

Welcome to FIRST CLASS [Online]

Module One

A COURSE IN THE BASIC TEACHINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

- *Faithful to the Holy Scriptures*
- *Faithful to the Lutheran Confessions*
- *Christ-centered and Gospel-centered in focus*
- *Comprehensive in the essentials of doctrine and practice*
- *Connecting with the Church's expression of the faith in the Divine Service*



- +For those who desire to become members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and of Trinity congregation in Springfield, Missouri (This is the adult confirmation class!)
- +For Lutherans who desire to review their doctrine and
- +For those who are just curious or desire to inquire what Lutheran Christians believe, teach, and confess (No obligations, no gimmicks, no strings attached for taking this course)
- +For members to share with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers who are un-churched to come and hear the Gospel (witness)

Note: Welcome to Trinity Lutheran Church!

Trinity Lutheran Church was founded in 1910 and is the mother church of the Springfield, Missouri area Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations. In its history, the congregation was blessed with three long-term pastors (Rev. A.V. Woker 1917-1935; Rev. E.H. Koerber 1936-1966; and Rev. C.W. Heilman 1967-1985), all of whom were sound theologians and gifted teachers of the faith. From humble beginnings Trinity has been blessed to establish itself in the Springfield community, while planting eight other mission congregations and a full time campus ministry in the regional area. Trinity further experienced the joy of church and mission planting working alongside some of its own daughter congregations to establish other mission starts and, in 1984, a Lutheran School. For nearly five years, Trinity hosted the offices of Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Southwest Missouri, but God blessed this ministry to outgrow our campus and relocate in a more accessible, larger Springfield location.

In the first decade of this 21st century, Trinity established a full time youth ministry and, in partnership with the Missouri District, a full time Hispanic mission, initially here in Springfield. But after economic conditions in 2008 negatively impacted the Hispanic population, Pastor Manny Rodriguez was transferred to Sedalia, Missouri, with Trinity as a sponsoring partner, until the mission there—Amigos de Cristo Lutheran Church—was blessed to become a chartered LCMS congregation!

In 2010 Trinity celebrated its centennial, and also became a family ministry certified congregation through the Missouri District Family Life Ministry Institute. Trinity also launched a Second Century Committee to plan for facility expansion to accommodate the growth with which God had blessed the congregation. In 2015, Trinity dedicated a new facility—The Trinity Family Center. A number of other projects were also completed, bringing updates and upgrades to other facilities. In 2017 the congregation dedicated a new organ after completing a total renovation, beautifying the sanctuary.

Trinity's campus is on a nearly 3-acre site just a few blocks south of Missouri State University on the west boundary of the historic Phelps Grove city park. Diverse neighborhoods surround our church—from established and distinguished to college rental housing—blessing us with wonderful opportunities for outreach. The internationally acclaimed Bass Pro Shops headquarters with Wonders of Wildlife bring hundreds of thousand of visitors annually within a few blocks of our church. One of southwest Missouri's largest two hospital complexes is also within a short distance of the Trinity campus. Trinity is situated in the center of Springfield, third largest city in Missouri, boasting the largest public school system in the state.

At the end of February, 2018 the congregation will vote on a future plan for the Trinity family, following an in-depth strategic planning process conducted by the Trinity Church Council. An updated Mission Statement, Vision, list of Core Values, and focus on Critical Targets will be presented as the foundation for completing the particulars of the long range plan regarding programming, staffing, facilities, and financial sustainability.



MEET OUR STAFF!

Senior Pastor William R. Marler was called to Springfield in 1986 to serve as the Campus Pastor and Associate Pastor at Trinity. He was installed as Trinity's Senior Pastor in November, 1998. He is a 1983 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, where he remained until 1986 pursuing further studies in church history at Concordia and St. Louis University. His first call was as a professor and pastoral counselor at Lutheran High School South in St. Louis. Pastor Marler has served on numerous circuit, District, and synodical boards and committees, including terms as Fourth- and Third-Vice President of the Missouri District. In June, 2015 he was a candidate for District President, and was elected as the District First-Vice President, an office served by a parish pastor who remains in his church. He also serves a Synod Reconciler. He has taught for twenty-seven years at Missouri State University in the Department of Religious Studies in the field of Religion in America. He is married to Katherine, an educator serving in the Springfield Public Schools gifted education program. The Marlers have raised three children, and were blessed in 2016 with their first grandchild.

Associate Pastor Nicholas (Nick) Hagerman was graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in May, 2011, and received his first call to Trinity. Pastor Hagerman grew up in Maryland, completed his Bachelor's degree at William and Mary, where he was a history major. Upon graduation he entered the seminary to prepare for his career in ministry. He served his vicarage in Arizona, giving him a number of rich experiences in church work from east to west. Pastor Hagerman serves on the Missouri District Board of Family Life and Youth Ministry, especially utilized in singles' ministry, junior high school ministry, and Junior High Confirmation retreats. He served as the Springfield Circuit pastoral delegate at the 2016 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Convention in Milwaukee. Recently he has begun studies in the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program at Concordia. Pastor Hagerman and Claire Brown were married in April, 2013. Mrs. Hagerman grew up in Springfield where she and her family belonged to Redeemer Lutheran. She attended the University of Missouri, and is a pediatric nurse. The Hagermans are blessed with a two sons.

Director of FamilyLife Ministry—Vacant

This position at Trinity is currently vacant.

4

Director of Age-Based Ministries—Ms. Jennifer Boyd

Jen began serving on Trinity's staff in 2014-2015 as a Parish Assistant. In March, 2015 the congregation, recognizing her talents and skill sets in ministry, redefined her duties and responsibilities to work with all of our children's and youth ministry groups, the college ministry, the older adults ministry, and other age-based groups. She also implemented and developed family ministry programs. Jen has also served in mission and ministry as Director of the Lutheran Student Center, our Missouri District campus ministry in Springfield. Jen grew up at Trinity, was graduated from Ozark High School, and Missouri State University. She also works in her family's business, so she brings to Trinity's staff business experience and gifts in administration, technology, and logistics support. Jen is the mother of two children, a son and daughter.

Director of Music Ministry—Dr. Grace St. Pierre

Dr. Grace is a life-long professor of music and, while serving the past five years as our Director of Music Ministry, has taught at Missouri State University (where she continues as a faculty member), Drury University, and Evangel University here in Springfield. A well-known teacher and musician in the area, she has also served in many community choirs, operas, and other musical events. Dr. Grace directs the Trinity Choir, and oversees all of our vocal choirs, ensembles, and vocalists, as well as instrumental music and choirs, including the adult bell choir (Heavenly Vibrations) and the flute ensemble. She also is responsible for children's vocal and chime choirs. She recruits members and promotes music ministry at Trinity. Often she is selected to direct area-wide Lutheran musical events, including Missouri District Convention combined choirs.

Office Manager—Angela Bruton

Angela also grew up in Springfield and at Trinity. She earned her bachelor's degree here at Missouri State University, and upon graduation, worked in the Communications ministry at The International Center of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. She married her husband Jim, and moved back to southwest Missouri. She and Jim lived in West Plains, where he was employed as a physical therapy specialist and athletic trainer at the Missouri State University campus there. When Jim accepted a position with the Cox hospital system here in Springfield, they moved back to their hometown and re-joined Trinity. Angela became our Office Manager in 2009. Jim and Angela are blessed with two children: an adult daughter, and a son, Kyle, whom in 2010 the Lord took to heaven to live with Jesus there. Trinity's exceptional children's playground is named after Kyle. Angela's gifts of administration, communication, and compassionate servanthood are a blessing to the Trinity family.

Also serving on Trinity's staff are **Ron Shepard**, custodian and **Mrs. Phyllis Hansen**, secretary emeritus

5

Our church's mailing address is:

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You can learn more about Trinity by visiting our home page.

Trinity produces a monthly newsletter which includes a list of all our Bible classes and educational ministries, descriptions and schedules of our worship services and fellowship events at Trinity, opportunities for evangelism and outreach in our community as well as world mission support, a roster of our lay leadership, monthly letters from our Senior Pastor and Director of Music Ministry, a complete prayer page for members as well as family and friends of neighbors, an accounting of our stewardship, and opportunities through our Springfield Circuit, Missouri District, and national Synod. THE TRUMPET is online; hard copies can be found on the narthex table in the church.



The Didache (Teaching of the Twelve) was the Christian book/manual used as early as the second century, A.D., to catechize (to teach doctrine with the goal of making a new disciple of Christ) those who came or were brought to the Church as visitors and prospects for membership. It was a systematic treatment of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, who trained His own chosen apostles that His doctrine would be the foundation of the Church He established:

Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20

For three years Jesus' twelve disciples had received His divine instruction and training. After His resurrection on Easter, Jesus met them and "*opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures,*" referring to the prophecies about the coming Messiah (savior) that were included in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) Luke 24:45

The first Christians confessed that Jesus of Nazareth was the incarnated Son of God whose life, death, and physical resurrection from death was the mission of salvation for humanity. They also believed and taught that He had gone back to heaven, from where He would rule the world and its history, even as His mission to save people continued through His Church. The words He spoke and taught were not only viewed as absolute Truth, but as words still spoken in the world with power to make things happen according to His will. Through His Word--the Church called it the Gospel (good news!)—individual people, one by one, would be converted to and preserved in a faith that led to eternal life. These first Christians at Jerusalem. . .

devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

Those who heard the Christian Gospel and wanted to join the Church were thoroughly instructed in these basic teachings before being baptized and brought into communicant membership. The Didache appears to have been a tool used in this teaching process. Its instructions also included guides on the administration of Baptism and The Lord's Supper, on the Divine Service (what Americans often call the worship service), information about the Church itself and the office of the public ministry (pastors), and instruction in daily Christian living.

Another New Testament term used for teaching the Christian faith is "*catechesis*". This word implies a life-long learning process, a way of life. Indeed our study here is merely a brief introduction to precious topics of Christian Truth that do lead to a lifetime of study and meditation!

Throughout church history various "*catechisms*" (books of doctrinal instruction by systematic arrangement of topics) were written and used. Dr. Martin Luther's reformation of church doctrine and practice in the sixteenth century restored catechises as a primary task and focus of the Church's ministry. His Small Catechism was written for children to memorize in order that they would internalize the basic teachings of the faith. His Large Catechism was written for adults (especially parents) to learn Christian doctrine in order to become instructors for their children.

In **FIRST CLASS**, each student will receive a new Small Catechism that can be used as a reference for what is being taught in the course, but also as a daily prayer book. **FIRST CLASS** is a series of presentations and discussions of the most basic teachings of the Bible, which are the foundations of Christian faith. Yet even though these are identified as the basic teachings, they are, nevertheless, the most significant questions and issues facing human beings in this life, often known in philosophy and history as the "great existential questions of life."

FIRST CLASS is also a very practical course, as we study topics like Christian worship, marriage and family life, vocation, and the Christian daily life in the contemporary culture.

Each lesson will be posted in written form on the Trinity home page, www.trinity-springfield.org. By topic name, you can request these lessons to be sent to you as needed. Hard copies of all lessons a participant might miss are also available upon request.

If you are a visitor or guest at Trinity, whether attending **FIRST CLASS** for confirmation, review, or just out of curiosity, by registering for the class, you become an extended member of the Trinity family, and we welcome you!



SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

<u>Module</u>	<u>Topics</u>
One	RegistrationOrientation to the Course
Two	The Existence of God & Creation: The Mystery of Origins
Three	Humanity: The Anthropological Mystery
Four	Jesus the Christ: The Christological Mystery
Five	The Gift of Eternal Life: The Soteriological Mystery
Six	The Christian Life: The Holy Spirit and the Church
Seven	The Means of Grace: Baptism
Eight	The Means of Grace: Holy Communion
Nine	Truth: The Epistemological Mystery
Ten	Worship: The Divine Service
Eleven	Death and Afterlife: The Eschatological Mystery

How To Begin First Class

- 1. Register for the class online or by phone (see contact info above)**
- 2. You will need a Bible (if you need to purchase a Bible, please indicate when you register that you need a new Bible, and we will help you acquire one) and all students will receive Luther's Small Catechism (new 2017 edition). Indicate whether you are a student who is already or can visit Trinity and would be able to pick up your catechism on campus; or if you need to have the catechism delivered to you. We will respond.**
- 3. When you have these two resources, go online and begin your study by accessing First Class: Module One. When you complete each module, send your finished product to Senior Pastor Marler. At this point you will be working with one or both of our pastors until completion of the process.**
- 4. If at completion, you desire to be confirmed, an interview meeting with Trinity's pastors will be scheduled to prepare you for membership.**
- 5. Before, during, upon completion, and anytime, please feel free to communicate and bring any questions to our pastors.**

Other Information

Once a semester, Trinity offers a discussion in a “coffee-house,” setting, led by our Senior Pastor for prospective members, new members, and all members:

Being a Christian and Living Out Our Faith in our Contemporary Culture

New Member Post-Class Events includes:

- 1) The Individual Household Meeting (Scheduled individually; referred to on page 8)**
- 2) The Rite of Confirmation**
- 3) A New Member Orientation Session**

God bless you as you consider this opportunity in your walk with Him.

Please call with any questions:

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