteer parishioners provided organ music or piano or vocal music recorded from home. (Much later, a parishioner was authorized to play flute music during the October 18 service.)

Later in the spring, the Sunday services were offered live on a more direct "ChurchOnline" website (www.trinitychurch.org), while the services were posted for later viewing on YouTube and the Parish's Facebook page.

For the live on-line worship services, parishioners could send a "chat" to greet other parishioners and offer short comments, with the "chat" displayed on the right side of the monitor screen. Initially, parishioners could also click on a red heart which then rose vertically on the screen to indicate the parishioner's positive reaction to something in the service, and there was also an opportunity to request prayers. In later versions of streaming services, the "chat" feature was continued, but the "red heart" and prayer request features were not.

For Holy Week worship services, on April 1, Trinity e-mailed to parishioners information about the April 5 Palm Sunday service, including who would be participating in the reading of the Passion According to Mark. For the Palm Sunday service, voices of those reading could be heard as relevant art or photos were displayed. During Holy Week, April 6-11, Trinity prepared and made available on the Trinity YouTube platform a special, daily worship service, including an Agape Meal on April 9, a Tenebrae Service on April 10, and an Easter Vigil on April 11.

For the April 12 Easter service, the pastors and vicar did a "fireside chat" in which all three appeared on the screen at one time from either the office or their individual homes and talked about the Bible passages where the women went to the empty tomb.

For the April 26 Earth Day service, Vicar Girardeau played the guitar, sang, and spoke from a wooded area with a stream, and Pastor Bouknight spoke from Trinity's butterfly garden. Parishioners from Trinity's Friends of the Earth team served as lay readers.

Pre-recorded services continued to be offered via the internet through spring and into the summer.

On Sunday, August 16, Pastors Bouknight and Miller led a 10:30 am worship service from the sanctuary broadcast in real-time via a camera in the back of the sanctuary and recorded for later viewing via YouTube. The service was made available to parishioners and the public who logged onto the Trinity website. The sanctuary was empty except for the pastors, a volunteer pianist/organist, a lay reader, a camera operator, new intern Vicar Rebekah Boatwright, and possibly some others.

On Sunday, August 23, Pastor Bouknight led another 10:30 am service in a generally empty sanctuary. Vicar Boatwright assisted with the service. The service was again made available in real time via the Trinity website and later via YouTube. By August 23 at least, the pastors, vicar, and lay readers wore face shields during the services.

3. Reopening the Sanctuary for In-person Worship Services

On August 30, Trinity re-opened the 10:30 a.m. service for in-person worship, limited to 50 parishioners, plus volunteer parishioners helping with health and safety protocols.

For all in-worship services, there has been a requirement to pre-register, and e-mails have been sent each week to accommodate pre-registering.

For the August 30 worship service, an effort was made to stream the service live from the sanctuary, but the effort failed as the Trinity system did not have sufficient internet capacity. The service was recorded and posted on YouTube for viewing Sunday afternoon and later.

Starting with the September 27 service, the 50-person limit was dropped, and the sanctuary has since been open to all wishing to attend the 10:30 a.m. service in person.

With upgrades to the internet system, worship services since mid-October consistently have been streamed live, as well as being posted on YouTube for later viewing, in addition to being available for registered, in-person attendance.

Starting with the October 18 service, the pastors, vicar, and lay readers switched from wearing clear-plastic face shields to wearing cloth masks, following recommendations from the CDC that masks were more effective than shields in protecting against the spread of COVID-19.

4. Virtual Communion Service

On Sunday, November 1, at 4 pm, Trinity offered a virtual communion service on-line.

B. Prayers, Spiritual Uplifting, Devotions, Faith Ideas, & Celebrations of Life

1. **Prayers during Worship Services**: In addition to prayers offered by the pastors during the worship services, the initial streaming of recorded, on-line Sunday services included an on-line application/space by which a parishioner could request a prayer.

2. **Daily Prayer**: Since March, the Trinity pastors, vicar, and staff have e-mailed a prayer to parishioners each day.

3. **Prayer List**: Beginning in late summer, Trinity included in weekly e-mails to parishioners an internet link which they could click on to see the names of people on the Trinity prayer list, including those with health issues, those who had lost a loved one, those serving in the military, and those with birthdays and anniversaries.

4. **Prayer Chain**: The Parish has offered via e-mail a prayer chain by which a parishioner can request prayers by others.

5. **Prayer Partners**: A program was offered to arrange for prayer partners who can stay connected through prayer.

6. **Election Day Prayer Vigil**: For the 2020 election, Trinity posted on its website a link to YouTube and a Trinity video with scripture, prayer music performed by Trinity volunteers, and photos of Trinity's stained-glass windows and crosses.

7. **Good News Cross Displays**: On March 25, Trinity sent an e-mail inviting parishioners to create a Good News Cross to display in their yards, on their porches, or in their homes and to e-mail photos to the church office for use in postings.

8. **Sharing Uplifting Photos and Moments**: Pastor Miller has invited parishioners "to walk with me" by sharing via e-mail uplifting photos and personal moments.

9. **Sharing "Faith Stories"**: A ministry was developed to have members of a team interview others parishioners to recount moments when they have experienced God at work. The interviews have been recorded and posted on the Trinity website. A total of six stories have been posted as of the end of October.

10. **Devotional Tools**: The Parish shares on-line devotional tools.

11. **Faith Ideas for Families with Children**: Director of Family Ministry Sharon Sicher sent e-mails to parents with family faith ideas for the home.

12. **Special Music**: Some parishioners have been asked or authorized to provide special music for worship services, and the Parish has directed parishioners to special music offerings on YouTube.

13. **Celebrations of Life Services/Memorial Services**: Celebrations of Life Services or Memorial Services were held in abeyance while the church building and sanctuary were closed. After the late August reopening of the church building and sanctuary for in-person worship on Sunday mornings, the Reopening Advisory Team considered recommending allowing Celebration of Life Services to be held in the sanctuary, but on October 30 the team informed parishioners by e-mail that it had decided to delay the implementation of such services in the sanctuary particularly out of concern for the increase in COVID-19 cases in the local area, protection of the pastors, and the availability of volunteers to safely staff such services. The team further indicated that when a vaccine is available and Trinity returns to more normal in-person worship, the team will revisit requests for Celebration of Life Services. The team noted that the Columbarium is currently available for Celebrations of Life Services and church members are encouraged to consider this venue.

C. **Communications, Meetings, Fellowship, and Finances**

1. **E-mail Communications**: Trinity has continued to send to parishioners a weekly e-letter--a short, weekly letter via e-mail. The Parish's prayer list has also been made available via an e-mail since summer. Special e-mails have also been sent, including about the coronavirus, resources, and other helpful information.

2. **Meetings via Zoom**: Organization meetings (including Parish Council) and educational classes, Bible studies, special group meetings, and confirmation classes have been conducted via the Zoom video/audio connection. Youth Group gatherings have been held on Zoom.

3. **Virtual Sunday Coffee Hour Fellowship**: In lieu of the normal Sunday morning coffee fellowship before and after worship services, the Parish has offered on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. virtual fellowship via Zoom.

4. **Virtual "Dine for 9" or "Zoom Chats"**: The Parish organized groups of some nine people each who shared fellowship via Zoom from May 1 to June 10. Pastor Bea organized a second set of groups to meet via Zoom beginning the week of August 10 and offered to form new groups after mid-November.

5. **Support Groups**: Many of the support groups supported by the Parish Nurse met via Zoom, including Life for One, Alzheimer/Dementia Caregiver Support Group, and the Men's Cancer Support Group. Others did not meet, including Multiple Sclerosis Support Group, the Breast Cancer Support Group, and the Chronic Pain Support Group.

6. **Finances**: During worship services and the offertory time, the pastors shared how those watching at home could contribute and those worshipping in person could contribute using trays at the back of the sanctuary. The Finance Team offered briefings via Zoom on Trinity finances and budget. The Stewardship Ministry Team mailed letters inviting pledges for 2021.

In April, Trinity applied for and received approval for a \$114,000 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) bank loan, part of the federal government's COVID-19 assistance program. Under PPP rules, the purpose of the loan was to ensure that during the uncertain times of the pandemic that Trinity could meet utility expenses, mortgage interest payments, and staff payroll. In May, Trinity received the \$114,000 loan and the money was used under the rules of the program to pay staff salaries. Trinity subsequently decided to apply for loan forgiveness, a feature of the PPP program, with the hope that Trinity will not need to repay a substantial portion of the loan. Loan forgiveness should provide well into 2021 the resources needed to continue ministry, uninterrupted by the effects of the pandemic.

7. **Trinity Treasures**: Parishioners, practicing health and safety protocols, continued to work during the pandemic to collect and organize donated items and to prepare for sales of these items on-line and at outdoor sales at Trinity in the spring and on October 3 and 10. October sales netted around \$20,000. With sales earlier in the year, total Trinity Treasures sales for the year were about \$54,000. An organizational meeting to discuss the future of Trinity Treasures was scheduled for November 13.

D. **Support for Individual Parishioners**

1. **Pastoral Care**: Pastoral care, provided by the pastors, the vicar, the lay pastoral assistant, and, until she retired, the Parish Nurse have continued by phone and electronic media.

2. **Stephen Ministry**: Stephen Ministers have continued their ministry via telephone, while postponing physical visits. The Stephen Ministers have communicated with pastors and other Stephen Ministers by phone or via Zoom video-audio chats.

3. **Visitation Teams**: Visitation teams have continued their ministries via phone.

4. **Phone Calls to All Parishioners**: The two pastors and vicar have made calls to check on each parishioner.

5. **Reaching Out to Singles and Socially Isolated**: The Parish has asked Stephen Ministers and members of the Visiting Ministry Team to make special efforts to reach out via the phone to those living alone or those who are isolated socially.

E. **Financial or Material Support for Those in Need**

1. **Financial Support for Families**: Trinity has provided financial support to several families affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

2. **Ministry of Service Funding**: Trinity's Ministry of Service has granted additional funds to area charitable organizations and agencies that provide assistance to those who are in need and affected by the coronavirus. In the fall, the Ministry of Service invited parishioners to volunteer to serve in liaison capacity between Trinity and some of the local charitable organizations and agencies that benefit from Trinity benevolences.

3. **Community Charity Challenge**: Trinity participated in the Capps and Community Charity Challenge initiative that raised over \$290,000 to be shared by Lake Christian Ministries, SML Good Neighbors, and the Agape Center.

4. **Backpack Program for Dudley School**: Trinity has continued the backpack program to assist families at Dudley Elementary School who face food insecurity.

F. **Church Office Management and Building Oversight**

1. **Office Management**: Office Manager Debbie Tyler and Office and Technology Assistant Linda Worman have worked from home; maintained contact with the pastors, vicar, and other staff members through e-mails, phone calls, and weekly staff meetings via Zoom; and established limited hours to work in the closed church office on items that cannot be done from home. While the church remains closed to all parishioners and others with non-essential business, Debbie and Linda have worked in the church office from 10 a.m. to noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, dealing with mail, various financial matters, and a variety of administrative duties.

2. **Building Oversight**: Beginning in March, volunteer parishioners made daily visits to the church to bring in the mail and walk the building to check on maintenance issues and security.

II. Trinity Decisions and Actions During the Pandemic— Chronologically by Month

March

Trinity first took action on March 13, after the Virginia Governor's March 12 declaration of a state of emergency and his March 13 order closing K-12 schools for two weeks. This was before any governmental guidance on social gathering.

On Friday, March 13, after consultation among themselves, the pastors and Parish Council members decided and informed parishioners via e-mail that the Sunday, March 15, worship services were being canceled and the church building was being closed for all regular activities and meetings, such as on-site Sunday services, Pre-school, meetings, classes, and office operations. Community groups scheduled to use the building were informed of the closing.

Specific Trinity events were later canceled or postponed with new dates to be determined, including Making Connections Classes and New Member Sunday, a Ministry Fair, a workshop for ministry team and small group leaders and Parish Council members, Vacation Bible School, and the summer mission trip for high school students. The church building closure was to last until May 16.

Trinity began offering pre-recorded worship services on-line beginning March 15.

April

In April, Trinity extended its building closure date to June 10 and so informed parishioners via e-mail.

Worship services were remotely recorded and offered to parishioners on-line on each Sunday and were available thereafter via the internet. Special worship services were offered during Easter week, on Easter Sunday, and for Earth Day.

May

On May 24, Parish Council sent an e-mail, followed by a hard copy letter dated May 26, to parishioners reporting that, while the governor had relaxed some of the restrictions placed on churches as part of the Phase 1 re-opening plan for the Commonwealth, Parish Council, based on the guidance of Trinity's judicatories and the high health risk of many parishioners, had elected to remain closed until at least Phase 3 of the governor's plan. Parish Council also reported that it had created a team of parishioners to work on protocols to have in place prior to safely re-opening, utilizing the advice of medical professionals as well as from The Centers for Disease Control and Virginia Department of Health guidelines. Parish Council also indicated that Trinity would continue to offer online church, online bible study, and a Zoom coffee hour.

June

On June 8, Parish Council sent an e-mail and letter to parishioners pointing out, among other things, that 91.2% of COVID-19 deaths in Virginia were of persons age 60 or older and that 84% of Trinity parishioners were over age 60. The letter expressed the concern of Parish Council and the Reopening Advisory Team that a premature opening would not only expose a particularly vulnerable population to a deadly virus but also run the risk of Trinity having to open

and close as circumstances warranted if infected persons had been present for church activities. The letter went on to announce Parish Council's decision that conversation about reopening would begin when Governor Northam announced that the Commonwealth was in phase 3, which followed the recommendations of all three Trinity denominations, but that Trinity had already begun the planning process for re-opening so Trinity would be better prepared once phase 3 arrived.

Also in June, Parish Council established a Reopening Advisory Team with the purpose of preparing for the church reopening. On June 26, this team sent an e-mail and letter to parishioners stating that since Gov. Northam had announced that Virginia would enter Phase 3 on July 1, the team was working to make sure all the protocols needed to hold a safe worship experience were in place prior to selecting a reopening date, following guidelines from state and federal governments and the three judicatories. The letter outlined some of the protocols—pre-registering to attend as one of 50 parishioners allowed, masks, doors opened for parishioners, medical screening, hand sanitizers, masks for those who forgot theirs, “touchless” temperature checks, ushering to social-distanced seats and to exits after the service, no social time before or after the service, no singing or unison responses (but piano and organ music provided but no choir), and initially no communion service. The team also said that virtual worship services would continue to be offered on-line for those who choose not to attend in-person. Also, a query letter would be sent to parishioners to ascertain how many planned to attend in-person and how many planned to worship at home for the time being.

July

In July, the Parish sent an e-mail clarifying the mission of the Reopening Advisory Team and providing an update on the team's progress. Subsequently, the team initiated a weekly letter to keep parishioners updated on planning for reopening. In the first letter on July 24, the team reported on a mid-July dress rehearsal for accommodating worshipers for a Sunday service. The team also listed team recommendations, including a requirement for face masks for in-person services; a limit of 50 worshipers for the pilot service, ramping up later to approximately 150; no paper bulletins; spraying of the sanctuary, fellowship hall, main floor restrooms, and carpets before and after each service; and issuing of advance specific instructions for attending the services once a reopening date was established.

As Vicar Christopher Girardeau prepared to end his internship and return to seminary, he and his wife, Ellen, recorded for internet viewing a farewell review of their year at Trinity and Smith Mountain Lake, and parishioners were invited to drive in their cars by the entrance to the church to say goodbye to the Christopher and Ellen.

August

On Sunday, August 2, following the 10:30 on-line worship service, Pastor Bouknight and Pastor Miller offered a “fireside chat” from the Parish Chapel in which they explained the process for deciding when and how to re-open the church, including the need to coordinate with the three judicatories. They noted that while Pastor Bouknight is the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church and Pastor Miller is the pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Bishop Bourlakas is the pastor of Trinity Episcopal Church. They discussed some of the measures being planned to re-open worship services safely, including the requirement that everyone wear a mask. They noted that masks would be available for anyone who came without one, and that if a person refused to wear a mask, the person would be asked to leave. If the person refused to leave, the service would be terminated.

On August 7, the Reopening Advisory Team reported to parishioners via e-mail that the team had been busy reviewing requests from several ministry groups. Three requests were reviewed and forwarded to the Parish Council for approval. The team also reported that:

- A special Parish Council meeting was held on August 6 to review the Plan for the Reopening of Trinity Ecumenical Parish. The plan was approved by the Parish Council and the Church Vestry. Pastor Bea and Pastor Philip then sent the plan to the three judicatories for their review and approval.
- The date for in-person worship was to be determined once the Reopening Plan was reviewed and approved by the judicatories.
- When a date to reopen the church had been determined, it would be important to remember that the church office would not immediately be open for in-person visits. The office would continue to receive phone calls from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm Monday – Thursday.

On August 14, Parish Council announced that all three judicatories had reviewed and approved Trinity's reopening plan and given permission for in-person worship. August 30 was announced as the target date for the first in-person worship service. Parish Council indicated that an on-line reservation system was being tested and that instructions for the congregation on how to use the system and register to attend a service would soon be communicated.

On Sunday, August 16, Pastors Bouknight and Miller led a 10:30 am worship service from the sanctuary broadcast in real-time via a camera in the back of the sanctuary and recorded for later viewing via YouTube. The service was made available to parishioners and the public who logged onto the Trinity website. The sanctuary was empty except for the pastors, a volunteer pianist/organist, a lay reader, a camera operator, new intern Vicar Rebekah Boatwright, and possibly some others.

On August 21, the Reopening Advisory Team, in a third in a series of weekly update letters, provided a summary of the system and procedures for in-person worship beginning August 30 at 10:30 am. The system would include designated entry doors, masks, social distancing, ushering to a table for temperature screening, ushering to a social distanced seat in the sanctuary, a shortened worship service with only organ or piano music and no singing, no bulletins, no communion, offering baskets at the rear of the sanctuary, and dismissal by an usher and exit by the doors near the office. Only one pastor, assisted by the vicar (intern) would preside at a service, to avoid exposure. A four-page detailed plan was attached to the e-mail message.

On Sunday, August 23, Pastor Bouknight led another 10:30 am service in a generally empty sanctuary. Vicar Boatwright assisted with the service. The service was again made available in real time via the Trinity website and later via YouTube. By August 23 at least, the pastors, vicar, and lay readers wore face shields during the services.

On August 24, the Pastors Bouknight and Miller sent a letter via e-mail to parishioners about reopening with in-person worship services, along with continued on-line worship services, and thanking all those involved in preparations for the reopening.

Also on August 24, the Reopening Advisory Team sent an e-mail to parishioners providing a link where parishioners could register for in-person Sunday worship services on August 30. Attached was a 17-minute video with a member of the Trinity Medical Response Team and the pastors explaining how in-person attendance would work.

On August 25, a Trinity e-mail invited parishioners to participate on the five Wednesdays in September in a program of "Wonderful Wednesdays," in which parishioners were invited to spend an hour, 10-11 am, together outdoors under a large tent in the parking lot by the walkway to the columbarium, with masks and social distancing, to hold prayer, devotions, and

conversations. After a week's break because the tents were being used for Trinity Treasures, these sessions resumed on October 14 and were to continue until November 18 as "Wednesdays with Sabbath Moments," with devotions based on author Terry Hershey's book *Sabbath Moments*. The sessions began at 11 am and were held under a tent that had been moved to the parking lot behind the church.

On August 30, Trinity re-opened the 10:30 am service for in-person worship, limited to 50 parishioners, plus volunteer parishioners helping with safety protocols.

On August 31, Trinity announced via e-mail that Pastor Bouknight was quarantining at home after one of his children had been exposed to COVID-19 and the Pastor and child had developed mild symptoms and were awaiting tests results.

September

On September 5, Trinity sent an e-mail to parishioners announcing that Pastor Bouknight, his wife, Tara, and two of their children were experiencing COVID symptoms, with one testing positive but all feeling ill and presumed to be infected with the virus. The e-mail said the family was under strict quarantine and a network of parishioners was helping them with food under a carefully supervised protocol. The family asked for prayers and welcomed cards, notes, and e-mail, while asking to hold off phone calls. Pastor Miller, Vicar Rebekah Boatwright, and Margaret Oosterman were attending to all pastoral needs and ministry activities. The Bouknight family recovered during the month of September, and Pastor Bouknight carefully returned to his pastoral duties. On September 21, Pastor Miller interviewed Pastor Bouknight on his family's experience with COVID-19 for a video that was posted on the church's website as a YouTube video.

On September 29, Trinity offered parishioners a meeting via Zoom on Trinity's financial status and preparation of a budget for 2021.

October

On October 5, a "Blessing of the Animals" was held in the church parking lot.

On October 3 and 10, Trinity Treasures sales were held outdoors and under tents, netting around \$20,000. With sales earlier in the year, total Trinity Treasures sales for the year were about \$54,000.

Trinity announced in early October that the usual Trunk or Treat program for Halloween to offer community children candy and other goodies from the trunks of vehicles in the Trinity parking lot was canceled because of COVID-19 and the fact that the number of cases in Franklin County had increased and the county had reached "community spread" status, meaning contact tracing could not be done well. Later in October, parishioners were invited to send in photos of the parishioners dressed in Halloween costumes.

On October 11, the attempt to provide live streaming of the worship service from Trinity failed for technical reasons. The service was recorded and available on YouTube later. A Trinity team worked to correct the issue and get more capable systems.

On October 16, Trinity announced that the pastors, vicar, and lay readers would resume wearing masks and not face shields, as the CDC had issued new guidelines saying face shields alone were not adequate protection.

On October 18, the technical problems for live streaming the Sunday worship service had been fixed, and the Sunday service was available for living streaming at 10:30 am, as well as

later viewing on YouTube. With Trinity approval, the October 18 service included a parishioner playing a flute in a duet with the pianist.

Sunday worship services on October 25 were offered with options for in-person, live-streaming, and recorded-play participation.

On October 26, the Parish announced that the three congregation meetings would take place during the afternoon of Sunday, November 15. Each denomination would hold a separate virtual meeting via Zoom. More information on the time for each meeting and the link needed to access the meeting were provided later. The Parish also announced that the annual Parish meeting would take place on Sunday, December 6. During this meeting, parishioners would receive the treasurer's report, vote on a budget for 2021, affirm new Parish Council nominees, and vote on nominated Parish Council Officers for 2021.

On October 28, after a nine-month search by the Music Search Team, Trinity announced the selection of Sharon Witherell as the new Director of Music Ministry.

November (as of Nov 9)

In November, Sunday worship services were offered with options for in-person, live-streaming, and recorded-play participation.

On Sunday, November 1, the Parish offered a virtual communion service.

In early November, a Nurse Transition Team worked on a position description for the possible hiring of a parish nurse. This was to be followed by consultation with the Finance Team and Personnel Committee and possible recommendation to Parish Council.

Attachment #1: Government Guidance and Direction

The context of government guidance and direction in which Trinity has acted includes the following:

- Jan 29: U.S. Government established a Coronavirus Task Force.
- Jan 31: President declared a public health emergency in response to COVID-19.
- Mar 7: First case of COVID-19 in Virginia announced.
- Mar 11: World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic.
- Mar 12: Virginia's Governor issued Executive Order 51, declaring a state of emergency in Virginia from March 12 to June 10, to prepare for the crisis.
- Mar 13: VA Governor ordered all K-12 schools closed for two weeks.
- Mar 13: President issued two national emergency declarations.
- Mar 16: U.S. Government issued guidance calling on Americans to follow state and local authorities' directions and for those who are older, feeling sick, or having serious underlying health conditions to stay home.
- Mar 17: President asked Americans to work at home if possible, avoid unnecessary travel, limit social gatherings to 10 individuals, and practice good hygiene.
- Mar 17: VA Governor issued Order of Public Health Emergency One, limiting to 10 the number of patrons in restaurants, fitness centers, and theaters.
- Mar 23: VA Governor issued Executive Order 53 for Virginia, ordering the closing of non-essential businesses and the closure of dining and congregation in dining and drinking establishments, prohibiting public and private gatherings of more than 10 people, and ceasing in-person instruction at K-12 schools for the rest of the 2019-2020 academic year.
- Mar 30: U.S. Government issued "30 Days to Slow the Spread" guidance, asking people who were older, sick, or had underlying conditions to stay home
- Mar 30: VA Governor issued Executive Order 55, ordering Virginians to stay at home (with certain exceptions), to maintain 6-foot social distancing when away from home, and to continue not to gather in public or private in groups of more than 10 people, all effective immediately and until June 10.
- Apr 3: U.S. Government issued guidance on wearing face masks.
- Apr 15: VA Governor issued an amended E.O. 53 that extended the restrictions in Executive Order 53.
- May 8: VA Governor issued Executive Order 61, Order of Public Health Emergency Three, that ordered a Phase One easing of certain temporary restrictions. It provided guidelines that relaxed some of the restrictions on gatherings in churches. The order directed that, as of May 15 and until at least June 19, individuals may attend religious services subject to 10 requirements, including limiting occupants to 50% of capacity, marked six-foot social distancing, attendees strongly to consider wearing face masks, no passing of items, restrictions on distribution of food and beverages, cleaning and disinfection of facilities, signage prohibiting attendees with fever or COVID-19 symptoms, signage on social distancing/gatherings/options for high risk individuals/staying at home if sick, and no in-person religious services if cannot comply with the 10 requirements.
- May 26: VA Governor issued Executive Order 63, Order of Public Health Emergency Five, requiring the wearing of face covering inside buildings, with the proviso that face coverings may be removed to participate in a religious ritual.
- Jun 2: VA Governor issued Executive Order 65, Order of Public Health Emergency Six, implementing Phase Two, easing restrictions, e.g., prohibiting public and private

gatherings of more than 50 individuals (up from 10), 50% occupancy limits, six-foot social distancing, and cleaning and disinfecting. This order included a link to a separate Commonwealth of Virginia document titled “Safer at Home: Phase One, Religious Services,” which gave mandatory requirements, suggested best practices, and provided resources for religious services.

Jun 23: VA Governor announced that Virginia would enter Phase 3 on July 1.

Jun 30: VA Governor issued Executive Order 67, Order of Public Health Emergency Seven, moving the Commonwealth to Phase III, easing restrictions from Executive Orders 53 and 58 and prohibiting all public and private in-person gatherings of more than 250 individuals (up from 50).

Jul 28: VA Governor issued Executive Order 68, Order of Public Health Emergency Eight, prohibiting in specified areas of eastern Virginia gatherings of more than 50 individuals.

Aug 21: VA Governor issued Amended Executive Order 67, Order of Public Health Emergency Seven, continuing the prohibition of more than 250 individuals in all public and private in-person gatherings, continuing the requirements for religious services, and adding that individuals attending religious services must wear cloth face coverings, in accordance with Executive Order 65, Order of Public Health Emergency Five.