

Holy Trinity Annual Report January 2019

Communications, Evangelism & Social Media

By Karen Owen, Vestry (holytrinitycountryside@gmail.com)

Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. (Matthew 25:35-40)

2018 was a year that we took stock in the ways Holy Trinity communicates and engages our wider community by offering services and programs and acknowledging the needs of those outside our walls. 70% of people wanting to learn about our church consult our web site and Facebook Page first. As an example of how important social media has become in our world, 3,875 people found Holy Trinity through a Google search during the month of December 2018. This is the generation of people who need God's unconditional love more than ever, searching for affirmation and healing in their lives. We want them to find it at Holy Trinity! Our Communications and Evangelism efforts were closely tied to Outreach programs, which have expanded. This year we reached out to our community in new and exciting ways, showing Jesus' redeeming love for people who may have been marginalized or cast out before, and demonstrating our support for all of God's children. We held a first-ever Shower of Stoles exhibit in our sanctuary displaying poignant and sometimes heart-wrenching stories of LGBTQ people of faith on their personal stole-stories. The Tampa Bay Times even wrote an article about us because of this exhibit! We hosted a suicide prevention training by the American Society for Suicide Prevention, and an HIV/AIDS Awareness Roundtable and Resource Fair, including free Pinellas County Health Dept STI and infectious disease testing. We collected undergarments for RCS "The Haven", one of only two domestic violence shelters in our county, and hosted a free painting class for the ladies there. We also participated in the March for Our Lives nationwide march against gun violence, supporting Episcopalians Against Gun Violence.

On the social media and technology side, we created a Google presence for the first time, including a church email that leaders can check during off-hours, a re-vamped web site, and a continuously-updated Facebook page curated by several members of our congregation. We began recording Randy's sermons with both video and audio, posting many of them online. The year 2018 marked a turn for this ministry with a pivot toward communicating a message of welcome, love and service to those least fortunate in our community, as the above scripture passage reminds us. In this way, we evangelized and communicated God's love by posting stories, interviews, pictures and event information using our web presence and our Facebook page. We hope to enjoin more of our technology-savvy members to reach out using communications platforms of choice in 2019, and to grow our social justice ministry in the months ahead, advocating and giving voice to the least of us.