

History of Trinity Lutheran Church and Academy

During the early 1920s, thousands of people moved to South Florida. Among them were Bertha Radke, Emma Reblin, and Herman Thiele. With a view toward founding a congregation of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), they approached the Rev. H. W. Niewald of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Miami. On Friday evening, February 12, 1926 Pastor Niewald gathered with a group of 24 people at the Women's Club to conduct the first worship service for what would become Trinity Lutheran Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

The members soon needed a full-time pastor to lead them in the work God was entrusting to them. Installed on Sunday, September 5, 1926, Pastor Dallas Gibson came in answer to their call. Less than two weeks later, a hurricane devastated South Florida, challenging the members under Pastor Gibson's leadership to help their neighbors rebuild their lives. Not until January 9, 1927 could the congregation formalize their organization.

By God's grace, members of Trinity have enjoyed a rich history of activity in the Ft. Lauderdale area and beyond. Pastor Gibson led Trinity to found a Sunday school in 1927. That year, he married Susan Hooks of Alabama. In 1933, Mrs. Gibson led the way in founding Trinity Lutheran School, which continues to serve students and their families today in worship, education and child care facilities located along South Andrews Avenue.

Pastor Gibson and Trinity worked to help other congregations get started: St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Hollywood; Grace Lutheran Church and Faith Lutheran Church in the Ft. Lauderdale area. After 29 years of service to Trinity, Pastor and Mrs. Gibson left to help the members of Faith with their ministry.

In August, 1955, Pastor Dean Kasischke came to Trinity to fill the void after Pastor Gibson left in 1954. Soon other congregations formed at Trinity's initiative: Hope Lutheran Church, Pompano; Prince of Peace, West Hollywood; Good Shepherd, Ft. Lauderdale; Miramar Lutheran, Miramar; Our Savior Lutheran, Plantation; and Gloria Dei, Davie.

After 29 years of service to Trinity, Pastor Kasischke transitioned to part-time service in a congregation at Lake Worth, Florida. He was followed by the Rev. Ralph G. Schmidt, who served Trinity from 1984-1986; the Rev. Louis H. Abel, 1987-2005; Rev. Thomas S. Hackett, 2006-2015 and the Rev. Jeffrey Carlson 2015-present.

Members of Trinity also led the way in

- Forming a Lutheran High School - a first among LCMS congregations in Florida
- Serving as the site where the Lutheran Women's Missionary League was organized in 1945
- Providing financial support to the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church Missouri
- Having a part in the development of the Cooperative Feeding Program of Broward County

As the current members of Trinity look to the future, they see a renewed effort to serve children and families in the area through Sunday school, The Learning Space Academy, and Trinity Lutheran School. They envision partnering with others to benefit all people, as they carry on their tradition of worship enhanced by fine music and ministry. They believe God still has work for them to do in Ft. Lauderdale and beyond from their facilities in the downtown area.